



Committee focuses on women's safety in Murdochville

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - The Feminist Concertation Roundtable of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands has recently established a reflection and awareness committee to examine women's safety issues related to the potential reopening of the Murdochville mine.

The committee brings together representatives from the community, health and public health sectors, education, regional development, entrepreneurship, Murdochville residents and other organizations. Several meetings have already been held.

"The committee chose the name 'Canary Committee,' in homage to the bird whose mission was to detect oxygen in mines before humans entered. Unlike the canary's tragic fate, we are working to ensure that women are not sacrificed or forgotten in the reopening project," says Sara Ternoir, spokesperson for the Feminist Concertation Roundtable on the issue.

The proposed reopening of the Murdochville mine is being led by Montreal-based Osisko Metals. The project remains in the exploration stage, with up to 50,000 metres of drilling planned this year.

The importance of working in prevention explains why, at its very first meeting, the Canary Committee adopted the mandate to act as a forum for discussion and monitoring of safety issues, both anticipated and experienced, by the women of Murdochville in the context of the reopening of the mine.

Members are entrusted with an active role in sharing experiences, field observations, and sectoral expertise in order to rigorously document local realities. This pooling of knowledge aims not only to identify the impacts of the mining project on women, but also to develop concrete courses of action to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of this development on the female population of the region.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

The mine, if it reopens, will bring in hundreds of workers, predominantly a male workforce.

"Initially, the committee will work on establishing links with the Osisko mine, and on producing prevention and awareness materials for mine workers and community partners. All women, whether they work for the mine or live in the community, must feel safe and supported should situations of violence arise," adds Sara Ternoir.

The idea of establishing the Canary Committee does not go back very far in time. However, a few elements based on past documents or steps that were somewhat similar and made to a certain extent in other regions raised interest within the Feminist Concertation Roundtable of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

Preliminary documentation

"The Public Health Department had made some recommendations, including raising awareness about the fate of women in a context of the mine reopening, including a message sounding like 'don't wait until you have a massive influx of male workers,'" stresses Sara Ternoir.

"Overall, one of the recommendations was to create a health committee, an advisory committee, with many stakeholders, and to work on vari-

ous issues," she also points out.

The Feminist Concertation Roundtable also consulted some documentation about the effects of the fly-in-fly-out practice in other areas, in Abitibi and on the North Shore, for example.

"For now, we're going to gather experiences, share them, and determine the current context. We've targeted stakeholders to see what we can do in this file, and specifically what we can do for women's health," notes Sara Ternoir.

The scope of the committee will not be strictly limited to the mining industry, like ramifications that are not suspected at first glance.

"If the mine opens, there will be some pressure on the rental housing market: who is struggling to find housing? Single mothers," underscores Sara Ternoir.

Female workforce

"In mining, 16% of the workforce is female, mostly in offices and research positions, which are less well-paid than drilling or working directly in the mine," remarks Sara Ternoir.

If the Murdochville mine reopens, up to 1,300 workers could be employed during the construction phase, while 500

to 700 workers are expected during operations.

"Sexism is the social element, the way in which it is expressed and perceived. The effect is harassment, stares, unwanted shoulder touching, for example. We think it's important to name things. We want to define what harassment is and we want to assure equal working conditions," points out Sara Ternoir.

So far, the main stakeholders she has contacted have greeted the initiative favourably.

"It was very well received, with openness and a willingness to work positively with us. We were not well-advanced in the reflection process at the time, as it was not something we had thoroughly thought out at that point, but we knew it (that kind of consultation) existed. We had to start with Osisko Metals and the Town of Murdochville. We are not there to give our opinion on the mine, but to provide a safe environment for the women," explains Sara Ternoir.

Parts of what is initiated in Murdochville has been covered in other regions, but most likely not as deeply as what the Feminist Concertation Roundtable is intending.

"Every project should have a monitoring committee focused on the living conditions

of women, and it wouldn't be a bad thing," she insists.

She notes that during hearings held by Quebec's Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) in Abitibi, concerns were raised about fly-in, fly-out workforces and their impacts on host communities.

"We are not the ones thinking about it first. On the North Shore, the impact of commuting on the host community was also reflected upon. What is the effect on families when male workers are gone for a long period? However, we are not there yet. We need to see the type of project Osisko Metals will implement. The ideal work week duration for it to be successful has to be determined. We need to prepare the ground, establish a space for reflection beforehand," she concludes.

Partners and funding

The project on women's safety in traditionally male-dominated environments is made possible thanks to the financial assistance and support of the partners of the 2024-2027 Sectoral Agreement on Gender Equality in the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands region.

The partners are the Secretariat for the Status of Women, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Employment, the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Regional Public Health Department, the Magdalen Islands Maritime Community, the Gaspé Peninsula MRCs, the Magdalen Islands Social Development Partners Network, the Gaspé Peninsula MRC Prefects' Table, and the Feminist Consultation Table.

The Feminist Consultation Roundtable leads collective advocacy for women's rights, notably through education, mobilization and representation. It acts in a non-partisan manner to promote and defend women's rights and interests in areas including health, education, and social and economic development.

Former MTQ site in Gaspé to be decontaminated

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI) has issued a call for tenders to hire a contractor to decontaminate the former Ministry of Transportation (MTQ) service centre site in downtown Gaspé.

According to the tender documents, work is expected to begin between September 4 and 21 and take about eight weeks to complete.

The project includes excavating, handling, transporting and disposing of contaminated soil, managing groundwater that enters the excavation, and backfilling and compacting the site.

Once remediation is complete, the process of transferring the property back to the Town of Gaspé can begin.

Future arena site

The former MTQ property has been selected as the location for Gaspé's new arena, a project being developed in partnership with the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation. The partners also plan to redevelop the remainder of the site.

Last fall, engineering firm Englobe completed an environmental assessment to determine the extent of contamination.



The former MTQ grounds in downtown Gaspé, slated to be the site of the new arena.

Photo: N. Sergerie

The study confirmed contamination related to the property's former use as an MTQ maintenance facility, particularly mechanical repair and storage operations.

The most heavily contaminated areas are located at the rear of the property, where the former repair garage, fuel station and traffic signal storage building once stood.

Testing detected hydrocarbons, including oil and fuel residues, volatile organic compounds and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which are commonly associated with petroleum products and combustion.

In addition to the hydrocarbons, a copper concentration exceeding provincial standards was also found in a trench near the former garage.

Groundwater testing detected elevated copper levels in one monitoring well near

the former abrasives warehouse, while the other five monitoring wells met applicable environmental standards.

The SQI notes that the groundwater does not supply the municipal drinking water system.

Last fall, the SQI said the contamination was limited to the areas identified in the environmental study and would be fully remediated before the site is redeveloped.

The agency said the cleanup will ensure the property meets environmental standards and is safe for future use.

The contamination identified during the study was in addition to asbestos and lead found in the former service centre, which delayed demolition until the fall of 2024.

The building, constructed in the 1950s, contained both asbestos and lead.



Photo: Gaspé River Management Society

There are more salmon in the Gaspé rivers this year.

Salmon are more abundant in the Gaspé rivers

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – After a particularly difficult year for salmon runs in 2025, early counts on the Gaspé region's three salmon rivers are showing a significant increase over the same period last year.

According to a July 14 report from the Gaspé Rivers Management Society, divers counted 510 large salmon on the Saint-Jean River, compared with 169 at the same point in 2025. The number of grilse (small salmon) reached 219, up 40 from last year, bringing the total count to 729 fish—more than double the 348 recorded at the same time in 2025.

The York River also showed strong gains, with 487 large salmon and 130 grilse counted for a total of 617 fish. At the same point last year, divers counted 135 large salmon and 70 grilse, for a total of 205.

The Dartmouth River posted similar results, with 463 large salmon and 242 grilse, bringing the total to 705 fish. By comparison, the river had 113 large salmon and 175 grilse at the same time in 2025, for a total of 288.

For comparison, during the entire 2024 season, the Saint-Jean River recorded 643 large salmon and 66 grilse, the York River 700 large salmon and 86 grilse, and the Dartmouth River 296 large salmon and 13 grilse.

“We are seeing an encouraging increase compared to last year’s difficult season. Fishing conditions have also been favourable and remain so,” states the Gaspé River Management Society while commenting on the data.

Mid-season salmon counts will be conducted in early August.

As in previous years, anglers are required to release all salmon they catch to help protect the species.

Osisko Metals still evaluating the deposit

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – As of now, the first assessments of the drilling performed since the beginning of 2022 reveal the possible presence of at least 2 billion tonnes of mineralized rock, with copper leading way ahead of molybdenum and silver, two elements that add to the value of the project. The ore is low grade, at roughly 0.35% in copper content.

Osisko Metals President Robert Wares estimates it will cost about US\$3 billion to reopen the Murdochville open-pit mine. He says a copper price of approximately US\$4.50 per pound is needed to justify the investment, with operations potentially beginning in 2032. Copper is currently trading at about US\$4.60 per pound, placing the market price near the level required to support the project's development.



The Murdochville copper project could reopen as early as 2032.

Photo: Archives

Mount Copper and its surroundings are mainly targeted during the deposit assessment initiative. Mount Copper was exploited during the decades of mining activities spanning between 1953 and 1999. Mount Copper’s mine was closed at the beginning of the 1980s, amidst an important recession.

At that time, Noranda Mines decided to concentrate its activities in the richer underground deposit, which was closed in October 1999. The local copper smelter was kept in operation until April 2002 with imported ore. It was closed because its technology was outdated, as Noranda refused to modernize it.

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Fisherman denounces tragic fate of moose

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – A Chandler lobster fisherman is criticizing the provincial government's response after a moose died near L'Anse-à-Beaufils despite an appeal to the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks to rescue the animal.

David Tremblay says he spotted the moose trapped between a cliff and the sea on June 27 and immediately contacted the SOS Braconnage hotline.

"I saw that the animal was in danger. It was on the edge of the cape. I called the Poaching Hotline, who confirmed they had contacted the officers in Chandler. I spoke with the officers three days later, after the animal's death had been discovered. No information had been provided. No report had been filed with their office," says Mr. Tremblay.

The moose was found drowned three days later, on June 30.

Mr. Tremblay believes the animal remained trapped for three days without food or fresh water while higher-than-normal tides associated with the full moon gradually surrounded it.

The Ministry of Wildlife confirms that a moose near the shore in the L'Anse-à-



Photo: David Tremblay's Facebook page

The moose at the base of the cliff near L'Anse-à-Beaufils before it was found drowned a few days later.

Beaufils area was indeed reported to SOS Braconnage on June 27, and the information was forwarded to the Chandler office in accordance with established procedures and the risk assessment of the situation.

According to the ministry, the information received indicated the animal did not pose a risk to public safety.

As a result, Quebec Wildlife Protection did not intervene.

"Interventions involving wild animals by Quebec Wildlife Protection are carried out only in exceptional situations where there is an imminent threat to public safety, while also taking into account the safety of wildlife protec-

tion officers during their intervention," the ministry explains via email.

"It's sad. An animal should be treated like a human. An animal in danger that's going to suffer for three days, that's going to be in agony, drowning for two or three hours, enduring excruciating pain—it's sad for the animal," laments Mr. Tremblay, who hopes the incident will lead to changes in response protocols.

The animal was reportedly first spotted near the Vieille usine in L'Anse-à-Beaufils.

Frightened by people, the animal is believed to have fled east along the shoreline before becoming trapped at the headland, where it eventually drowned.

2,400 jobs created in June

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine added 2,400 jobs in June, according to the latest figures from Statistics Canada.

The increase lowered the region's unemployment rate from 9.7 per cent in May to 7 per cent in June, a drop of 2.7 percentage points.

All of the new positions were full-time jobs, Statistics Canada reported.

A total of 39,800 people were employed in June, including 32,300 working full-time. The number of part-time jobs remained unchanged at 7,500.

The number of unemployed people fell by 1,000 during the month, from 4,000 in May to 3,000 in June.

Despite the strong monthly gains, employment remained slightly below June 2025 lev-



Photo: Metro Creative Graphics

Statistics Canada reports that Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine gained 2,400 full-time jobs in June, while the number of unemployed residents fell by 1,000.

els. At that time, 40,300 people were employed—500 more than this June.

However, there were also 3,800 unemployed people a year ago, resulting in an unemployment rate of 8.6 per cent.

Statistics Canada noted

that the labour force, which includes people who are employed or actively looking for work, declined from 44,100 in June 2025 to 42,800 this June.

That means approximately 1,300 fewer people were participating in the labour market compared with a year earlier.

Police report

Five-year-old child killed by truck in Saint-Omer

A 5-year-old child died on July 14 after being struck by a truck in the Saint-Omer sector of Carleton-sur-Mer. "It is a very, very sad event. Around 5 p.m., the emergency services were called to the Route de l'Église in Carleton-sur-Mer to intervene at the scene of an accident involving a truck of 53 feet in length and a child. The investigation tends to demonstrate that the accident occurred on a private piece of land, located along Route de l'Église. According to the first observations, the truck was leaving the private property to reach the public street when it hit the child, who was circulating on a small electric toy vehicle. The death of the child was unfortunately confirmed where the accident occurred. The truck driver, a man in his fifties, was met by the major crime investigators, but at this time of the inquiry, there is nothing at all indicating that alcohol or drugs played a role in that accident," indicated Sûreté du Québec communication officer Frédéric Deshaies. A collision reconstructionist went to the scene to support the investigators' work. Their mandate is to conduct a complete analysis of the scene to help establish the causes and circumstances of the event. The investigation remains open.

Yoan Anglehart now has a lawyer, Ariane Cayer

Yoan Anglehart, the 33-year-old Paspebiac man charged with manslaughter guilty in connection with the July 1 death of Austin Gallon in New Carlisle, came back to court on the afternoon of July 15 for the orientation of his case. It was announced then that attorney Ariane Cayer, who had since July 1 assisted the case as a friend of the court, will represent Yoan Anglehart from now on. Previously incarcerated in New Carlisle following his July 1 arrest, he was still in New Carlisle for his second court appearance on July 6, but had been transferred to Quebec City by July 15. "Such transfers happen in the carceral system," points out criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier.

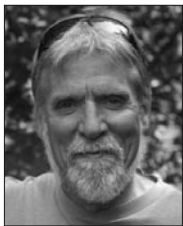
As the SPEC was reaching its July 16 deadline, Quebec Court judge Celestina Almeida scheduled Yoan Anglehart's case for another court appearance on July 22. Attorney Frappier-Routhier explains that such postponement is normal under the current circumstances. "The bail hearing will come at one point. For now, those court appearances are used to update the case. The investigation is still ongoing and some evidence remains to be collected. It remains a relatively young case, investigation-wise," she affirms. During the July 15 court appearance, Mr. Anglehart's left arm was still in a sling. Austin Gallon, a young father, died after being hit with a blunt object that investigators have not publicly identified.

Bruno-Pierre Godbout to return to court on August 24

Bruno-Pierre Godbout appeared in Percé court on July 9 and pleaded not guilty to five new charges laid on June 25. Currently detained in New Carlisle after receiving a 36-month prison sentence on May 1 for sexual assault, assault, forcible confinement and criminal harassment, Mr. Godbout is now alleged to have committed similar offences involving two additional victims. According to CHNC, he is scheduled to return to court on August 24 to face a separate charge of fraud under \$5,000 related to false expense claims submitted to the Town of Chandler in 2021.

Chandler's Kevin Dea charged with possession of prohibited firearm

The Sûreté du Québec's Chandler Major Crimes Unit arrested 38-year-old Kevin Dea of Chandler on July 8 in connection with firearms and drug offences. Police executed searches of his vehicle and residence, seizing a .38-calibre handgun, a collapsible baton, swords, nearly 100 methamphetamine tablets, about 115 Viagra tablets, approximately 250 grams of cocaine and drug trafficking paraphernalia. He appeared in court on July 9 facing charges including possession of a prohibited firearm while prohibited by court order, transporting a firearm contrary to the Firearms Act, occupying a motor vehicle knowing a prohibited firearm was present, possessing a prohibited firearm with readily accessible ammunition without authorization, possessing a firearm with an altered or removed serial number, and breaching court-ordered conditions. Police say additional charges are expected. The Chandler Major Crimes Unit was assisted by officers from Rimouski and patrol officers from the Bonaventure and Rocher-Percé MRCs.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

What’s in a name, after all?
The CAQ example

Weeks away from the official start of the electoral campaign, the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) brass changed the party’s name for the fourth time in its 15 years of existence. It is now called Équipe Christine Fréchette – Coalition avenir Québec.

The predominance of the “team” (équipe) represents an obvious attempt to part ways with former premier François Legault, whose second term was close to a disaster to some people, and an evident catastrophe to another important cross section of the electorate.

On July 11, Karine Bourassa, minister responsible for Sport, Recreation and Outdoor activities, posted on social media that “I will be a candidate for Christine Fréchette’s team in the next election.” She did not mention the Coalition avenir Québec in her message.

On the party’s website, the name of the party founded by François Legault in 2011-2012 has also been relegated to the background to highlight its new leader, who took over in mid-April, three months after the founder’s announcement that he would soon retire.

Even the photos of the candidates for the elections to be held on October 5 have been changed to emphasize Christine Fréchette’s name rather than that of the Coalition avenir Québec.

People learned on July 15 that the party was officially but discretely renamed on July 9, the day the authorization was announced by Quebec’s Chief Electoral Officer.

CAQ director general Brigitte Legault now confirms that the name change was not a random decision. She points out that the choice aims to create a fresh perspective for voters in the lead-up to the upcoming campaign. "It was important for us to clearly signal that the party had changed direction," she explains, adding that "not everyone consumes political news."

Brigitte Legault adds that "it's a new face, it's a woman, it's someone who already has something completely different from Mr. Legault. Hence the

fact that we started with that name, to clearly establish our platform with the electorate."

A staggering
collection of failures

This is true, but a lot of people have witnessed the last term’s shortcomings in health care, in education, in the overall deterioration of Quebec’s infrastructure, namely roads, schools and hospitals, the controversial Third link project between Quebec City and Lévis, the decline of environment protection measures and the huge grants and loans conferred to megaprojects that have failed, like Northvolt.

The list above doesn’t include frontal battles against unions, a context that deprived Quebecers of essential services and only contributed to lengthening delays when one has to see a doctor, for example, or count on the completion of a railway, like in the Gaspé Peninsula. François Legault’s failed promise to the effect that the CAQ government would deliver the refurbishment of the railroad to Gaspé before the 2026 election is a regional example that is duplicated in other parts of Quebec. The railway venture should have been completed years ago. It was technically feasible at a much lower cost.

If we exclude infrastructure, this is a government that neglected important shortages such as daycare places and housing, two fundamental pillars of a society that wants to be attractive and functional. The “catch up” work undertaken recently in these files would have been greatly alleviated if the problems had been acknowledged when the CAQ was first elected in 2018.

The government nevertheless showed humanity during the first term because of the pandemic. However, the CAQ has downplayed the importance of individuals since the 2022 election. There again, the young generation suffered. How can you pretend that education is a priority when the 2025 budget cuts led to 250,000 fewer books being purchased for school libraries? The illiterate proportion of Quebec’s population stands at 52%, in the sense that these people can read a road sign, but not a long text, such as a newspaper article. Is society advancing in such a context? It is not.

The challenger of allying
change and continuity

It is obvious that the name change is an attempt to reduce the party to Christine Fréchette's personality, in order to make electors forget about the last

term’s dismal track record.

Louis Aucoin, a communications strategist, thinks that the CAQ decided to highlight its leader because the party’s brand, after the last two terms in power, is now triggering a viscerally negative reaction in the public opinion. He opines the CAQ is betting that voters' perception of Ms. Fréchette during the campaign will be positive and that her popularity will reflect positively on the party.

He adds that the CAQ has chosen to make the change in the summer because it is the right period to do so, given that people have time to get used to it before the election.

The name change was officialized slightly under 13 weeks before voting day. It is a long period in politics, but the CAQ’s caseload is significant. Will 89 days be enough to make people forget the poor track record?

The attempt is daring, but what kind of choice did the party have, except putting emphasis on the new leader's name and image in the party's communications, given the negative sentiment the CAQ evokes? The website and all the social media posts come from Christine Fréchette and all the videos feature her as a thumbnail.

There is significant risk in staking everything on one person. All the opposition parties will try to find flaws in Christine Fréchette’s record, starting with the name change, something uncommon in Quebec politics.

Considering the number of ministers and Members of the National Assembly who will not run during the next campaign, the CAQ obviously couldn’t count on names like minister Bernard Drainville, a loose cannon who will likely put the party in trouble over the next weeks.

His love for the Third link project is such that he is ready to utter stupidity in order to support it. After his September 2022 “don’t bother me with GEG” (greenhouse effect gases) statement, Mr. Drainville made another tasteless declaration on July 5 when he stated that “I’m a bit fed up with all these experts who are never for the project, who are always against it.”

If we sum it up, he meant “don’t bother me with experts.” So, he doesn’t care if the project sends society backwards by generating more polluting gases or if it goes against all transportation experts’ advice. Representing the Lévis riding at the National Assembly, he is essentially trying to save his political career.

With friends like that, Christine Fréchette doesn’t need enemies.

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

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

ROCGIM-CDC marks 30 years of community advocacy

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER — The Regroupement des organismes communautaires Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-CDC (ROCGIM-CDC) is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region was one of the last in Quebec to establish a coalition of community organizations.

The organization was created to provide a unified voice in discussions with the former Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Regional Health Authority.

“We remember that we were in a period when regionalization was underway. The community organization support program was managed by the regional health authority. We needed a single point of contact to negotiate with the budget manager, and the community groups—who didn’t want to negotiate individually—decided to go as a group, and that’s how we created the ROCGIM,” explains director Geneviève Giguère.

Over the past three decades, the organization’s mandate has expanded considerably.

In addition to its health-related mission, the Community Development Corporation (CDC) component was added.

“Since the region didn’t have a Community Development Corporation, local partners came to us to address poverty—a major concern for all independent community groups. We expanded our funded scope of action because we were doing it with our limited funding, but receiving this mandate from our members—it was in 2019—allowed us to secure additional funding that enables us to have a greater impact in the areas of social development and the fight against poverty,” says Ms. Giguère.

After 30 years, ROCGIM-CDC hopes to continue strengthening the community sector, particularly by supporting the sustainability of non-profit organizations.

“Let’s not beat around the bush: we’re in the thick of a community campaign (Le communautaire à boutte). I hope we’ll stop falling, hit rock bottom, and then propel ourselves higher. That means strengthening every citizen-led initiative within the groups. If



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Geneviève Giguère, director of ROCGIM-CDC.

we ensure that all volunteers have the right conditions to carry out their mission, we’ll provide a social safety net and a sense of belonging to our extraordinary communities. That’s what my dreamer’s eyes see,” says the director.

However, she acknowledges that the current social situation remains challenging.

Homelessness, inflation, food insecurity, mental health concerns and social isolation continue to affect communities throughout the region.

“Things aren’t going well. I hope our 30th anniversary will allow us to come together, feel strong as a group, and get through this difficult time,” says Ms. Giguère.

Ms. Giguère notes that wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated among those who are already well-off, while many middle-class families are struggling.

“It’s a mirage to think that our society is getting richer. In reality, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening,” she says.

The challenges facing the region remain significant.

“We’re in the process of losing an electoral district. This will be a challenge that won’t make us stronger. We face significant challenges regarding access to healthcare; we have the two most depopulated MRCs; and our average wages are lower than the Quebec average. We really need to come together around the Gaspé Peninsula to strengthen ourselves. But all the social actors are talking to one another and trying to strengthen themselves. Yet we face major challenges in better distributing the wealth that is concentrated far from us,” concludes the director of ROCGIM-CDC.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) would like to remind the public of the importance of checking open areas before shellfish harvesting

Several tools are available to help you check before you harvest:

- Use the interactive SHELLI application, available at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CheckBeforeYouHarvest, or use the QR code below with your mobile device. You can even receive notices of area openings and closures directly to your inbox. Go to our SHELLI map, click on "Map Tools", then on "Subscribe to the CSSP".
- Call **1-800-463-4204** and a recorded message will inform you which areas are closed or open to shellfish harvesting in the Gaspé Peninsula.
- Pay attention to signs posted where shellfish harvest is prohibited.

Remember that eating contaminated shellfish from prohibited areas is dangerous and can lead to paralysis or even death.

Visit the DFO Quebec Region website for the regulations on shellfish harvesting.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is closely monitoring shellfish harvesting and closed areas and asks the general public to report any poaching activity to 1-800-463-9057 or online on our website.



Pêches et Océans Canada (MPO) désire rappeler à la population l'importance de vérifier les zones ouvertes avant d'aller cueillir des mollusques

Plusieurs outils s'offrent à vous pour faire la vérification avant de planifier votre activité de cueillette :

- Utilisez l'application interactive IRMELL, disponible au www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/VerifierAvantDeCueillir ou en utilisant le code QR ci-dessous avec votre appareil mobile. Vous pouvez même recevoir les avis d'ouverture et de fermeture de zones directement dans vos courriels. Rendez-vous sur notre carte IRMELL, cliquez sur « Outils Carte », puis sur « Abonnez-vous au PCCSM ».
- Composez le **1-800-463-4204** et un message enregistré vous indiquera quelles zones sont ouvertes et fermées à la cueillette de mollusques en Gaspésie.
- Soyez attentifs à la présence d'affiches interdisant la cueillette dans certaines zones.

Nous vous rappelons que la consommation de mollusques contaminés récoltés dans des secteurs fermés est dangereuse et ses effets peuvent entraîner la paralysie et même la mort.

Visitez le site Web du MPO, région du Québec, pour connaître la réglementation entourant la cueillette de mollusques.

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A new chapter begins for the SCFG

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW RICHMOND – The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) has reached another milestone with the end of its cement transshipment operations in New Richmond after nine years of service.

The last railcar of cement transferred in New Richmond was handed over to Canadian National (CN) on July 8 in Matapédia. Since then, all cement produced at the Port-Daniel-Gascons cement plant and shipped by rail has been transported directly from Port Daniel to Matapédia.

“We started in the summer of 2017, and yes, this marks the end of an era,” says the company’s president, Éric Dubé.

During that period, 10,975 railcars were hauled between New Richmond and Matapédia, following the transshipment of cement between Port Daniel and New Richmond.



Photo: SCFG

The last truck delivered cement to New Richmond on July 6.

The company invested \$300,000 to install a cement silo in New Richmond, an operation that generated approximately \$20 million in gross revenue over nine years.

“That’s 25,437 truck trips that left Port Daniel and headed to New Richmond. The numbers speak for themselves!” says the president.

Nearly one million metric tonnes of cement were moved by truck during that time.

The cement plant has since invested about \$12 million in its own loading facilities.

“We understand that this isn’t the same type of equipment. Their system is designed to handle higher volumes and load our railcars quickly,” says Mr. Dubé.

Depending on production and sales, between 20 and 60 railcars of cement will now leave Port-Daniel-Gascons by rail each week.

“We’re still making between two and four round trips per week. The logistical challenge is that this extends our transit time, and regulations have created the constraint of having to transport cargo 24 hours a day. We understand the

inconveniences and are looking for solutions, but they’re purely financial. We’re working with our partner to minimize these negative impacts,” says Mr. Dubé.

Each time railcars are transferred between the company and CN in Matapédia, every car must be inspected individually.

“That’s why we face delays and have to transport them at night. If CN picks up our railcars in Matapédia at 6 p.m., they need to be there by 2 p.m. so that CN can inspect them. There’s a whole safety and technical aspect to this that causes delays. It’s not there for no reason. It’s to protect both employees and the public. Canada was built on rail, and safety will remain the priority,” says Mr. Dubé.

Although the line has been fully operational since reopening in January, work continues on upgrading railway crossings.

Cont’d on Page 7

RéGÎM surpasses 100,000 passengers

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – The Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, better known as RéGÎM, has surpassed 100,000 annual passengers for the first time in its history, although service reductions may make it difficult to maintain that milestone.

Founded in 2012, RéGÎM carried 100,708 passengers in 2025, an increase of 8% over the previous year.

“We’re very pleased. This is all the more significant given the current context. It feels like validation of what we’re doing. We’ve met our goals—and even exceeded them for 2025. We’re very happy to have reached this milestone,” says director Marie-Josée Pichette, following the release of the organization’s annual report on July 8.

Despite the record year, Ms. Pichette says the outlook is more challenging after the organization lost \$300,000 in provincial operating funding for 2026, forcing service reductions.

“These service reductions will affect ridership. We’ll have to slow down growth and reduce the number of kilometres travelled, which will make it even harder to meet our funding goals for the coming years. It’s like we’re caught in a vicious cycle,” she



Photo: Archives

RéGÎM served more than 100,000 passengers for the first time in its history.

explains.

As a result, she acknowledges it will be difficult to repeat this year’s achievement.

“We hope so, but honestly, it will be difficult given the cuts that have been made. Ending free rides for the summer had a significant impact on our youth ridership and affected the start of the school year. It will be difficult for us to meet our goals this year,” she says.

With only half the year completed, the organization says it is still too early to predict total ridership for 2026.

“For now, we’re managing to maintain the average,” she says.

The Côte-de-Gaspé sector recorded the strongest growth, with ridership increasing by 49%, thanks

largely to the Forillon shuttle service and school transportation.

Ridership also increased by 37% in the Rocher-Percé sector, driven primarily by students travelling between Rocher-Percé and the Gaspé Coast.

Meanwhile, passenger numbers declined by 27% in the Grande-Vallée area and by 25% in the Magdalen Islands.

Other services

Paratransit service has remained stable, but demand exceeds supply.

“Unfortunately, expenses are rising significantly. Vehicles are becoming increasingly expensive, and vehicle requirements are growing as wheelchairs get larger. There

are also more specific requests from customers. We could do much more, but we can’t meet those needs,” says Ms. Pichette.

Car-sharing services recorded 79,241 trips, with most usage concentrated in Carleton-sur-Mer and Chandler.

Bike-sharing continues to face technical challenges after the bankruptcy of the system’s supplier.

“We’re barely keeping a system afloat with a company that has gone bankrupt. As time goes on, we’re experiencing more wear-and-tear issues after three summers. Our bikes rely on 3G technology, while the network is now on 5G. Technical issues mean we have fewer bikes available. We hope to find a new provider to take over,” she explains.

Vehicle registration tax

With provincial funding

declining and fuel tax revenues shrinking because of vehicle electrification, RéGÎM expects a new vehicle registration tax to help stabilize its finances beginning in January 2027.

The MRCs of Avignon, Bonaventure and Côte-de-Gaspé have already approved the measure.

“Currently, it’s up to the SAAQ to draft an agreement with the MRCs. The agency will handle the administrative aspects. This will help alleviate the organization’s financial challenges. It would allow the agency to survive,” says Ms. Pichette.

If implemented, the proposal would add a \$30 annual surcharge to vehicle registrations, generating an estimated \$2 million in revenue.

The Rocher-Percé MRC will not participate in the program, choosing instead to contribute \$200,000 directly to RéGÎM because it operates its own paratransit service.





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Snack bar contract at rest stop in Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie sparks controversy

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ — The Town of Percé's decision to award the contract to operate the snack bar at the Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie rest stop to the owner of Camping Tête d'Indien has sparked controversy among supporters of the previous operator.

About a dozen people attended the July 8 council meeting to support Tia Caoile, who operated the snack bar from 2021 until last year. After another prospective operator submitted a letter of intent, the Town launched a competitive call for proposals.

Council voted 5-1 in late June to award the three-year contract to another applicant. In response, a petition with more than 170 signatures was circulated, mainly among supporters of the businesswoman in the Percé and Gaspé areas.

The snack bar remained closed in 2025 while the Town renovated the building to bring it up to code.

"We were told to keep the keys because once it was repaired, they knew we'd want to come back," says Ms. Caoile. "Today, we're surprised and disappointed that we weren't selected. We have a lot of questions."

She also questions the successful bidder's proposed menu. "Supposedly, the vendors selected for three years will be selling hot dogs, even though the petition mentioned that bringing back Tia Asian Cuisine's kitchen would allow us to offer fresh products. They'd rather choose someone who sells hot dogs," laments Ms. Caoile.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Supporters of former snack bar operator Tia Caoile attended the July 8 Percé Town Council meeting to voice their concerns over the decision to award the Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie rest stop concession to another bidder.

Ms. Caoile also disputes how the proposals were evaluated.

"There are the ingredients used, the experience, and the background of the restaurant operators. We have 40 years of experience. I lost 10% because of the local business, even though we've been looking for a location for four years. The passing score was 70%, and if we look at the criteria, in our opinion, we scored 80%. From what we've heard from the other candidates, they don't have experience in the restaurant business," explains the restaurant owner, who was unable to obtain the scoring rubric used to select the operator.

Given this, she criticizes the council's lack of transparency.

"They say they can't disclose the rubrics. We asked them for transparency. They

wouldn't agree to that either," continues Ms. Caoile.

After receiving the Town's explanations, Ms. Caoile says she is considering her options.

"We're now looking at what we can do. I understand that we weren't selected, but when we look at the case as a whole, we feel there's been a denial of justice, and that's what we're focusing on," says Ms. Caoile.

Mayor defends council's decision

Mayor Daniel Leboeuf says council followed the appropriate process.

"After we repaired it, we received a letter of intent from another person to operate it, in addition to Ms. Tia Caoile, who had been running it for several years. It's a municipal concession. It's like food trucks. We put it out for

bids, and the council made its decision," says the mayor, who says he feels sorry for her.

Regarding the evaluation criteria, particularly menu originality, Mr. Leboeuf says there is no universal standard.

"It was a personal judgment. There were six council members, and they leaned toward the other candidate. I can't justify their reasoning," says the mayor.

Other council business

Following last summer's dry conditions, which caused water shortages for some residents, the Town is preparing a brochure offering water conservation tips to help residents cope with future droughts.

Council is also considering purchasing a potable water tanker truck.

"We haven't made any

progress on this issue, as our Public Works Director hasn't yet been assigned to handle it—to put it out to bid and determine what type of truck we need," notes Mr. Leboeuf.

"We can't just use a fire truck. It has to meet specific hygiene standards, and that's beyond the mayor's authority. It's another consequence of a staff shortage," the mayor explains.

The term of interim director general Claude Panneton has been extended after the Town was unable to recruit a permanent replacement. The mayor hopes the position will be filled by the end of the summer.

Meanwhile, major upgrades to the Cap-d'Espoir rest stop have been put on hold while the Quebec Department of Transportation plans shoreline protection work in the area.

"We won't undertake any major renovations while the Department of Transportation is planning major work in this area as part of coastal protection efforts. We won't spend a million dollars when the Department of Transportation is going to reinforce the entire stretch with rock. We'll wait for their plans," explains Mr. Leboeuf.

Routine maintenance will continue in the meantime.

The roofs of the Oasis and Val-d'Espoir community centres, both nearing the end of their service life, will be replaced this fall.

"We have to put it out to bid. For a heritage building (the Oasis), we have to request permission from the Ministry of Culture, which took three to four months," says the mayor.

SCFG:

Cont'd from Page 6

"The major challenges are no longer with the track itself; they're really with the railroad crossings. We still have work to do on them until the end of the year. There are still mandatory speed reductions at certain crossings, but that allows us to remain operational. We're loading our cars to capacity and running our trains within a reasonable time-frame," explains the president.

Once the crossing work is

complete, trains will be able to operate at full track speed.

"We could write a book about all the obstacles and challenges we've faced along the way, but today, thanks to the hard work and dedication of SCFG's (La Société de chemin de fer de la Gaspésie) staff, the results speak for themselves: the train is now running all the way to Port Daniel," the company notes on social media.

Focus remains on reaching Gaspé

Following the reopening

of Section 2 between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons in January, extending rail service to Gaspé remains the company's long-term objective.

Mr. Dubé says the success of the cement operation demonstrates how rail could support future mining projects, including the possible revival of Mines Gaspé.

"We were very pleased with the announcements regarding the resumption of work on the two construction sites along Section 3. There will be an election campaign. This will be part of our de-

mands. A new government will be elected, and we'll make another push so that in the next budget, in March 2027, the necessary funds reappear in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan," comments Mr. Dubé.

He also points to the growing resource estimate at Osisko's mining project, now estimated at two billion metric tonnes of mineralized rocks.

"This is our mission. With 11,000 railcars of cement, that's 25,000 truck trips to Port Daniel and New Richmond. Without rail, imagine

the volume if it all had to go by road? That gives us strong grounds to justify upgrading the rail line," he argues.

Preparations for the next phase of the project have been slowed by the Quebec government engineers' strike.

"They're following political directives. My role is to ensure that the political side is there and then to work on fostering collaboration between the company and the Ministry of Transportation," Mr. Dubé concludes.

Planning continues for major Route 132 upgrades in Saint-Siméon and Carleton-sur-Mer

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINT-SIMÉON – Two major projects involving the reconstruction of Route 132 and the replacement of municipal infrastructure in Carleton-sur-Mer and Saint-Siméon continue to advance through the planning process, with construction still expected in the early 2030s.

In Saint-Siméon, municipal officials met with Quebec's Ministry of Transport (MTQ) earlier this year to discuss plans for the section of Route 132 between the viaduct and the Saint-Siméon River bridge.

At the time, Mayor Denis Gauthier described the discussions as positive, saying there was a genuine opportunity for the ministry and the municipality to work together on the project.

The municipality must replace aging water and sewer



Photo: Allen Doug Shaw

The Quebec Ministry of Transport and the Municipality of Saint-Siméon continue developing plans for a major reconstruction of Route 132, with work not expected to begin until the early 2030s.

infrastructure while the MTQ would reconstruct the highway. The combined project has been estimated at between \$25 million and \$30 million. Under the proposed cost-sharing arrangement, the municipality would pay for its portion of the water and sewer work, with approximately 85

per cent of those costs expected to be covered through provincial funding.

In Carleton-sur-Mer, a similar project has been under discussion for nearly 25 years. The municipality passed the first provincial planning checkpoint in 2024 and continues to work with engineer-

ing firms on the project's preliminary design.

Mayor Mathieu Lapointe previously indicated that field surveys had been completed and that engineering work was underway to prepare the first concept plans for public consultation.

The initial planning phase,

valued at just over \$1 million, is being funded equally by the town and the Quebec government.

The project would extend from Rue du Quai to Quai des Arts. As in Saint-Siméon, the municipality will replace its water and sewer infrastructure while taking the opportunity to improve sidewalks and other streetscape features. The MTQ will rebuild the roadway and storm sewer system and review several intersections with local streets, although the overall road alignment is expected to remain unchanged.

Current plans include sidewalks on both sides of the highway, cycling facilities and safer access to businesses.

Construction is not expected to begin until the early 2030s. Estimated project costs have increased from about \$10 million a decade ago to roughly \$20 million.

Gaspé continues street paving program, renews call for more retail development

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The Town of Gaspé will continue investing in its road network this year, while once again facing questions from residents about attracting more retail stores and restaurants.

Council has approved a \$1.2 million street paving program for 2026 to improve sections of roads under municipal jurisdiction.

As in previous years, only one bid was submitted in response to the tender call. Eurovia, the only asphalt contractor operating in the Gaspé Peninsula, was awarded the contract.

“We’re still in the same boat. We’re doing a similar amount of work. Maybe a little less because the price of asphalt is rising again. This was predictable because oil prices are rising, and asphalt contains a lot of oil. It’s going up



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Gaspé continues paving street sections within its jurisdiction.

by 10% this year. Honestly, I expected worse,” says mayor Daniel Côté.

Municipal staff determine which streets will be repaved based on the condition of the pavement and traffic volumes, a process the mayor says removes political considerations from the decision.

The Town invested \$1.1 million in paving projects last year. Repaving every municipal street would cost an estimated \$100 million.

Calls for new retail chains

The issue of Gaspé's retail

offerings has once again gained attention on social media, where residents are calling for more national retailers and additional restaurant options, particularly breakfast establishments.

Despite the town's economic growth over the past decade, Mayor Côté says attracting major retailers remains a challenge.

“When we knock on their doors, people ask us, ‘What’s your postal code?’ Oh, G4X? People from your area already shop with us. Why would I go through the trouble of owning a building, paying employees, and paying taxes when people already shop with us—whether they go to Rimouski or Quebec City or visit our website?” the mayor explains.

Despite those challenges, he says the Town may renew its efforts to recruit new retailers.

As for restaurants, the mayor believes Gaspé has a reasonable selection, but says the economics of the industry make expansion difficult.

“Talk to the restaurant owners. Nobody gets rich selling club sandwiches,” he says.

In 2015, more than 5,000 people supported a social media campaign calling for a branch of the family clothing chain L'Aubainerie. At the time, the company cited the small local market as the reason for not opening a store in what is often referred to as the capital of the Gaspé Peninsula.

Residents have also periodically called for a Walmart, a request that continues to resurface online.

Canadian Tire remains the area's only large-format retailer, while mid-sized chains such as Hart and Rossy operate from local shopping centres.

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SCAN ME

College certificate program to support women who are victims of violence

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles will launch Quebec's first specialized Attestation of College Studies (AEC) in Support for Women Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence and Post-Separation Violence in the winter 2027 semester.

Offered entirely online beginning in January, the province-wide program was developed in response to requests from organizations that support women experiencing violence.

"This is significant. If there's one thing that truly gives me pleasure, it's ending my term by announcing a new program that combines my portfolios for Higher Education and the Status of Women. These are two issues I feel very strongly about. To bring them together in this way – I am delighted to make this announcement," says Higher Education and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Martine Biron during the announcement.

The AEC consists of eight



Photo: Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

Minister Martine Biron, Nancy Gough, Catherine Blouin, Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, and Éric Couillard, Director of Continuing Education at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles.

courses delivered over two semesters. "This college certificate is designed to provide additional tools to those working on the ground: social workers, criminologists, and those who have studied Special Educational Needs or Police Techniques. They will have this added value to complement their training," says Ms. Biron.

"I want to emphasise the term 'post-separation'. We

often see in our statistics that there is a rise in violence linked to separation. I think it's a good thing for our practitioners to be better trained. We stand to save more lives," the minister adds.

The idea for the program originated with L'Émergence Women's Shelter and Support Centre in Maria, which approached the Cégep to develop the training. "The initiative originated in the Gaspé Penin-

sula. We, at the Ministry of Higher Education, have invested \$20,000," continues the minister.

An advisory committee made up of eight specialists from women's shelters and support organizations helped design the curriculum. The Cégep also surveyed 104 organizations across Quebec working with women affected by violence to ensure the program reflected frontline needs.

"I hope this Gaspé-based initiative will inspire others to follow suit!" adds minister Biron.

"These efforts, carried out in close collaboration with those on the ground, have enabled us to identify the right skills to develop. People from all corners of Quebec have advised and supported us to ensure the training is truly tailored to needs, and I sincerely thank them for their invaluable contribution," explains Éric Couillard, Director of Continuing Education at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles.

"L'Émergence Women's Shelter and Support Centre welcomes this news with great

enthusiasm and expresses its deep gratitude to the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, which believed in the idea of developing this specialised program. This AEC will meet a growing need to train the next generation of support workers within the network of support and shelter centres for women who have experienced domestic violence and their children, and will benefit all other affected groups," adds Nancy Gough, former Executive Director of the L'Émergence Support and Shelter Centre.

The program also responds to recommendations contained in the fourth report of Quebec's Committee on the Review of Deaths Related to Domestic Violence, released on June 22, which called for additional training for health and social services professionals to improve the detection of domestic violence.

Minister Biron also praises the institution for its leadership.

"In my view, the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles is one of the jewels in our crown amongst Québec's 48 public cégeps. It is a very well-run cégep," says Martine Biron.

Quebec funds planning for next phase of Grande-Rivière fisheries school project

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – The Quebec government is providing \$406,100 to the Grande-Rivière Economic Development Corporation to prepare the plans and specifications needed for the preliminary stages of constructing a next-generation multi-purpose boat and related infrastructure.

The planning study will cost a total of \$677,000.

Grande-Rivière mayor Gino Cyr, who worked since 2018 to establish a Blue Innovation Zone for the fisheries sector in partnership with Rimouski, a proposal that was rejected by the Quebec government – is now pleased to see that his idea for a multi-purpose hybrid boat, a much smaller project, has been taken on board by the same government.

"Our business plan covers both phases. To carry out Phase 1, we needed all the required documentation, including the plans and specifications. We want to ensure we have an accurate cost for the vessel of the



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Representatives from all organizations involved in the project gathered for a group photo following Quebec's funding announcement.

future, along with the upgrades to the boat winter storage area. Our estimates are around \$10 million. For the plans and specifications, since the main users will be Merinov and the École des pêches et de l'aquaculture du Québec, we need to make sure, together with the school, that the multi-species hybrid boat, which uses less energy, is suited to training students and meeting the needs of today's and tomorrow's fishing industry," explains the mayor.

"The amount may not seem

significant, but what is important is that, for the Fisheries Innovation Centre and infrastructure project, we have a clear message from the Quebec government that it is supporting the updating of the plans to ensure we have as much information as possible. In Grande-Rivière, we already have an ecosystem in place. We received \$36 million for the innovation hub. We are now putting the plans into action so we can go to tender as quickly as possible. Preparing the plans is

expected to take between 12 and 18 months, and we are looking at going to tender in 2028 for the boat of the future," says Mr. Cyr.

The boat will be used for research and for training apprentice fishermen and owner-operators, allowing them to discover and adopt innovative and sustainable fishing practices.

"In terms of the research and innovation ecosystem, as well as harvesting and processing, the idea that students at the École des pêches et de l'aquaculture du Québec in Grande-Rivière will have access to innovation and be trained in a modern environment makes us proud to be part of this project," says Stéphane Sainte-Croix, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé and Parliamentary Assistant for Fisheries.

Several companies in the region specialize in designing this type of boat.

"I would very much like to see the expertise we have here recognized and for the rules of the game to be clear to every-

one. On a level playing field, we can imagine that a local company could qualify to win this contract, considering what has already been accomplished in research and innovation," continues Mr. Sainte-Croix.

The MNA says he continues to support the creation of a fisheries innovation centre.

"I have no doubt about what comes next," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

He is also confident about the future construction of the winter storage area and gantry crane, both of which will be needed.

"I think we are building a strong case for what comes next and ensuring consistency in our actions. At a time when choices have to be made, the fisheries industry is in a very good position. We are performing well. The economic impact is tremendous, and that applies to infrastructure as well. I am not worried about what comes next because we are dealing with the reality of the industry, and that will give us strong arguments moving forward," says the MNA.

Shigawake Fair blends new ideas with tradition for 2026

GILLES GAGNÉ

SHIGAWAKE – Preparations are in full swing for the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival, with coordinator Dave Felker and a team of volunteers and board members putting the final plans in place for the August 13 to 16 event.

Three weeks ago, the board was still waiting for confirmation of some grants making it difficult to plan the event without knowing the extent of its available funding.

“At the same time, the site can accommodate between 4,000 and 5,000 people. We don’t want to go too far with our promotion,” says Dave Felker.

Whether for the agricultural fair or the music festival, organizers have put together a balanced program that blends returning favourites with new talent.

“On the music side, Li’l Andy is back after four years of absence, and Catie Moore is back after two years. Baie Comeau’s Rockin Blues Trio, with New Richmond’s Danny Robertson as singer and drummer, is also back for the second year in a row,” points out Dave Felker.

Local favourites like Nash Stanley, Shaina Hayes and Jonny Arseneault, as well as the Barr Brothers, will also be back. Gesgapegiag musician John Gedeon, who has



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Nathan Hayes, Kevin Jones and Nash Stanley are among the performers taking the stage during the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival between August 13 and 16.

been gaining recognition on the regional music scene, is also part of the lineup.

Innovations will also take some room at the event. Dave Felker gives the example of uRockaoke, the band accompanying people in the Trough for the Saturday night party. “This year, the band will also play on Sunday afternoon for families. It will be great for the kids to sing with a real band,” he says.

Organizers also hope to introduce workshops on Thursday, August 13.

“We have invited two young bands from Paspébiac and Chandler for the open mic session. Why wouldn’t

we make them meet professional musicians, like Shaina (Hayes) and Andrew Barr? We have JUNO awards winners coming. Regarding the fair side, Shaina is specialized in water management. It would be great to take advantage of that with some gardeners. We are also thinking of having MAPAQ people around. They could explain what it takes to have permits to transform food. It would be an educational side. In the last 10 to 15 years, some musicians have learned to perform on a stage at the music festival. The knowledge is there. It is another element we are throwing in the fair,” concludes Dave Felker.

Wakeham Centre listed for sale

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The former Wakeham Adult Education Centre has been put up for sale after being declared surplus by the Eastern Shores School Board.

The Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI) has been mandated to oversee the sale and has issued a public call for bids through the Quebec government's electronic tendering system.

No asking price has been specified in the call for proposals.

The building, which was constructed in 1935, and the property are assessed by the Town of Gaspé at \$386,500.

The Wakeham Centre previously housed the school board's vocational and adult education programs but has been vacant since those services moved to the Wave Centre at Carrefour Gaspé in 2025.

According to the school board, the deteriorating condition of the building made it impractical to renovate for new purposes, prompting the decision to relocate its programs and declare the property surplus.

Three new tourist information kiosks added in the Gaspé Peninsula

Nelson Sergerie

MONT-JOLI – Three new interactive tourist information kiosks have been installed in Chandler, Carleton-sur-Mer and Grande-Vallée, expanding Tourisme Gaspésie's network of visitor information services.

The new kiosks join six others installed across the region in 2025.

The Chandler kiosk is located at the corner of Rue Commerciale Ouest and Avenue Jacques-Cartier, the Carleton-sur-Mer unit is at Parc des Horizons, and the Grande-Vallée kiosk is located at the village's parking and rest area.

The kiosks are intended to complement existing tourist information offices throughout the region by providing visitors with access to information at any time.

Each kiosk cost approximately \$50,000, with 90% of the funding provided by Quebec's Ministry of Tourism and the remaining 10% contributed by local partners.

According to Tourisme Gaspésie, the six kiosks installed last year, at a total cost of \$300,000, were used by about 12,000 visitors.

Those kiosks are located in Matane, Cap-Chat, Gaspé, Percé, New Richmond and at Tourisme Gaspésie's headquarters in Mont-Joli.

Family Ties praised by longtime partner Centraide

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Family Ties received high praise from one of its longest-standing supporters during its 30th annual general meeting on June 10.

Stéphan Boucher, director general of Centraide Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, travelled from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts to attend the meeting and show his organization's continued support for Family Ties, which Centraide has funded for two decades.

Before the meeting began, Mr. Boucher quietly signed the guest book and viewed a display of newspaper clippings highlighting the organization's work over the past 30 years. Near the end of the



Photo: G. Gagné

Stéphan Boucher, director general of Centraide Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, wanted to underline the appreciation his organization has for Family Ties during the June 10 annual general meeting.

meeting, Family Ties coordinator Heather MacWhirter invited him to address those in attendance.

“I can’t say how proud we

are to help Family Ties. We have been doing so for 20 years now. I want to congratulate all the volunteers. It is always interesting and

stimulating to work with intelligent people. I also want to say that in the future, we will always be there,” pointed out Mr. Boucher.

Speaking with SPEC, Stéphan Boucher added that he is impressed by the wide range of intervention fields Family Ties can reach, with a modest budget. “It is a model to duplicate. I am not surprised that Family Ties has won several province-wide awards in 30 years. What the staff and volunteers are doing for all generations, from early childhood to seniors, in a variety of fields, is amazing,” he said.

Bookkeeper Johnny LeGrand remarked on June 10 that Family Ties “had another great year, thanks to increasing revenues. We grow. We declared a surplus of a little

over \$13,000 (precisely \$13,173) last year, which is better than the year before (\$2,895). Our current bank loan’s balance is \$265,472, for a building that has a value of \$1,919,015.”

Family Ties is paying \$2,817 monthly in capital and interest on its mortgage, for an annual total of \$33,804.

Family Ties reported total revenues of \$869,119 and expenses of \$855,946 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026. Most of its funding comes from federal, provincial and municipal government grants.

“For the current year 2026-2027, we are working with a provision budget of \$640,798, but it will definitely be more. We have projects coming up,” concluded Johnny LeGrand.

Provincial election race begins to take shape in Bonaventure and Gaspé ridings

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – While outgoing Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and minister Catherine Blouin has confirmed she intends to seek re-election in the October 5 provincial election in Bonaventure, the Parti Québécois (PQ), the Liberal Party, and Québec solidaire are searching for the right candidate to challenge her.

The PQ nomination could be highly contested, as Pier-Luc Bujold, president of the Union of Nurses, Nursing Assistants, and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec, expressed interest in the nomination as early as last September.

Since then, he has been active in the community and on social media, raising his profile ahead of the nomination process.

Another potential contender has also emerged: Paspebiac Town Councillor Nancy Anglehart.

The Parti Québécois is re-



Photo: Facebook

On July 3, Pier-Luc Bujold stopped by the Jardin du Village, a vegetable farm in the heart of Caplan.

maining tight-lipped about the nomination race.

“We cannot disclose, deny, or confirm the identity or number of people who have or have not submitted their nomination forms for a riding. At this time, the nomination period in Bonaventure is not open. Once it has passed, information about the nomina-

tion meeting will be sent to the media,” writes Katrina Archambault.

The Quebec Liberal Party is being equally cautious. “We will make announcements in the region in due course,” says Louis-Charles Baril, press secretary to Leader Charles Milliard for the Bonaventure and Gaspé ridings.

At Québec solidaire, regional coordinator Yv Bonnier Viger is also searching for a candidate in Bonaventure after the person initially selected to represent the former Gaspé-Bonaventure riding decided instead to run in Gaspé following the adoption of legislation maintaining two separate ridings on the Gaspé Peninsula.

Situation clearer in Gaspé

In the Gaspé riding, a rematch appears to be shaping up between incumbent Coalition Avenir Québec Member of the National Assembly Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who defeated Parti Québécois candidate Méganne Perry Mélançon in 2022, and his former opponent.

Ms. Perry Mélançon, who represented the riding from 2018 to 2022, has been confirmed as the Parti Québécois candidate for the October 5 election.

Québec solidaire will be represented by Emmanuelle

Babin.

Polls favour the Parti Québécois

According to Québec125, a website that projects election results based on public opinion polls, the Parti Québécois holds a significant lead.

As of June 28, the Parti Québécois was projected to receive 51% of the vote in Bonaventure, compared with 19% for Coalition Avenir Québec and Catherine Blouin, and 18% for the Quebec Liberal Party.

Québec solidaire trailed at 6%, tied with the Conservative Party of Quebec.

The picture is similar in Gaspé, where Méganne Perry Mélançon is projected to receive 51% of the vote, compared with 21% for Coalition Avenir Québec candidate Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

The Quebec Liberal Party is projected at 16%, the Conservative Party of Quebec at 6%, and Québec solidaire at 5%.



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Young filmmaker documents Gaspé railway

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – Over the years, the Gaspé Peninsula railroad has fascinated railfans from various parts of the world. Some of them have written articles for specialized magazines, sometimes for publications of general interest. Some have advocated for the salvage of the Matapedia-Gaspé line in the 1990s, like John Henry, a freelance journalist based in New York.

No matter the season, people can see them along specific spots along the line, spots that are mentioned on railfans' websites or social media pages, shared by previous visitors. There was a peak railfanning period in December 2016 and over the first months of 2017, when the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) started hauling windmill blades between New Richmond and Matapédia, where Canadian National (CN) would take them and transport them to Texas or neighbouring states.

Dozens of Americans converged to the railway stretch between New Richmond and Matapédia during that period. The expression “over the years” to categorize the interest of railfans for the Matapédia-Gaspé line is not exaggerated. In the 1940s, Julian Bernard, a well-known photographer from Ontario who died only a few years ago, came to Gaspé and took some photos that can still be found on certain websites. The line likely attracted railfans well before the 1940s.

Then there is Harrison Smith, 20, who has been producing train videos for a few



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Harrison Smith, right, spent two days between Matapédia and Port Daniel chasing freight train 565 along the coast. He was assisted by a Montreal-based friend and railfan, Victor Planché, who also collects railway photos.

years already. He was in the Baie-des-Chaleurs area on March 17, 18 and 19 with a railfan friend, Victor Planché, of Montreal. They finished their journey at CN's Campbellton facility, where most of the SCFG rolling material is maintained.

The SPEC interviewed Harrison Smith just before he left for Campbellton, on his way back home to the northern part of New York State.

When asked what brought him to the Gaspé Peninsula, Harrison Smith said his goal is to tell the stories of unique railways that have received little attention outside the regions they serve.

“That’s a great question! Pretty much everyone has asked me: You are from where, from New York? So, I run a YouTube channel called North Country Trains. I write for a couple different railway magazines, and I like to find railway companies that have some character. You know, some short lines, some scenic operations, and most impor-

tantly, railways that haven’t been really covered in film, or in print, and bring their story to the world, to the United States to even just, like, Anglophone in Canada, that doesn’t necessarily know what goes on here. So, I did a project with the Sartigan Railway, last year, in Chaudière-Appalaches, and this (the Gaspé railway) was one I have had on my list for a while now. And they have Alcos (locomotives), built in Montreal, and it is very scenic. They are a small company, so I made a national target for my next project,” he says.

Mr. Smith noted that this was his second visit to the region.

“I visited in 2024. I chased the train but I didn’t meet with any people. I just chased the train and like, there is a story here. So, I set time aside to come back, talk to some people, get the full story and make a project,” he explains.

The SPEC pointed out

that while the Gaspé railway is not widely known, it has long attracted dedicated railfans, particularly during the wind turbine blade trains that operated several years ago. Mr. Smith said his approach differs from simply photographing the trains.

“I know it has been covered but I haven’t seen anybody actually come here and talk to the management. We are on our way to Campbellton next to talk to the mechanical team, because the shots are beautiful and god knows there are better photographers than I am. I would say I am an average photographer. But I want to tell the story and I want to show the people who run the railway, and I like getting the full picture,” he says.

Asked how he first became interested in the railway despite being only 20 years old, Mr. Smith said his fascination with eastern railways began as a child.

“I am trying to remember how I... like the Eastern lines, like New Brunswick, the Maritimes, Maine, and Eastern Quebec, have always been like (interesting)... When I was a kid, I was just looking at maps. That’s what I did. Over our dining room table, we had a big map of North America and I would just stare at it. The West has been done. People have documented all the stuff out there,” he recalls.

He added that photographs he found online and recommendations from fellow railfans convinced him to make the trip.

“It always just called me and I did see photos online, on Flickr, on railpictures.net. And I am like: wow, it is re-

ally cool, and a friend of mine, Lucas Legion from Maine, he started coming up here before I did and he said: ‘you have got to check this out,’ and I did. But I like to go and get the deeper story, with people,” Mr. Smith says.

As for when viewers can expect to see the finished documentary, he hopes it won't be too long.

“I don’t want to say soon, because something will happen then but, as soon as I can. Hopefully...hopefully by spring,” he says.

The SPEC also asked why he seems particularly drawn to northern railways. Smith said both his upbringing and personality naturally pull him toward rural regions.

“Where I live in the New York State is called the North Country. My channel is called North Country Trains because that’s the place I come from. It’s fine that you mention that because I mostly go north. And, I have grown up in a pretty rural place and I work in the Adirondacks and so, I don’t want to go to cities, and go to... I mean, there is pretty cool stuff in urban areas and industrial areas but, I’d rather live up here, where it is like, slower. There is less going on. The scenery,” he says.

When asked if he simply enjoys driving through the North.

“Ya. It is just, I guess, part of who I am, like the way I am wired and I want to go north, I just don’t want to go south! I don’t know. It is just how I am, I guess.”

(Anthony Bernard Prince informed The Gaspé Spec of Harrison Smith's visit to the Gaspé Peninsula.)

Five Gaspé agri-food companies receive funding

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Five local companies operating in the agriculture and agri-food sectors have received more than \$1.5 million from the federal government to modernize food processing, strengthen national supply chains and support business growth.

The largest contribution went to Pêcheries Gaspésiennes de Rivière-au-Renard, which received \$619,944 in repayable funding through the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program.

Escuminac Maple Syrup Farm, also known as Érablière

Escuminac, received \$440,744 in repayable funding under the same program, while the Ristigouche Agroforestry Co-operative Group in Ascension-de-Patapédia received \$204,000.

The Mi'gmaq Economic and Community Development Organization of Gespeg received a non-repayable contribution of \$19,974 through the same program.

La Poissonnerie de Cloridorme received a non-repayable contribution of \$245,000 through the Regional Tariff Response Initiative, another federally funded program.

Across Quebec, Canada Economic Development for Quebec is providing financial support totaling \$33,996,687 to 52 businesses and organizations in the province's agri-food sector.

According to the federal government, the bio-food sector plays a central role in Canada's economy and food sovereignty at a time of trade pressures, supply chain disruptions and increased global competition.

The investments are intended to help build a more resilient, self-sufficient and affordable food system by encouraging innovation, expand-

ing local food processing and supporting regional businesses.

The federal government says the funding will help secure approximately 3,400 jobs across Quebec.

“Quebec’s bio-food sector is a driving force behind our economy and a key driver of innovation across all regions of Quebec. By supporting businesses and organizations that invest in new processes, cutting-edge technologies, and increased production capacity, our government is strengthening their competitiveness, stimulating the creation of quality jobs, and fostering sustainable economic growth. These in-

vestments will enable our entrepreneurs to innovate further and seize new business opportunities, both here and in international markets,” says Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and head of DEC, in a press release.

The federal government unveiled its National Food Security Strategy on June 11.

The strategy aims to strengthen Canada's ability to produce and process more food domestically, reinforce supply chains and improve the food system's resilience to global disruptions while increasing Canadians' access to affordable food.

Future of Les Percéides still uncertain

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – The future of the Les Percéides International Film Festival remains uncertain following an internal crisis that surfaced in January and public criticism of the organization's management.

Interim president and executive director Benoit S. Pilon estimates there is only a "60%" chance the festival will proceed as planned.

"We're facing a bit of a headwind right now, but we're staying calm. We're taking things one step at a time. Clearly, there's some discontent. There are people who have never been part of the team. There are people who resigned following the announcement of an internal investigation. I suppose this is upsetting and making people nervous," says the president, who notes that he is taking this step to ensure the event's long-term viability.

"Do you really want to help us? Then respect the board's authority," he says.

Financial partners have been asking questions, but discussions are continuing.

The organization has received public support from the Town of Percé, the Rocher-Percé MRC and the Gaspé Peninsula Film Office. During the July 8 program launch, Percé mayor Daniel Leboeuf also pledged to donate \$6,000 from his salary to the organization.

"It warms our hearts. Back in January, we were wondering what to do. No team, no staff, and a lot of projects. We rolled up our sleeves, tackled them one by one, and got everything done," the president continues.

"To feel that private companies are reaching out to us to renew partnerships. That tells us there may have been a minor issue with harmony in inter-organizational relations. And we have a team that's come back, as well as some new members," says Mr. Pilon.

Investigation continues

Regarding the administrative investigation, Mr. Pilon does not want to use the terms "fraud or financial misconduct."

"It's a pretty significant issue. We've certainly uncovered some irregularities. We'll be able to put a label on this fairly soon. We'll be able to pinpoint specific issues. But at this stage, I don't want to use any specific terms. I can't



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

jeopardize the investigation," he says, noting that it is an internal investigation for now.

He described the organization's financial situation as difficult.

"We'll be announcing the figures soon. We're looking at a fairly significant deficit for 2025. We'll probably have to borrow money to get through it. We're in a vulnerable position. We're being transparent. We have an accountant working on it. We'll be transparent."

Given the situation, nothing is certain for the festival, even though he remains confident.

"We haven't finalized the funding. There were significant delays in reporting. The situation is precarious. We're moving forward as if it were confirmed. The program is 90% complete."

Pressed to specify whether or not the festival will take place in August, the president remains cautious.

"As you ask me this question, I can't give a clear answer. I can certainly say yes with a 60% probability. We have confidence in our relationships with our partner organizations. We still have more meetings to hold with them. We've been put in a vulnerable position. I'm going to fight for this. We're going to try to reassure them," says Mr. Pilon.

The organization has not ruled out legal action over what it describes as false allegations made by a small group of critics.

"Yes, there could be legal action, but I don't think I'll go that far. However, some of the statements made are quite severe and cast doubt on the credibility of the board of directors. There are two lawyers on the board. We're not going to start breaking the rules," concludes the president, who notes that all the resolutions adopted are justified.

Discussions surrounding the proposed \$2-million reno-

vation of the Art Centre are expected to resume this fall once the organization's situation has stabilized.

Summer programming announced

Despite the uncertainty, Les Percéides has unveiled a summer film program running from July 13 to September 11, featuring a strong selection of Quebec films.

"It's our seventh art. These are magnificent films, often underappreciated. I've noticed that in Percé, people love watching Quebec films. That's what works best, whether the film is recent or not," comments programmer Guillaume Whalen.

"There's something for

everyone—drama, comedy, documentaries. There's a Gaspé-based documentary filmed between Gaspé and Percé and in Miguasha. People are going to love watching it and seeing themselves on screen."

Among the films on the program are L'Âme idéale by Alice Vial, in which Magalie Lépine-Blondeau plays a resigned romantic in love with a ghost, and the musical documentary Uzeb en fusion by Philippe Frenette-Roy, which offers a spectacular, rhythm-driven journey—featuring previously unseen archival footage—into the world of Quebec's greatest jazz-fusion band.

Films will also be screened on the beach: La grande sé-

duction and Gaz bar Blues. The Cinémathèque québécoise will collaborate with the festival to present four films from the Quebec film canon: Ti-cul Tougas by Jean-Guy Noël (1976) Les bons débarras by Francis Mankiewicz (1980) Jésus de Montréal by Denys Arcand (1989) and Il était une fois dans l'Est by André Brassard (1974).

"We're the first ones they're doing this with. We're collaborating on broadcast rights to put together a program of films we want to highlight. We discussed it and decided on this lineup. It's unique," continues Mr. Whalen.

Festival organizers expect to announce the complete August festival program and guest lineup later this month.

New fundraising initiative

To generate independent revenue, Les Percéides is launching its first Gaspé-style speakeasy, inspired by the hidden bars of the Prohibition era in the United States.

Located behind the Le 7e Art cinema, the venue is intended to attract both local residents and tourists while providing an additional source of revenue for the organization.

Santé Québec Gaspésie looking to recruit dentists

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – Santé Québec Gaspésie is looking to recruit additional dentists and dental hygienists to expand services at its community dental clinic in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

Working in partnership with the Vivre en Gaspésie strategy, the regional health network has been promoting career opportunities across Quebec, including at the recent Quebec International Dental Days.

"The need is really concentrated at the Haute-Gaspésie community clinic. We need one dentist and two dental hygienists," says spokesperson Cassandra Lévesque.

The clinic currently employs one dentist, two dental hygienists and two dental assistants.

The recruitment campaign aims to strengthen access to



Photo: Santé Québec Gaspésie

Santé Québec Gaspésie is seeking to recruit additional dentists and dental hygienists to expand services at its community dental clinic in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

dental care in the region by attracting qualified professionals to the Gaspé Peninsula.

Residents regularly express frustration on social media over the difficulty of obtaining dental appoint-

ments. Even patients who already have a dentist often face long waits for follow-up care.

As a result, some residents must travel outside the region, in some cases as far as Quebec City, to receive treatment.

Carleton-sur-Mer to invest \$500,000 in aerated pond

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – Carleton-sur-Mer will have to invest half a million dollars to clean its wastewater treatment system of aerated ponds.

Installed in the late 1990s, this is the first time the system will undergo such an overhaul.

Over the years, deposits have built up in the system.

“It’s still a significant expense. We’ll be issuing a 10-year bond for \$309,000, and the remaining \$200,000 will be drawn from the unallocated surplus. The work will be carried out over the next year,” says Mayor Mathieu Lapointe.

This cleaning is mandatory, according to Ministry of the Environment standards.

The impact on property taxes will be minimal, accord-

ing to the mayor.

GHG Reduction

The Town is continuing its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. An assessment of all municipal buildings has been conducted, and a series of measures has been proposed.

“This includes installing heat pumps, converting lighting to LED, and improving ventilation systems in the buildings. Ultimately, this will allow us to reduce GHG emissions. These are investments that will pay for themselves over 10 years,” the mayor estimates.

The investment amounts to \$300,000 and will generate annual savings of \$30,000.

In total, the reduction in



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Mathieu Lapointe, mayor of Carleton-sur-Mer.

GHG emissions is estimated at between two and three tonnes per year.

The investments will be made gradually over the next two years, although the Town has not ruled out implementing them more quickly.

Issue with the code of ethics

When questioned about certain aspects of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, the municipal administration must adjust its procedures to comply with a request from the Commission municipale du Québec.

The Town underwent an audit, and certain issues were highlighted in a report released in December.

Among these, the presentation of the code to elected officials and employees raised concerns.

“The Code of Ethics was presented to all municipal employees. However, the Municipal Commission is unable to assess this presentation because it lacks visual materials. What matters to us at the Town is that municipal employees are familiar with the Code of Ethics, have all received it, and were briefed on it,” states Mr. Lapointe.

The commission would have appreciated seeing a PDF-style document to evaluate the presentation made by the administration to its employees and elected officials.

In this audit, the commission did not note any other issues concerning Carleton-sur-Mer.

The mayor acknowledges the recommendations to improve the Town’s practices.

Kempffer Centre sees signs of recovery

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The Kempffer Cultural Interpretation Centre is opening on a limited basis this summer thanks to the efforts of board members and volunteers, while donations and special events are helping improve its financial situation.

At the same time, board president Karine Lacroix and the organization's directors are working to secure projects and funding aimed at putting the centre on a more stable long-term footing.

In June, Ms. Lacroix publicly warned that the centre had reached a critical point after failing to secure funding for a student employment program or financial support from the Municipality of New Carlisle



There are part-time activities scheduled at the Kempffer Interpretation Centre this summer.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

since 2023. In previous years, student employees had allowed the museum to remain open full time and generate revenue. By the end of June, Heritage New Carlisle—the organization that operates the Kempffer Centre—had reached \$18,000 on its line of credit.

“The media interventions

increased donations to a certain extent, with the mayor and one municipal councillor, both of whom had not contributed to our fund-raising drive, sent us money,” points out Karine Lacroix.

Since the end of June, the organization has received about \$1,000 in donations, in

addition to the \$2,000 raised through a GoFundMe campaign.

“I contacted CASA, which has always been a partner, and I also contacted Hamilton Manor’s owner, Marcel Rancourt, who is a former museum director, and who can help us with grant applications. The Bonaventure MRC, where we have always found great support, is still following the situation closely. Things are moving,” adds Ms. Lacroix.

The centre will continue offering activities throughout the summer and plans to remain open on a limited basis during the fall and winter.

“We are opening upon appointments taken on Facebook or emails. We will soon have a new telephone line. Since we don’t have employees, the

board members open the house when there are reservations, according to our availability. We have activities planned in August. We are also planning to redo the haunted house, which was very popular in the past. The tea room will be open over the Labour Day break. We are also planning activities for Halloween and the Christmas period. It keeps Kempffer alive, and with the money, we lower our credit line and reduce our interest fees,” further explains Karine Lacroix.

Note: In the July 1 edition of SPEC, on page 14, in the third paragraph of the first column, the amount provided by the municipality for the historical path should have read \$3,824, instead of \$30,000. Our apologies for the inconvenience it may have caused.



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Multigenerational Centre grand reopening

ELAINE SEXTON

CASCAPEDIA—SAINT-JULES – Residents gathered to celebrate the grand reopening of the community's newly expanded and renovated Multigenerational Centre, formerly known as the Youth Centre.

The addition and renovations have created a larger, more accessible space that will serve residents of all ages while continuing to support the community's growing summer camp and other local activities.

The grand opening was well attended by community members, local officials and supporters. During the ceremony, Mayor Ashley Milligan welcomed those in attendance and spoke about the vision behind the project. Her remarks are reproduced below.

“Good afternoon everyone, On behalf of our team, I would like to warmly welcome you all to the grand opening of our new multigenerational centre.

Today is a very special day for our community, and we are so excited to open our doors



Photo: Elaine Sexton

Mayor Ashley Milligan welcomed residents to the grand reopening of the newly renovated Multigenerational Centre. The celebration also featured Tessa and the community's new town mascot, which will receive its name from children attending the daycare.

and share these beautiful renovations with you.

This new and improved space will allow us to better support our ever-growing summer camp, provide a more accessible environment for all, and make great use of our newly renovated kitchen and gathering areas.

Most importantly, transforming the youth center into a multigenerational center reflects our vision of bringing people of all ages together.

We hope this space be-

comes a place where children, families, seniors, and community members can connect, learn from one another, and create lasting memories together.

To everyone who helped make this project possible, and to all for being here today to celebrate with us, we thank you.

We invite you to enjoy the center, explore the renovations, and imagine all the wonderful moments that will be shared here for years to come.”

New collective agreement reached at Manoir Saint-Augustin

NELSON SERGERIE

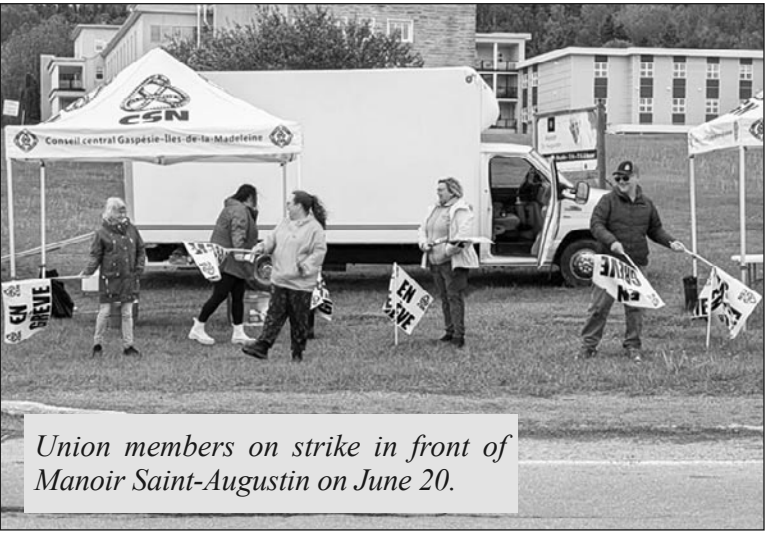
GASPÉ – A five-day strike by approximately 50 employees at Manoir Saint-Augustin helped break the deadlock in negotiations and led to a new collective bargaining agreement, according to the CSN (Confederation of National Trade Unions).

The strike, held from June 19 to 23 inclusively, preceded a tentative agreement reached with the employer with the assistance of a conciliator. Union members unanimously approved the agreement.

“The strike helped break the deadlock in negotiations and secure a truly attractive tentative agreement,” says Pierre-Luc Boulay, president of the CSN Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Central Council.

The agreement includes a minimum wage increase of 16.5% over four years, improvements to the pension plan, certain bonuses, the addition of a sixth week of vacation and recognition of prior experience.

“We’re really not far from 100% (of our demands). Whether you like it or not, when you adopt a strike mandate, it has a significant impact.



Union members on strike in front of Manoir Saint-Augustin on June 20.

Photo: CSN

We’re very satisfied with these negotiations,” says the union leader. “We’ve struck a balance that ensures wages will keep pace with inflation for the next four years. In the context of coordinated negotiations involving more than 20 RPA (private seniors residences) unions in Quebec affiliated with the CSN, we’ve finally achieved a decent outcome.”

The president of the central council now hopes that the work environment—which had been strained in the weeks leading up to the labour dispute—will improve.

“We hope things will settle down over time. We’re really happy with the outcome. We’re hoping to put the climate of

fear or the difficult work environment of the past few months behind us. We believe that with an agreement in place, things will improve. We hope so. We’ve taken a big step forward,” says Mr. Boulay.

CSN-unionized employees at Manoir Saint-Augustin voted 95% in favour of a strike mandate to be exercised at a time deemed appropriate last April, following several rounds of negotiations marked by financial offers deemed insufficient in an inflationary environment.

Approximately 120 seniors live at the residence, including about 40 in intermediate care who require some level of assistance.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Savour Summer

“The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning.”

Natalie Babbitt

We wait eight months for summer to arrive, while spending June complaining that it has not yet arrived. Then it comes with all the things we cherish the most. The sun, the heat, the longer days, the wildflowers, the visitors, the beach days and even the June bugs!

Before summer disappears and we start to read about “Back to School Sales,” enjoy summer on the Gaspé. Here are a few things every Gaspesian should consider doing before summer slips away.

Start with the woods. Wander beneath the spruce and fir trees, and my personal favourite, the junipers, where the air smells like nature's air freshener and not one of those cardboard ones hanging from a rearview mirror. Listen for a woodpecker, but leave your phone behind. If you don't take a picture of a tree, it's still a tree.

Then climb a mountain! The hike up always begins with confidence, followed by heavy breathing. But when you reach the top and look out over the forests, rivers and beautiful waters of the Gulf, it is worth every step.

You also owe it to yourself to visit both fresh water and salt water before summer ends. Take a swim in a cool lake, then head for the beach and dip your toes in the sea.

Going hunting for sea glass is always a great time for all ages. It's amazing how beautiful that tiny green piece of glass is. A treasure. Meanwhile, you'll also collect seventeen special rocks only to empty them out of your pockets when your shorts start falling down. Then you can use the flat ones to skip stones into the waves of the bay.

Hungry? Stop at your favourite cantine. Order poutine, a burger, a hot dog or an ice cream. Summer calories get walked off, so don't be too concerned.

Stay outside after sunset. Watch the stars appear, listen to the waves and enjoy the evening. Make a fire and totally relax while staring into the flames. What is the best part of a summer fire? The smell, the sights or the sounds?

Pick some berries you'll make into a pie or jam, and perhaps eat them all before you get home.

Most importantly, spend time with family and friends. This is the high season for visits from loved ones who live away. Make summer memories worth remembering all winter.

Summer in the Gaspé always leaves us wanting one more beach walk, one more mountain hike, one more evening in the woods and one more sunset over the water.

Don't waste these last beautiful days. Winter will arrive soon enough.



Announcements



In Memory

BOURGAIZE: Ada
BOURGAIZE: Lennox

In loving memory of a dear mum, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother who passed away August 16, 2012. Also our dear brother Lennox Bourgaize who passed away July 4, 2021, we love you both.

*May the winds of heaven blow softly,
And whisper in your ear.
How much we love and miss you,
And wish you were still here.
Gone from our sight,
But never from our hearts.*

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



Funeral Announcement

BISSON: David

Family and friends are invited to attend the gravesite service and interment for David Bisson on August 11 at 11 a.m. at St. James Anglican Church in Port Daniel. A reception will take place immediately after at the Golden Age Club in Port Daniel West.

**The New Carlisle
Funeral Association**
extends sympathy to the family of
Kerry Huntington.

*With Deepest
SYMPATHY*

Congratulations



*Congratulations to the
Graduating Class of 2026!*

On behalf of the Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Cascapedia-Saint-Jules, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all of our 2026 high school graduates!

We are especially proud to recognize our local graduates from New Richmond High School; Blake Polichuck and Jenny Coull; and from École Antoine-Bernard; Madison Ferland and Albert Trépanier.

May your future be filled with opportunity, prosperity, and happiness. Continue to dream big, embrace new challenges, and always believe in yourselves. Your community is incredibly proud of all you have accomplished and looks forward to watching you thrive. We wish each of you the very best as you begin this exciting new chapter.

This recognition was first published on the local community webpage.

**PHOTO
QUALITY**

When submitting a photo for this page, please send in a digital photo (.jpg) to specs@globetrotter.net. You can also send your photo by mail.

It is essential that the photo is not a copy printed at home or by the funeral home.



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Steven Imhoff

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Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

COAST ROUND-UP

COAST ROUND-UP: \$8 per week
CLASSIFIED: \$8 per week

GASPÉ:

Gaspé County W.I. September 12: Gaspé-County W.I. Fair. Do you want to enter the W.I. Craft Fair competition? It's time to register with the Gaspé W.I. Here's what you need to know: the fair will be held at the York Hall, the registration fee is \$15, you can enter as many craft, cooking, and/or garden items as you wish. You can register with Bonita Annett at 418-368-3453 or gaspe22@gmail.com, and she will give you a copy of the Fair List for 2026. The last day to register is July 31. Everyone is welcome!

SHIGAWAKE:

Shigawake Music Festival and Agricultural Fair July 30: Jesse and the

Jones band beginning at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7 p.m., \$10 entrance fee. Canteen and bar service available.
August 1: Loud and Plowed Barn Dance beginning at 4 p.m. - 11 p.m., \$20 entry fee. Vendors, BBQ and bar service available.
August 6: Brian Haché beginning at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7 p.m., \$10 entrance fee. Canteen and bar service available.

HOPE TOWN:
Hope Town Sports club
August 22: A gift bingo

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN**
Sunday, August 2
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, August 9
10 a.m. Service

will begin at 7 p.m., held at the Community centre.

NEW CARLISLE:
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
August 1: A gift bingo will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion. Doors open at 6 p.m., bingo begins at 7 p.m. One series for \$10 or three series for \$20.

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

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND**
Sunday, August 2
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, August 9
10 a.m. Service

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

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
Book Room
The book room will be open on August 5. For any other dates please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896 for an appointment.

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, August 2
St. Andrews - York
9 a.m. Holy Communion
Sunday, August 9
St. James - Wakeham
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist



ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, August 2
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, August 9
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

CROSSWORDS

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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52	53	54				55				56		57	58	59
60					61				62		63			
64					65						66			
67					68						69			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Listen to

5. Presents

10. A type of guitar

14. Actor Idris

15. A citizen of Iran

16. Pretentiously artistic

17. Harness

18. Diamond weight measurement

19. "Better Call ____"

20. Fervent support

22. Male cat

23. Jewish spiritual leader

24. Disposed to venture or take risks

27. A way to nail

30. Cool!

31. Women's ____ movement

32. "Losing My Religion" rockers

35. Step-shaped recess

37. A princess can detect it

38. Tractor-trailer

39. Leslie and Leon are two

40. Color at the end of the spectrum
41. Lines where fabrics are sewn

42. Dodgers great Hershisier

43. Floor covering

44. Traveled aimlessly

45. Rocker Stewart

46. Body art

47. Congressman (abbr.)

48. No seats available

49. Breaks apart

52. Hand gesture

55. Ballplayer's tool

56. Sword

60. Baseball team

61. Upper bract of floret of grass

63. Italian Seaport

64. Mars crater

65. Tube on a shoelace

66. U. of Miami mascot

67. South American nation

68. Video game series "Max ____"

69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title

2. Ancient Greek personification of mercy

3. Jewish calendar month

4. Family of long-legged frogs

5. Photo

6. Delivered a speech

7. Lute used in Indian music

8. Decorated

9. Cease to stand

10. The bottom layer

11. Member of a Semitic people

12. Part of a ticket

13. Defunct monetary unit

21. Challenges

23. Body part

25. Tell on

26. By way of

27. Shady green alcove

28. Egyptian city

29. ____ and flowed

32. Widens a hole
33. Eurasian wheat

34. Act incorrectly

36. "Be back later"

37. Al Bundy's wife

38. Ocean

40. Large root eaten as a vegetable

41. Units of subjective loudness

43. Music genre

44. A way to drench

46. Popular hot beverage

47. Silk-like cotton fabric

49. Rumanian city

50. Come back

51. Vaccine developer

52. Canadian law enforcers

53. Wings

54. Observational comedian Bill

57. Small fry

58. ____ Clapton, musician

59. Take a chance

61. Semi-liquid food for babies

62. Consumed food

PUZZLE SOLUTION

H	E	A	R		P	O	S	E	S		B	A	S	S
E	L	B	A		I	R	A	N	I		A	R	T	Y
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B	I	B	B	S		R	E	D		S	E	A	M	S
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P	E	R	U		P	A	Y	N	E		N	E	C	K

SPEC gets around

I brought along my SPEC when I went on a beautiful trip to Italy in June. This picture is in front of the Coliseum in Rome. Wonderful Italian people, beautiful scenery and was with a great group as we visited six cities.

We would love to see your pictures this summer as you travel far and wide.

Elaine Sexton



Summer is a state of mind

Did you ever notice that summer sunshine is the best medicine for the soul? Perhaps that's because we carry its warmth with us wherever we go. Gaspesians are rarely idle. Our heritage is rooted in country living, the rugged, winding coastline of Chaleur Bay and a sense of humour that follows us wherever life takes us.

Summer is more than a season; it is a state of mind. We welcome visitors from other provinces with open arms and gladly share the beauty around us so they, too, can experience the joy we are fortunate to have in our own backyard.

We should never take for granted the simple pleasures that make this time of year so special: good friends, beautiful weather and the unmistakable aroma of barbecues drifting from decks throughout our communities. Together, they come close to capturing the perfection that life along the Chaleur Bay has to offer. Summer is a time when memories are made and worries seem fewer.

Ken Ross
New Carlisle, Quebec.

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

You're pure rocket fuel this week, Aries. Charge ahead with all of your bold ideas.

Your charisma is off the charts right now. Use it before your energy starts to wane.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Treat yourself to something delicious and expensive this week, Taurus. Just do not blame the cosmos when you get the receipt for this luxury.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Say yes to spontaneous plans this week, Gemini. Your brain is going a mile a minute, so you may need someone along for the ride to keep you grounded.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, right now home is your fortress, so create a welcoming space to relax and recharge. You may want to spend some time in the kitchen baking up something delicious.



LEO – July 23/Aug 23

The spotlight is on you this week, Leo. Shine as brightly as you can, post that selfie and own the room you walk into. Be grateful to those who helped get you to the top.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

All of your organizational superpowers will be activated this week, Virgo. Tackle that messy drawer you have been putting off or conquer a chaotic schedule.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, romance and fun are in the air for you. Your charm level is very high this week, and you may have a lot of people circling in your orbit as a result.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you will dig out all of the secrets this week like a super sleuth. Remember to

keep these pursuits light-hearted.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Your adventure mode is engaged, Sagittarius. It's time to book the trip, try an exotic dish or do something wild. CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Reward yourself with something that makes you feel important, Capricorn. It may be different depending on the day, and only you know what you desire.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Someone is ready to hear any wild ideas you can come up with, Aquarius. Tap into any genius that arises in your brain and share it. PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

This week is about dreamy and magical vibes, Pisces. It's the perfect time to create art, fall in love with a song or float through the week.

Three municipalities report 2025 financial results

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE – Three Gaspé Peninsula municipalities tabled their 2025 financial statements on July 13, with Carleton-sur-Mer reporting the largest surplus.

Carleton-sur-Mer recorded a \$204,000 surplus on revenues of \$12.4 million.

The municipal campground played a major role in the positive result, generating \$205,000 more in revenue than the previous year.

“For the town’s finances, this is significant. It’s a \$1.2 million profit that allows us to provide services to residents. The direct and indirect benefits are substantial. About 1,000 people (the daily capacity of the campground) visit the sand bar and spend money at restaurants and local businesses,” explains Mayor Mathieu Lapointe.

The municipality’s accumulated surplus now totals \$1.5 million.

“We have room in our working capital—which we had increased—and our debt has decreased by \$500,000. Our financial indicators are looking very good,” the mayor says.

Net debt stands at \$17 million.

Paspebiac restores financial balance

Paspebiac reported a



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Murdochville Mayor Stéphane Gamache.

\$53,381 surplus on a \$7.1-million budget.

After using \$552,000 from its accumulated surplus to balance the budget, the municipality’s surplus now stands at \$697,000, down from \$1.8 million in 2023.

“We made an effort to cut expenses by \$250,000 annually, but there was also a significant shortfall in revenue. We had to make up the shortfall through taxation. The gap was simply too large,” explains Mayor Jérémy Laplante.

The tax rate increased by roughly 10%, and if this measure hadn’t been taken in 2026, the surplus could have disappeared.

Net debt declined from \$15.7 million to \$14.5 million, but higher interest rates have increased debt servicing costs

from 16% to 22%.

“There’s a lot of interest on these new loans. We’ve had to refinance at higher rates since the prime rate was higher than before. In absolute terms, that’s a \$700,000 increase,” the mayor notes.

He adds that the municipality now has less financial flexibility and will reserve available funds for unforeseen expenses while limiting new investments.

Murdochville keeps budget balanced

Murdochville ended its fiscal year with a balanced budget of \$2.6 million.

Mayor Stéphane Gamache says the municipality continues to rely on remaining provincial revitalization funding tied to the town’s mining history to balance its finances, but those funds are nearly exhausted.

Property tax revenues increased by 9%.

Mr. Gamache says the balanced budget does not reflect the municipality’s financial reality.

“There are expenses we should be making but can’t, such as purchasing new equipment or repairing our infrastructure. We have no choice but to end up with a balanced budget. We’re keeping our investments to a minimum,” explains Mr. Gamache.

Intensive care not yet affected at Gaspé Hospital

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – Santé Québec Gaspésie continues to maintain emergency and intensive care services at Gaspé Hospital, despite staffing shortages during the summer vacation period.

On June 17, president and chief executive officer Martin Pelletier warned that staffing challenges during the holiday season were putting pressure on the hospital’s emergency and intensive care units.

One month later, Santé Québec says the most serious disruptions have so far been avoided. “The contingency plan is being implemented at various times throughout the summer due to staff shortages. As is the case everywhere, we have staff on vacation, and it is more difficult to find independent contractors during the summer, but efforts in this regard are ongoing. Despite the contingency plan, we want to emphasize that services remain available to patients. The teams on the ground are working hard to provide quality care to the public, and to date, no patient has had to be transferred due to a lack of capacity at our facility,” replied Santé Québec Gaspésie’s communication service when asked about the current situation in the midst of the vacation season.

“Our priority is to maintain emergency services,” Mr. Pelletier said. “If staffing shortages became more severe, intensive care services would be the first affected.”

Under the contingency plan, patients requiring intensive care would be transferred to another hospital in the region or, if necessary, transported by air ambulance to a facility outside the region. Gaspé Hospital has three intensive care beds, located adjacent to the emergency department.

Staffing shortages have also affected other regional facilities. During the weekend of July 10 to 13, the obstetrics department at Maria Hospital experienced a shortage of nursing staff.

Power outages leave about 10,000 customers in the dark

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – Two separate power outages affected about 10,000 Hydro-Québec customers in the Gaspé Peninsula on the morning of July 15.

The first outage occurred at 6:39 a.m., leaving 6,132 customers without electricity between Bonaventure and Port-Daniel–Gaspcons.

According to Hydro-Québec, the outage was caused when protective equipment at a substation automatically shut down after detecting a fault.

A crew inspected the site and, finding no visible damage, restored power shortly before 7 a.m.

Another major outage struck part of Gaspé in the early morning.

A second outage affected approximately 4,000 customers in the Rivière-au-Renard area and part of the Forillon Peninsula.

Hydro-Québec said the interruption was caused by protective equipment tripping on a distribution line but was unable to determine the exact cause.

After technicians found no visible damage, power was gradually restored by mid-morning.

In both cases, Hydro-Québec says the outages may have been triggered by a tree branch or a small animal coming into contact with electrical equipment, activating the system’s automatic safety mechanisms.

Change in leadership at Gespeg

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The Gespeg Mi’gmaq First Nation and its former executive director, Connie Jacques, have reached an amicable agreement following her recent departure from the position.

Sources indicate that differences of opinion between the Band Council and the executive director led to the agreement, the terms of which remain confidential.

Despite her departure, Ms. Jacques is credited with helping advance several key initiatives during her tenure.

Among her most significant achievements was her role in resolving the long-standing reserve issue, a goal the Gespeg Mi’gmaq First Nation had pursued for more than 50 years.

The Nation accepted applications until July 20 to fill the executive director position.

Before joining Gespeg, Ms. Jacques retired in February 2024 as Deputy President and Chief Executive Officer of the former CISSS de la Gaspésie.

Missing Quebec flag

NELSON SERGERIE

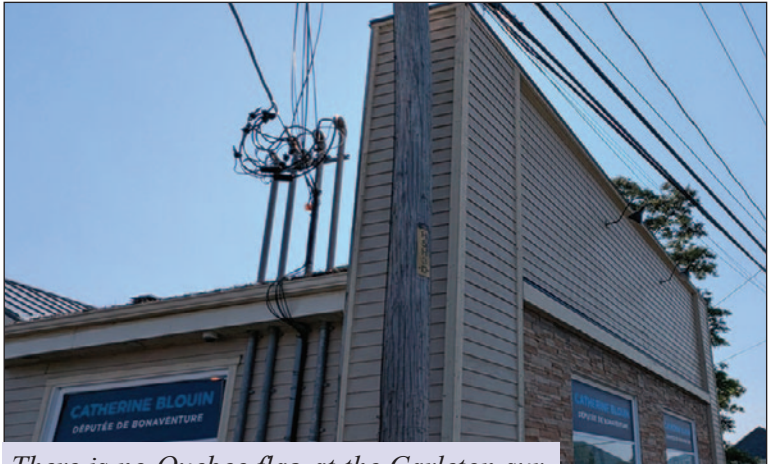
CARLETON-SUR-MER – The absence of a Quebec flag at the Bonaventure constituency office of MNA Catherine Blouin has sparked criticism from a local Parti Québécois activist.

Claude Lucier took to social media to question why the Quebec flag is no longer displayed outside the office.

“Catherine Blouin removed the Quebec flag from the facade of her Bonaventure constituency office—she who was so proud to display it the day after her election. It’s a disgrace,” he wrote.

The flag had been mounted on the side of the office facing Route 132, where only a sidewalk separates the building from the busy highway.

“I’ve heard people talking about this,” Ms. Blouin said right away when asked about the flag’s absence.



There is no Quebec flag at the Carleton-sur-Mer district office of the Bonaventure MNA.

Photo: Claude Lucier

“For those who know where my office in Carleton-sur-Mer is located, it’s practically right next to Route 132. The flag was often very dirty, brown. It pained me to see a dirty, torn flag flapping haphazardly on the flagpole. We changed it regularly, but sometimes there were delays between when we requested a change and when it was actually changed. For the sake of the Quebec flag, we decided

to take it down,” she explains, noting that the Fleurdelysé has been removed for at least a year.

She said she cannot say when, or if, it will be reinstalled.

“I can’t put it back up there because it will inevitably always be dirty and torn. It would have to be installed somewhere else. We’ll have to see,” Ms. Blouin simply replies.

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