

Sunny Bank: Settlement agreement presented to flood victims

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – On November 24, the court will review and rule on a settlement agreement reached between lawyers representing victims of the Sunny Bank flood and the Quebec Ministry of Transport regarding a portion of the damages caused by the December 2010 flooding in Gaspé's Sunny Bank neighbourhood.

The 38-page document dealing with property damage was presented on September 7 at the York Community Hall in Gaspé to members of the class action that was successful in 2022.

Members were informed about the categories of compensation that may be claimed, the anticipated amounts and the main steps in the proposed claims process.

"There were matters that



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Approximately 70 people attended a presentation on the memorandum of understanding reached between the victims' attorneys and the Department of Transportation.

needed to be negotiated following the judgment. It's been almost four years since the judgment, but we've just finished going through nearly the

entire case file," notes Marie-Anaïs Sauvé, the lawyer representing the flood victims.

Before the process can move forward, however, the

agreement must be approved by the court at the Percé courthouse.

Anyone who owned property, lived in Sunny Bank or

had property there at the time of the flood may be eligible for compensation. (See tables.)

"If you owned a home or a piece of land on December 15, 2010, or if you lived in Sunny Bank on that date, as soon as you qualify as a member, you're already entitled to a minimum amount of \$3,000 that has been accruing interest since December 15, 2010," says Ms. Sauvé.

Various costs associated with the lawsuit will have to be deducted from the compensation.

"If you were a homeowner, you are entitled to 3% for loss of property value," she adds.

Compensation for emotional distress was already provided for in the court's decision.

"That famous \$3,000 was settled by the judgment. It was

Cont'd on Page 6

Osisko now planning \$4 billion plus project in Murdochville

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Osisko Metals is planning a project to reopen the Murdochville copper mine with an estimated cost ranging from \$4 billion to \$5 billion. This figure is double the previous estimate.

The project, known as Gaspé Mines, has grown to a scale that will likely prompt the Montreal-based firm to sell it before the open-pit mine is developed.

These details emerged from a September 10 press briefing held by company representatives, including Ann Lamontagne, vice-president of environment and sustainable development. She further noted that the project could be scaled down if the town of Murdochville remains in its current location; the potential relocation of the town has been a frequently discussed scenario since the spring.



Photo: Osisko Metals

Dewatering of the former mine could begin as early as 2027.

Osisko Metals "does not have the financial muscle [to see such a project through to completion.] We have 30 employees. It will take a larger company to lend a hand," Ann Lamontagne stated during a question period at the virtual meeting.

She also indicated that it

is too early to identify a potential buyer for the project.

Since 2022, Osisko Metals has been exploring an area of Murdochville where two open-pit mines and several underground mines operated between 1954 and 1999.

The company is conducting a total of 50,000 metres

of drilling this year. Operations are focused on Copper Mountain and Needle Mountain—both former mine sites—as well as Porphyry Mountain, where drilling is targeting significant depths.

Data from drilling conducted between 2022 and 2026 indicate that the deposit

contains an estimated 1.834 billion tonnes of mineralized rock with an average copper grade of 0.27% and 239 million tonnes of rock with a grade of 0.41%. While these are low grades, the volumes involved are very large, according to projections made by Osisko Metals following an analysis of the drilling results. These projections require further, more precise verification. (see chart on page 7)

"What we know is that there is copper left—and a lot of it," asserts Ann Lamontagne.

A very different context

She points out that the Gaspé Mines project operates in a context vastly different from the economic conditions of October 1999, when the last underground

Cont'd on Page 7

What is the future role of Villa Frederick-James?

The Ministry of Culture rejects the strategic direction proposed by the only group that worked on revitalizing this former "Espace bleu"

GILLES GAGNÉ

PERCÉ – The Table de concertation sur l’avenir de la Villa Frederick-James is denouncing the Quebec Ministry of Culture’s rejection of the strategic direction it proposed. The committee is the only regional body that worked on revitalizing the former "Espace bleu," a site renovated at a cost of \$25.5 million between 2021 and 2024.

The Ministry’s decision came in July, when the committee received a letter from Culture Minister Mathieu Lacombe stating that "the proposed directions do not align with the vision (the Ministry) wishes to prioritize for the Villa’s future."

Minister Lacombe noted that the report submitted by the committee recommended, among other things, that the Villa "be dedicated primarily to the visual arts and a diversity of artistic practices, under a governance model granting the committee full autonomy regarding management and programming."

The minister added that activities at the Villa "must fit into a broader vision that also accommodates initiatives related to heritage, literature, other artistic disciplines, cultural mediation and activities that encourage citizens to make the space their own."

Pierre Wilson, spokesperson for the committee, points out—citing the relevant documents—that while the report submitted by his organization emphasizes the visual arts, it goes much further in addressing the versatility of the site’s use.

"The report sent to the Ministry aims to make the Villa a year-round cultural venue featuring activities related to presentation, creation, training, cultural mediation and the development of artistic practices," says Mr. Wilson, who sees a strong alignment with the Ministry’s expectations.

He notes that the diversity of practices was always clearly articulated by the Table de concertation sur l’avenir de la Villa, both during the two years of discussions held with the Ministry and in the written documents submitted to that same Ministry.

"We aren’t dealing with historical heritage in the traditional sense, but if we are talking about history, we are talking about the history of the



The renovation of the Villa itself took place primarily in 2023.

arts. Villa Frederick-James has an exhibition space that meets professional standards. And what do you find in an exhibition space if not visual arts? Does the Ministry not want visual arts exhibitions? We do want visual arts and a diversity of practices in a house built by a ... visual artist!" Pierre Wilson points out.

"We had planned for music and poetry. The exhibition space would certainly have been used for painting and sculpture, but visual arts also encompass fine crafts, cinema, design, video and architecture! We are somewhat surprised by the rejection of this proposal," he explains.

A broad-based consultative committee

Pierre Wilson, president of the Musée le Chafaud de Percé, notes that the Concertation table on the future of Villa Frederick James brings together eight organizations—including Culture Gaspésie, the Town of Percé and the Rocher-Percé MRC—and comprises 11 individuals. He points out that the two years of discussions with the Ministry of Culture were undertaken on a voluntary basis by the committee members.

Although these discussions sometimes involved disagreements regarding the scope of the versatility required for the committee to potentially manage the Villa, there were indications that pointed to a successful outcome.

"We were told—though never in writing—that they (Ministry of Culture staff) were seeking funding for the March budget announcement, to the point where we began taking steps to organize ourselves. We believed the Ministry would respond positively to the four

elements of the committee’s mandate: defining the Villa’s objectives and purpose, establishing a program of activities, proposing a management model and setting the budget for the first three years of operation," explains Mr. Wilson.

Why discuss this now?

Although Minister Lacombe’s letter is dated July 30, Pierre Wilson and members of the Table de concertation sur l’avenir de la Villa decided to wait until the start of the Quebec electoral campaign before bringing the debate into the public eye.

"This has been a political issue from the very beginning—establishing the Espaces bleus, halting the network’s rollout, tasking the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) [for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix] with finding a purpose for Villa Frederick-James—and a political decision will be required to find a solution for its use," Mr. Wilson observes.

The Villa has been open since the summer of 2024. It is managed by SÉPAQ (Quebec’s parks and outdoor recreation agency) while the exhibition content is provided by the Museum of Civilization, the organization originally entrusted with the Espaces bleus project.

"It’s open only in the summer. There’s an exhibition on fly fishing. In 2024, we installed information panels about the Villa’s renovation. The Rocher-Percé MRC Chamber of Commerce gala was held there," Mr. Wilson summarizes.

"I don’t want to blame the government, but what will the Villa’s mission be now? It can’t have the same mission as the Musée de la Gaspésie in Gaspé. I want to emphasize this: the Villa has a visual arts



The Villa has been open to the public since the summer of 2024 with exhibitions supplied by Quebec’s Museum of Civilization.

Photos: Gilles Gagné

exhibition space. When you’re an artist with professional status, you need to exhibit twice in a recognized venue. For someone from the Gaspé, there are only two such venues—one in Gaspé and one in Carleton. Now we have a third one here, and Percé is recognized as a major artistic hub. It needs to be open year-round and there should be multiple artistic events at the Villa every year," he asserts.

Funding

Between 2024 and 2026, the Table de concertation sur l’avenir de la Villa received \$28,000 from the Ministry of Culture to hire two consultants. They were tasked with drafting a report for the Ministry to determine the site’s purpose, management structure and future over a period of at least three years, based on input provided by Mr. Wilson’s group.

"On July 7, the Ministry of-

fered us a '\$99,000 gift,' without ever taking a stance on our proposal for management autonomy or providing assurances that our mandate would last several years. We turned it down," specifies Pierre Wilson.

The committee proposed that the Ministry of Culture provide \$298,000 annually for three to five years—with a 4% annual cost-of-living adjustment—plus \$150,000 to help structure the Musée Le Chafaud, (a small-scale organization) so it could take the \$25.5-million renovated site under its wing.

"We were planning for an annual budget of \$420,000, supplemented by regional partnerships," says Pierre Wilson.

He notes that the Musée de la civilisation received \$5 million over the next five years in connection with the Villa Frederick-James. "SÉPAQ has access to those funds to maintain the building," he concludes.

An iconic villa

Gilles Gagné

PERCÉ - Built in 1888 by the American artist of the same name (who died in 1907,) Villa Frederick-James was notably used for several years by Université Laval as a summer teaching site. Over the past 138 years, it has likely been photographed millions of times—often incidentally—because of its location on Cap Canon, adjacent to Percé Rock.

Five years ago, the Villa was designated as the Gaspésie region’s "Espace bleu" (Blue Space.) In 2021, former premier François Legault envisioned a network of these "Espaces bleus," one for each of Quebec’s 17 administrative regions. The network was capped at four sites in March 2024—the others being located in Quebec City, Amos and Baie-Saint-Paul—due to massive cost overruns.

The initial \$259-million budget would have at least quadrupled had the network been completed. In the case of Percé, the renovation cost \$25.5 million, at least 25% more than projected. This figure includes the cost of moving the structure a few metres to protect it from erosion; it now sits on a large concrete base, with a buried foundation that also houses the exhibition space.

When the Espaces bleus network was first announced, several spokespersons from the Gaspé cultural community expressed surprise at the scale of the investment, noting that the region’s museums were primarily in need of consolidation.

St. Marys Cement to invest \$80 million to cut greenhouse effect gases emissions by 20%

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT-DANIEL – St. Marys Cement, owner of the cement plant in Port-Daniel, plans to invest \$80 million between 2027 and 2029 to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% through the use of forest residues and other low-carbon fuels.

Forest biomass, primarily logging residues and sawmill by-products, will be supplemented by construction and demolition waste, as well as non-recyclable plastics.

The Port-Daniel cement plant currently uses petroleum coke to fuel its high-temperature kilns. This coke is a residue from oil refineries, and burning it in the clinker kilns—which produce the base material for cement powder—releases significant amounts of greenhouse gases (GHGs.)

"We would like to begin construction so we are ready by 2029 for the plant's startup. That is why we say that by 2030, we will be able to substitute (petroleum coke) with



Photo: Gilles Gagné

The clinker production section of the Port Daniel plant will receive the alternative fuels.

forest residues," says Philippe Marceau, the plant's director.

"Before starting construction, which we aim to do in 2027, we need to obtain a building permit. The project is currently being developed by engineering firms," adds Mr. Marceau.

The project is being developed in collaboration with the

Migmawei Mawiomi Business Corporation (MMBC), the business arm of the three Indigenous communities in the Gaspé region, namely Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespeg.

The financing agreement and final protocol have yet to be signed, a step that is expected to be completed before

the end of 2026. The MMBC has been following St. Marys Cement's activities from the outset, with the goal of establishing a business partnership.

A new building to be constructed

A new building will be required to store forest biomass and other low-carbon alternative fuels. Since forest biomass often has a high moisture content, this new building will serve, among other purposes, to dry the alternative fuels and reduce their moisture levels. That drying operation will not increase the plant's overall emissions.

"We need to remove as much moisture as possible to increase the efficiency of these alternative fuels," explains Philippe Marceau.

The biomass and other fuels will be dried by recovering the hot air released during the clinker cooling process. A duct will be constructed to connect the clinker production area of the cement plant

and the new building.

A conveyor will be installed between the new building and the preheater tower—the first stage of clinker production—to facilitate the use of the alternative fuels.

"No waste and no rubber—meaning no tires—will be used by the new alternative fuel system," notes Philippe Heppell, human resources director at St. Marys Cement.

At full capacity, based on an annual cement production of two million tonnes, the Port-Daniel plant is expected to consume 200,000 tonnes of petroleum coke per year. The plant currently produces 1.6 million tonnes annually and burns slightly more than 150,000 tonnes of petroleum coke.

In the long term, the company would like to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 70% through a much greater reduction in petroleum coke use. Some European plants have already achieved similar levels of emissions reductions.

2026 Provincial Election



Vote on October 5

9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Where and when to vote



Find your polling station at electionsquebec.qc.ca/where-when or call 1-888-ELECTION.

Can't vote on Election Day?

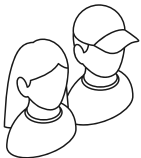
Vote at an advance poll on September 27 or 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To vote

- You must be registered on the list of electors, and your address must be up to date. Check your registration at electionsquebec.qc.ca/check.
- You must bring an accepted piece of identification (driver's licence, health insurance card, Canadian passport, etc.).

New electoral map: your electoral division may have changed.

Check at electionsquebec.qc.ca/division.



Bring your children with you when you vote!

Introduce your children to democracy through the small polling stations.



All advance polling places are accessible. On October 5, most polling places will also be accessible. Check the accessibility features of each polling place at electionsquebec.qc.ca/where-when.

If your assigned polling place does not meet your accessibility needs, ask your returning officer for authorization to vote at another location.

On October 5, exercise your right to vote

electionsquebec.qc.ca
1-888-ELECTION (1-888-353-2846)





Gilles Gagné

Commentary

You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours

A lot of work remains to be done before Canada becomes an "associate member" of the European Union. First of all, the very definition of an associate member must be worked out, as such a status does not currently exist, and the conditions surrounding it must also be clearly understood.

Formally, associate member is not a legal European Union designation. Under current rules, only European countries can apply for EU membership.

The desire to make Europe and Canada closer in terms of trade is far from mysterious, given the current international context. Canada has been bullied by the American administration, Donald Trump first and foremost, since he was elected for a second time in November 2024.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has been able to stay calm amid the storm, but navigating through threats, tariffs, erratic decision-making, constant attempts to destabilize Canada and a slow erosion of business partnerships has convinced the country's leaders to do something that should have been done decades earlier: diversify our international trade.

The 27 countries of the European Union are un-

doubtedly stronger economically than Canada and perhaps even stronger, when working together, than the United States, but their leadership has been seriously challenged over recent years, individually and collectively.

A fair cross section of the European population is questioning their country's presence in the European Union. This reality is notably observed among right-wing extremists, who are notably opposed to immigration.

At the other end of the spectrum, many European leaders admire Mark Carney's approach when dealing with Donald Trump, and they would gladly take the opportunity to adopt a similar strategy.

Hence the statement made by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to the effect that it is time to open the door for Canada to become an "associate member" of the European Union.

In a state of the union address, she pointed out that Canada and the European Union must "urgently reimagine" their partnership and move beyond a free-trade agreement.

That free-trade agreement has been in place for a decade. However, it pales in comparison with trade between Canada and the United States, fuelled by their geographical proximity and, until recently, their common interests.

Seeing the world through the same eyes

Canada and the European Union largely see the world with the same eyes, as Ursula von der Leyen indicated on September 16 during Mark Carney's visit to Europe.

The similarities are numerous indeed. Both entities

are trying to control the unbridled development of AI, they agree on the effects of climate change, although Europe is far more active in that regard, they see the Arctic and geopolitics with a touch of subtlety, unlike the United States. Moreover, they stand together on Ukraine and defence.

However, Canada has a few hurdles to overcome before reaping the benefits of increased trade with Europe.

European countries certainly need some of our natural resources. There is only an ocean separating the two entities, but transportation costs will likely be higher than those associated with trade between Canada and the United States.

There is a way of improving Canada's advantages in dealing with Europe, and that is to add value to our resources.

There is also the challenge of improving our trade balance with Europe. Currently, Canada's exports to the European Union (EU) countries stood at \$42.8 billion in 2025, an increase of 23.4% from 2024. However, Canada imported from the EU goods and services worth \$91.6 billion, a hike of 5.9% from 2024. This resulted in a Canadian trade deficit of \$48.8 billion.

The total annual exchange of goods and services between Canada and the United States amounts to approximately \$1.3 trillion (\$1,300 billion), according to recent consolidated bilateral trade data. This represents a daily average of nearly \$3.6 billion. The balance is about kif-kif.

It will take a while for Canada to adjust to these two very different situations, and a lot of things can happen in the meantime. However, our dependence on trade with the United States provides plenty of food for thought.



Sharon McCully

Guest Commentary

Amusez-vous. Have fun.

It's what you say to a six-year-old when you drop them off for a play date. Or to a teenager leaving on a camping trip. Maybe a colleague going on a special date.

You know when it is not appropriate to say 'Amusez-vous'?

When you are responsible for communications for the leader of the CAQ and you forward a request for comment to a colleague responsible for media relations, from an English-language newspaper asking if the CAQ is comfortable with the fact that English-speaking Quebecers without access to technology will be unable to access voting information. 'Amusez-vous' does not seem like an appropriate tagline.

It would seem more like an indication the CAQ doesn't give two hoots whether English-speakers find their way to the polls since it's highly unlikely many will be voting for their party given four years of discriminatory legislation and bad policy.

Élections Quebec, meanwhile, the agency responsible for ensuring free and fair elections in Quebec, told reporters last week that it had asked the government to allow the distribution of election information in both French and English. The CAQ flexed its Bill 96 muscles declaring English-speakers can access their voting information by scanning the QR code on the French-language printout. The CAQ's 'no harm, no foul' equivalent of 'let them eat cake'.

If a QR code can adequately inform Quebecers on where and when to vote, why not just send QR codes to all Quebecers?

Where was the minister with the oxymoronic title, Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, when his government decided a half million Quebecers should not have equal access to the most basic fundamental right in a free society: to elect the people who will form the government.

The notion that co-inhabitants who breathe the same air, pay the same taxes, suffer the same delays in health care, smack into the same potholes, should be treated differently, has always been a mystery.

Surely the government is not suggesting that Quebecers who speak English should not have an equal opportunity to go to the polls to elect the people who will represent them for the next four years. Are they attempting to make the absurd argument that providing voter information in English would threaten the French language?

English-speaking Quebecers are not just Quebecers who speak English. They are co-builders of Quebec. Together they have jointly built, funded, managed and maintained an enviable network of schools, universities, hospitals, churches, community centres, libraries for the benefit and great pride of all Quebecers.

Let me repeat what I've said before. It is not entirely correct to say English-speaking Quebecers do not have any impact on Quebec election results. While it's true the number of English-speaking voters in the 127 electoral divisions of Quebec will have little direct effect at the polls, to argue English-speaking Quebecers do not influence election results is to suggest the Catholic Church did not have any sway over Quebec politics.

The election game-changer is not the number of English-speakers going to the polls, it's the number of French-speakers who work, live, play and support their communities side-by-side with Anglos and see them as allies and co-builders, and not the enemy.

Here in the Townships where English-speakers represent barely a blip on the radar, there is a historic relationship between the two language groups that

transcends the political flavour of any one election and rallies voters to protect what they have built together. English-speakers in the Townships, though small in number, are among the most bilingual people in Quebec, a demonstration of respect for their French-language neighbours and their desire to be participants in the daily life of Quebec and not mere observers.

It is very difficult for political leaders to alienate friends and neighbours and fabricate a sense of urgency to protect and preserve the French language and culture when all around there is evidence of the general acceptance of French as the predominant language of Quebec and the peaceful co-existence of Quebecers of all stripes.

What counts is what transpires between elections and each one of us has an equal say in that.

So if you believe creating obstacles for English-speakers to vote will change the result, amusez vous.

(Taxes included)
1-year paper \$50
6-months paper: \$29
1-year digital \$50
Outside Canada:
Contact office for a quote

Published every second **Wednesday** by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc. (Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)
208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0

Local Journalism Initiative

Member of:
QCNA

Tel: 418-752-5400 speccs@globetrotter.net

The Caspe Spec
ESTABLISHED MAY 2015

SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes (address & phone number will not be printed). The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher's liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issue or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Elaine Sexton
Hayden Sams
Bonita Annett
Greg Leblanc
Steven Parent
Marjorie Lepage
Cheryl Leggo
Patricia Ste-Croix Annett

News Editor:
Gilles Gagné
Circulation/Office Manager:
Holly Smith
Sales Manager:
Emily Hocquard
Office Assistant:
Jillian O'Connell
Journalists:
Nelson Sergerie,
Cynthia Dow,
Diane Skinner,
Mary Robertson,
Jeanie Lelacheur

Fraud case: Godbout ruling set for October 22

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – On October 22, the court will rule on a plea agreement reached between the prosecution and the defence in the fraud case involving Bruno-Pierre Godbout, a former Chandler municipal councillor for the Newport district.

On September 8, Mr. Godbout’s lawyer, Arianne Cayer, told the court at the Percé courthouse that an agreement had been reached in the case involving charges of fraud, forgery and the use of forged documents. The alleged offences occurred while Mr. Godbout was serving as acting mayor in 2021.

Quebec’s Anti-Corruption Unit (UPAC) estimated the alleged fraud at approximately \$10,000.

In January 2024, UPAC indicated that its investigation suggested that between February 1 and July 31, 2021, Mr. Godbout, who was serving as

acting mayor during the suspension of former mayor Louise Langlois by the Quebec Municipal Commission, produced and used false expense reimbursement claims.

Violent crime charges

Mr. Godbout had previously withdrawn his bail hearing application after being charged in a separate case involving alleged violent crimes against two victims last June. He faces five charges, including sexual assault, criminal harassment, forcible confinement and assault.

A publication ban prevents the identification of the victims.

The alleged incidents occurred in Chandler, Saint-Damien-de-Buckland, in the Chaudière-Appalaches region and Montreal.

In a separate case, on May 1, Mr. Godbout was sentenced



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

to 36 months in prison after pleading guilty on January 20 to six of the 12 charges against him.

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

Sun glare blamed for fatal snowmobile crash

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Sun glare as he approached a curve caused Stevens Isabel, 63, of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, to veer off the trail in a fatal snowmobile accident on February 22 in Rivière-à-Claude, in Haute-Gaspésie.

That is the conclusion reached by coroner Nicolas Lutzenkirchen, who investigated the death.

Mr. Isabel was snowmobiling with two friends. The group

had left Mont-Saint-Pierre and was heading toward Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, with Mr. Isabel travelling at the rear.

As he approached a curve, Mr. Isabel was reportedly blinded by the sun. He attempted to correct his course, but his snowmobile veered onto the shoulder and tipped over into a ravine. Mr. Isabel struck a tree during the fall.

When one of his companions noticed that Mr. Isabel was no longer following, the two friends turned back. They dis-

covered snowmobile tracks veering sharply off the trail and spotted him at the bottom of the ravine.

The impact against the tree had pinned Mr. Isabel in the ravine. The snowmobile was on top of him, and he was found face down with his face and head buried in the snow for approximately 20 minutes.

Mr. Isabel died of asphyxiation. Toxicological tests showed no drugs or alcohol in his system. The coroner ruled the death accidental.

Sharp rise in unemployment in August

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The unemployment rate jumped by 2.2 percentage points to 7.5% in August in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region. According to Statistics Canada, 1,000 part-time jobs were lost during the month, bringing the total to 5,700, while the number of full-time jobs remained stable at 34,000.

In total, 39,700 people were employed in the region in August. The number of unemployed people rose by 900 to 3,200. Approximately 200 people left the labour force, which declined from 43,100 in July to 42,900 in August.

Higher than August 2025

The region lost 1,200 jobs compared to the same period last year. In August 2025, 41,000 people were employed, including 35,000 full-time workers. At that time, approximately 2,300 people were unemployed and the unemployment rate stood at 5.3%.

Across Canada, employment fell by 42,000, or 0.2%, in August, while the unemployment rate remained at 6.4%. In Quebec, employment declined by 19,000, or 0.4%, while the unemployment rate remained at 5.6%.

For Employment Insurance (EI) purposes, a different unemployment rate is used. For the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine EI economic region, that rate is currently 10.3%. From September 6 to October 10, workers need 525 insurable hours to qualify for regular EI benefits. Depending on the number of insurable hours accumulated, claimants may receive between 21 and 45 weeks of regular benefits. EI benefits are calculated using a claimant’s 17 best weeks of earnings.

Police report

Paspebiac man killed in car crash

A man in his fifties died following a single-vehicle crash in Paspébiac early on September 18. Emergency services were called at approximately 2:30 a.m. to Chapados Street, near 5th Avenue. According to preliminary information from the Sûreté du Québec, the driver, who was alone in the vehicle, lost control for reasons that remain under investigation. The vehicle left the road and struck a tree. The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

Fire heavily damages Nouvelle arena

A September 12 fire caused extensive damage to the Nouvelle arena, also referred to as Centre sportif Louis Sleighter. "The emergency services were called at 11:30 a.m. The cause of the fire was under investigation from the first day, even if we had no reason to suspect foul play. After the investigation we can conclude that an electrical problem was the cause of the fire," points out Sûreté du Québec communications officer Frédéric Deshaies.

Even though the structure over the rink and three walls of the building are still standing, Marc Côté, fire chief of the eastern part of the Avignon MRC, states that the degree of destruction will likely spell the end of the building erected in 1978. It was still heavily used by the community for hockey, skating, summer events and other activities. For now, the municipal council will assess the situation and make decisions later about the future of the arena.

White shark attack in Percé

On September 16, a white shark reportedly attacked a diver near Bonaventure Island, off the coast of Percé. The Canadian Coast Guard’s Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in Quebec received a call at approximately 10:27 a.m. reporting that a diver from the YODA, a dive boat that is also a member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, had reportedly been bitten by a shark. Ambulance services were dispatched to Percé to attend to the victim upon the vessel’s arrival. The man reportedly told first responders that he had been bitten by a shark. According to reports, he sustained serious injuries and was taken to the hospital. Due to the severity of his condition, he was transferred to a Quebec City hospital, where he is reportedly in stable condition.

The Percé Diving Club issued a statement on the afternoon of September 16 confirming the incident. "Out of respect for the privacy of the individual involved, no further details regarding this matter will be released." The organization stated that, as a precautionary measure, all diving activities have been suspended for the remainder of the season.

Gaspé man receives conditional sentence

Douglas Quirion, a 64-year-old man from Gaspé, will serve a sentence of two years less a day at home for sexual contact with a person under the age of 16. His sentence was rendered at the Percé courthouse on the afternoon of September 9. Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida sided with the defence. In July, the defence lawyer, Mike Junior Boudreau, had asked the court to order a conditional sentence of 18 to 24 months—meaning it would be served in the community. The prosecution had asked Judge Almeida to sentence Mr. Quirion to a two-year prison term.

Douglas Quirion will be required to provide a DNA sample, and his name will be listed in the sex offender registry for 20 years. The Gaspé resident had also been found guilty of sexual assault against the same victim. However, a conditional stay of proceedings was ordered this summer for that charge. Consequently, the sentence Mr. Quirion received relates only to the charge of sexual contact. A conditional stay of proceedings is generally granted to avoid multiple convictions when several charges are based on the same facts or events.

The individual’s sentence includes a three-year probation period. During this time, he must comply with numerous conditions, notably avoiding contact with his victim and refraining from being in her physical presence. The individual will also be prohibited from being within a 500-metre radius of the victim’s home.

For five years, Mr. Quirion will also be barred from going near places frequented by minors, such as daycares, school grounds, or community centres. He will also be prohibited from possessing weapons for a period of 10 years. Failure to comply with any of the conditions could result in him serving the remainder of his sentence in prison.

Judge Almeida took into account as mitigating factors that the accused had been a productive member of society for some sixty years and had no criminal record prior to his arrest. However, the judge considered the victim’s age at the time of the events, the significant impact on the victim and the fact that Mr. Quirion had abused a child’s trust as aggravating factors.

Student residence moves forward in Grande-Rivière

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – A student residence project in Grande-Rivière for students attending the École des pêches et de l’aquaculture du Québec (ÉPAQ) and the Adult Education Centre of the René-Lévesque School Service Centre has reached an important milestone with the awarding of contracts for plans and specifications.

The project was submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education in September 2023.

Two contracts for architectural and engineering services totaling nearly \$345,000 have been awarded to design an 868-square-metre residence comprising 24 two-and-a-half-room apartments—including three units accessible for handicapped people—as well as a lounge area and a laundry room.

The complex will be simi-



Photo: Gilles Gagné

The proposed Grande-Rivière student residence will be similar to the complex built in Carleton-sur-Mer.

lar to the student residence in Carleton-sur-Mer. The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles has commissioned the same firms to adapt the existing plans and specifications to the Grande-Rivière site and provide site supervision.

The use of the same contractors is justified under public contracting rules by the intellectual property rights they hold over the existing plans. Bourbeau Proulx Savard was awarded the architectural contract for \$187,289,

while Stantec Experts-Conseils received the engineering contract for \$157,300.

A partnership has been established with the René-Lévesque School Service Centre, which owns the land near the adult education centre

and not far from ÉPAQ. The Cégep will own the residence.

Some apartments will be reserved for students attending the adult education centre, while the majority will be reserved for ÉPAQ students.

In April, the Quebec government authorized the Cégep to move forward with this phase of the project.

The Cégep hopes to secure the necessary funding to begin construction during the 2027–2028 academic year.

The Carleton-sur-Mer residence includes 24 affordable apartments and was built at a cost of \$7.7 million, with 75% of the cost funded by the Quebec government.

The residence was inaugurated last August.

However, new student residence projects are now funded by the province at a rate of 50%.

SUNNY BANK:

▶ *Cont'd from Cover*

intended to compensate people for their fear of recurring flooding in Sunny Bank. The judgment also provided for the damages people could claim for the losses they suffered. The amounts varied from person to person. That was already provided for. What the settlement agreement primarily addresses are the amounts for property damage,” explains Ms. Sauvé.

The agreement establishes lump-sum amounts, while the Department of Civil Protection waives its right to recover amounts it previously paid to cover part of the damages resulting from the flood.

Members will still be able to claim “extraordinary” damages by submitting supporting documentation to the claims administrator.

Those who believe the amounts remain insufficient may pursue an individual



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Class-action lawyer Marie-Anaïs Sauvé.

claim in court, but could be required to repay compensation already paid by the ministry.

West York Boulevard reconstruction

The reconstruction of West York Boulevard between Sunny Bank and Wakeham remains unresolved.

The original ruling required the work to be completed within six years.

The Ministry of Transport (MTQ) requested an additional seven years because of environmental impact studies, a requirement that has since been eliminated.

“This timeline would be shortened. We are still awaiting a specific timeline, but we could expect a reduction of two years. The bridge would be completed within 11 years. This timeline will be confirmed shortly,” notes Ms. Sauvé.

The lawyer notes that while the court has ruled on the issue, the MTQ maintains that it will not be able to meet the original deadline.

“To find an appropriate solution with the members, we are trying to work out a solution—the details of which I will not disclose,” she says.

If another flood similar to the one in 2010 were to occur, further legal action could be

possible.

“At that point, it would be surprising if the ministry were to dispute its liability. We already have a ruling stating that the bridge’s design is responsible for the flooding. If flooding occurs due to water levels that could not have passed under the bridge, the members may be entitled to damages,” explains Ms. Sauvé.

If the court approves the settlement agreement, a firm will be selected to administer the claims.

Approximately 200 residents and 98 buildings were affected by the 2010 flood.

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

The road connecting Sunny Bank and Wakeham, which was rebuilt in 1977, impedes the flow of the York River.

Previously, the road was at water level, allowing the roadway to flood when the river

overflowed.

After the road was raised by 1.5 metres in 1952, it was recognized that it partially obstructed the river’s flow.

In 1977, the road was raised by another two metres, further restricting the flow of water.

The devastating 2010 flood eventually led residents to take legal action.

Residents filed their class action in 2013, and it was certified by the court in 2015.

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

Timeline

December 15, 2010: Flooding in Sunny Bank - **March 23, 2015:** Class action certified - **2019 and 2021:** Hearings on the class action - **June 29, 2022:** Court rules in favour of the flood victims.

PROPOSED COMPENSATION			
PROPERTY DAMAGE	PROPOSED PAYMENT	DISRUPTION AND INCONVENIENCE	PROPOSED PAYMENT
Building with flooded ground floor	\$20,000	Building with ground-floor flooding	\$3,000 per member
Building with flooded inhabited basement	\$10,000	Building with basement flooding	\$2,000 per member
Per flooded room	\$4,000	Building with crawl-space flooding	\$500 per member
Replaced furnace	\$2,000	Building that was not flooded	\$250 per member
Damaged furnace	\$1,000		
Pump requiring replacement	\$1,000		
Replaced water heater	\$1,000		
Flooded shed or storage shed	\$1,000		
Flooded landscaped or maintained property	\$500		
All amounts are subject to court approval.			

mine closed.

"The price was 60 cents a pound when the mine closed and it is between \$5 and \$6 now. What was once considered low-grade ore is becoming attractive. The project's profitability remains to be determined; technical and economic feasibility studies have yet to be conducted," she explains.

Noranda Mines, the operator of the mines from their opening to their closure, ceased operations at the Murdochville copper smelter in April 2002. Between October 1999 and April 2002, that smelter was supplied exclusively with imported ore.

The potential presence of 673 million pounds of molybdenum and 93 million ounces of silver—two metals worth significantly more than copper by weight—would also add value to the mine.

Relocate or stay put

In the spring, during consultations held by Osisko Metals with various Murdochville citizens' groups, the company



Photo: Gilles Gagné

A potential relocation of the town is being considered by residents and the company to move outside the mining zone.

presented the proposed mining perimeter. The area to be mined does not encroach on the inhabited zone; however, the mining benches—or steps—required for potential operations would extend into part of the built-up area, as a deep mine "cannot be defined by a vertical wall," notes Ann Lamontagne.

It was during these meetings that the possibility of relocating the town several kilometres outside the mining

perimeter was discussed.

Three scenarios were considered: leaving the town where it is, relocating it, or the possibility of there being no mining development at all.

"Two people expressed opposition to relocation. Other citizens are open to relocation, 'provided we preserve our social fabric and keep our services,' they told us," Ms. Lamontagne explains.

Keeping the town where it is would reduce the area avail-

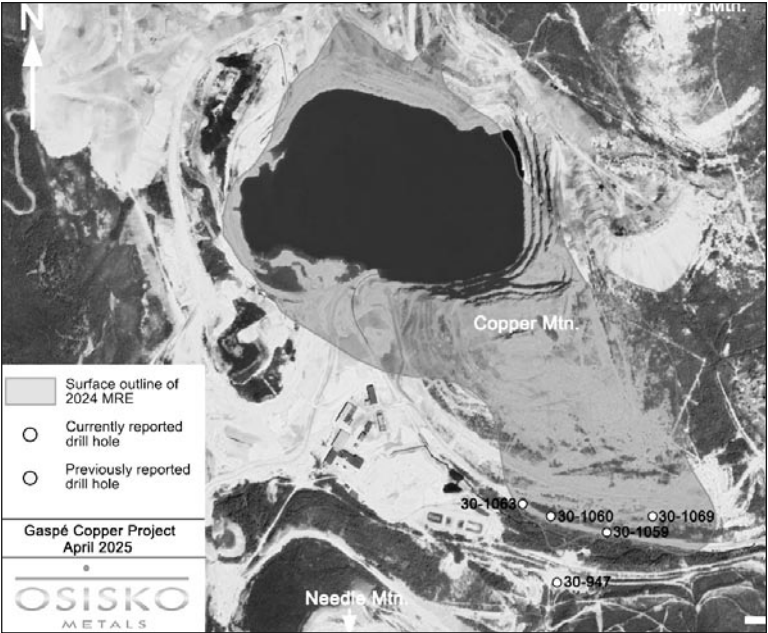


Photo: Osisko Metals

This aerial view shows the mineralized zone in red and its proximity to the town limits on the right.

able for Osisko Metals to mine, she adds.

"The project will have to be adapted and scaled down. We'll have to decide if it's still viable. You can't have the edge of a mine pit right next to the town and leave the town there. We're going to move forward based on the most plausible scenarios," says Ann Lamontagne.

She notes that 25% of the population attended the ten or so meetings held by Osisko

Metals during the first half of 2026.

The Town of Murdochville will launch its own consultation process—focusing in particular on the future of its streets—in the coming days. Osisko Metals will not participate in these consultations.

"I can't see myself walking into a town council meeting and saying, 'Make up your minds!' No, no, that's not how it's done," Ann Lamontagne asserts.

Murdochville mine project

By the numbers



5,000

Murdochville population in the 1970s



650

Current population



200,000 tonnes/day

Ore concentrator processing capacity



140,000 tonnes/year

Mine capacity, in smelted copper equivalent



\$4–5 billion

Estimated investment required for mine development



1,000–1,500

Construction jobs



1,000+

Operational jobs, depending on the selected scenario



2032

Scheduled opening

Copper and mineral resources

Based on April 2026 data

1.834 billion tonnes

Measured and indicated resources at 0.27% copper

239 million tonnes

Inferred resources at 0.41% copper

10.8 billion lb.

Copper contained in measured and indicated resources

673 million lb.

Molybdenum

93 million oz.

Silver

Copper concentrate buyer:

Glencore

(under a 2022 agreement)

There are many steps ahead

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Over the coming months, Osisko Metals will work on preparing a preliminary economic assessment, which it plans to submit in the fall of 2027. The study will present various scenarios regarding the potential scale of the mining restart in Murdochville.

"This study includes a 'risks and opportunities' chapter featuring the conceptual [mining] pit used to calculate resource estimates. We will refine the process after 2027," notes Ann Lamontagne.

A more detailed economic study is expected to be submitted in 2028. It will include a technical study and a comparison of different mining scenarios.

An environmental impact assessment covering a 170-square-kilometre area around Murdochville is currently underway in anticipation of potential consultations by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) sometime between 2029 and 2031.

Dewatering the Mount Copper mine—where 35 million cubic metres of water have accumulated since its closure in the 1980s—is the subject of a research project that could lead as early as 2027 to "bridging" (or controlled discharge), the slow process of draining this water into the York River, a salmon river.

"Production could potentially begin in 2032," indicates Ann Lamontagne.

The workforce during the construction phase could range from 1,000 to 1,500 workers. Open-pit mining operations would employ at least 1,000 workers, according to the latest data from Osisko Metals.

In 2022, Osisko Metals reached an agreement with mining giant Glencore—owner of the Horne smelter in Rouyn-Noranda—regarding the purchase of concentrate production from the planned Murdochville facilities, or at the very least, a right of first refusal. Glencore could send this ore to the Horne division, but it also owns smelters elsewhere in the world.

Incidentally, Glencore had owned the "Gaspé Mines" property since the 2010s before selling it to Osisko Metals under an agreement reached in 2022 and finalized the following year.

Noranda Minerals, the original owner of the Murdochville facilities, was absorbed by Falconbridge after the smelter closed; Falconbridge was subsequently acquired by Xstrata, which was in turn integrated into Glencore.

Page 7, September 23, 2026 - Spec

Elections: Gaspé mayor calls for “true decentralization”

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – The mayor of Gaspé is calling for genuine decentralization of powers to better address regional realities as the provincial election campaign is in full swing ahead of the October 5 vote.

“We figure that if our programs were tailored to our realities, we probably would have already resolved the issue of the Gaspé arena or the detour road at Pointe-Navarre. There are plenty of issues we could resolve more quickly and prioritize how we want to spend the money, rather than having our priorities dictated by people in Quebec City and Montreal who lead successive governments,” says Daniel Côté.

Under such an approach, he believes infrastructure and



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

transportation issues could be addressed more effectively.

“How can we break down the silos between specialized

training programs? We have an excellent example: in adventure tourism, we’ve attracted people from outside the region who ended up staying here. Conversely, we have a shortage of wildlife officers, but the program is offered in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean. There’s no shortage of officers there because the program is offered there,” says Mr. Côté.

On housing, the mayor says the region has succeeded in securing funding through the recent housing initiative.

“The housing initiative must continue. As far as I know, responsibility for housing lies with the provincial government. It seems as though it has become a municipal responsibility, but it should be the province’s responsibility—with integrated

programs to effectively meet the community’s needs,” explains the mayor.

Economically, Mr. Côté believes wind power and shipbuilding should be important assets for the region.

“It’s not right that wind farms are being built with Chinese components. That was before the Trump era. Now imagine the era of tariffs and counter-tariffs. We don’t want the wind power, shipbuilding, and fishing industries to be forgotten. We want them to be taken into account, and we want Quebec to buy from Quebec—and Quebec isn’t just Quebec City and Montreal. Regions with specialized niches must also benefit,” exclaims Mr. Côté.

The mayor also outlined what he believes true decentralization should look like.

“It’s fine for there to be major provincial priorities, as

long as they align with the realities of the regions. Local elected officials are also accountable. Citizens can ask us, the elected officials, questions directly. In real life, we’re even more accountable,” he says.

In the past, the Quebec government has transferred responsibilities to municipalities without providing the necessary funding.

Rather than presenting the government with a “shopping list,” the mayor prefers to focus on the broader issue of decentralization.

“Take the Town’s three-year capital plan, which totals \$185 million in projects—that would be the shopping list. But I don’t want to come in with that list because I’d be asked to prioritize. No, everything is a priority,” he says, noting that half of the plan consists of water and sewer projects.

Groups call for concrete action from candidates

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – Five civil society groups are calling on candidates in the October 5 provincial election to take a stand on a policy statement titled Oser pour vrai (“Dare to Be Real”) and to set ambitious goals for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

The Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS) launched the campaign in June 2025.

The Table de concertation féministe, the the Regroupement des organismes communautaires Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine (ROCGIM), the Groupe ressource en logements collectifs, and the Réseau de développement social have since joined the APTS.

The coalition is focusing on housing and living conditions, regional development and public services, health and social services, and social and demographic realities.

“There has been a lot of talk in recent years about staff shortages, overwork, and the deterioration of access to care—all of which are linked to the housing shortage. When we go out to recruit, we’ve encountered people who had nowhere to live. Childcare centres are a major issue. I



Photo: Courtesy of the APTS union

have 15 employees who are considering delaying their return to work due to a lack of daycare spots. These are losses for our region. We need the candidates to take a stand,” says Jenny Tardif, spokesperson for the coalition and APTS representative for Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

The coalition says the issues it is raising have been known for at least a decade, with little concrete progress made.

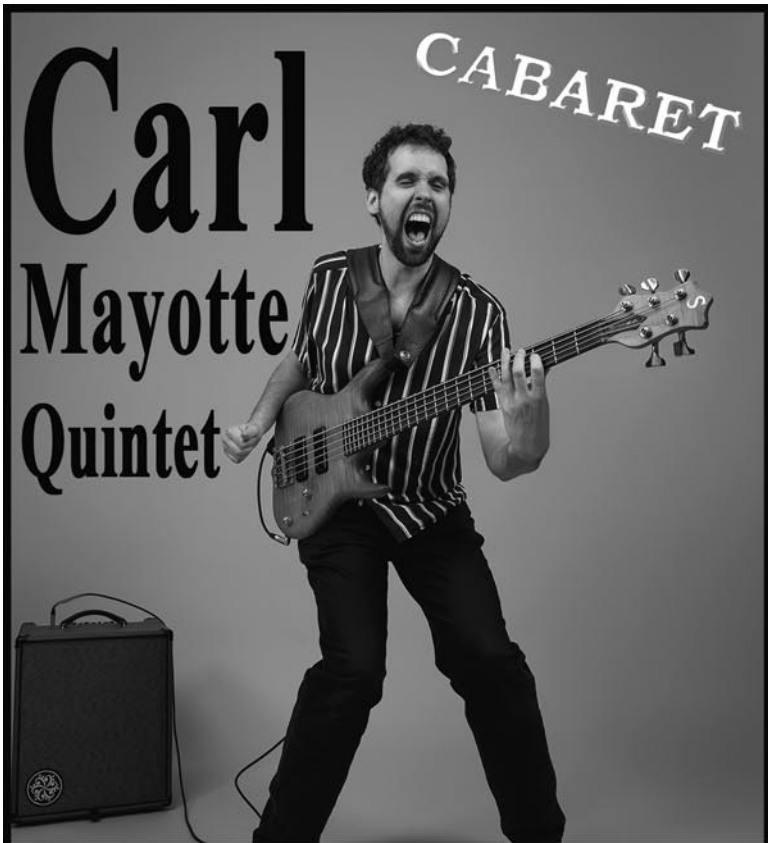
“These are issues that have been dragging on. We’re facing a constant and growing labour shortage. There are questions that need to be asked at the political level: why aren’t people interested in certain types of jobs anymore?” asks Ms. Tardif.

Funding is another source of uncertainty. “Now we have to figure out where to set our priorities because we’re in a vicious cycle. No housing, no daycare centres—families

aren’t settling in—and services are becoming increasingly difficult to provide due to the shortage. The shortage puts additional pressure on staff, and sick leave is on the rise. It’s a vicious cycle,” explains Ms. Tardif.

At the same time, several sectors are offering incentives to attract workers to the Gaspé Peninsula. “We need solutions,” demands the spokesperson.

The coalition recognizes that its demands will not result in every issue being resolved immediately. “It’s not that everything will be resolved, but that the party in power will make this a priority. There’s a way to address these issues, but if the decision is made to change nothing, we’ll be stuck in a vicious cycle in the long term. In healthcare, if there are no priorities, we’ll have to anticipate service disruptions and a decline in the quality of care,” says Ms. Tardif.



Carl Mayotte, bassist, composer, arranger, and educator, is one of the leading figures in contemporary jazz fusion in Québec, standing out for his dazzling virtuosity, impeccable rhythmic precision, and signature sense of groove. He blends discipline with stage energy, creating a powerful and accessible musical universe that draws on modern jazz, progressive rock, funk, and Latin influences. With his own ensemble, he presents bold compositions driven by rich harmonies and complex rhythms, fueled by a deep desire to connect with the audience and offer a truly unique experience at every concert.

Thursday, October 8 | 8 pm
Ticket information: 418-392-4238
WWW.SPECTACLESNEWRICHMOND.COM



Railway issues dominate debate in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – As the only media debate held in the Gaspé riding ahead of the October 5 election, the issue of railway rehabilitation sparked the most heated exchanges among the four candidates participating in the event organized by CHNC and Télé-Gaspé.

The incumbent Member of the National Assembly (MNA) was targeted by his opponents, while Stéphane Sainte-Croix had to defend his record during part of the open discussion and during the segment where candidates asked each other questions.

Parti Québécois (PQ) candidate Méganne Perry Mélançon launched the first attack on Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) candidate Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

“We’ve experienced unacceptable delays in bringing the train back to Gaspé. As early as 2018, it was announced that a complete overhaul would be undertaken. We were still working on it in 2022. Unlike the CAQ, we won’t carry out the overhaul solely because a company has a project that requires it. We need to focus on the population’s mobility,” suggests the PQ candidate, who wants to carry out this project responsibly, while denouncing the removal of the project from the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI) in March 2025. Liberal candidate Michel Marin made the same remark.

“Since then, we haven’t heard a thing,” she says, prompting a strong reaction from the incumbent MNA.

“I don’t just advocate. We’re taking action,” he said, pointing to the \$54 million in investments between Matapédia and Caplan and nearly \$300 million all the way to Port-Daniel-Gascons.

“There’s still the last stretch. We’re hard at work. We’ve allocated \$130 million in recent months to move forward with major infrastructure projects that were abandoned by the federal government and also by the PQ during its brief time in office. Construction worth \$10 million had been halted for a tourist train project that was already in operation,” replies Mr. Sainte-Croix.

In reality, then premier Pauline Marois, whose term started in September 2012 and ended in April 2014, earmarked \$10 million for bridge repairs. The work was carried out and interrupted when the Liberal Party government of Philippe Couillard was elected



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The candidates from left: Emmanuelle Babin, Michel Marin, Méganne Perry Mélançon and Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

in April 2014. Three years later, on May 5, 2017, Mr. Couillard announced \$100 million for the rehabilitation of the line to Gaspé but work only started in the summer of 2018.

“I actually got the impression that this train is moving backward—or isn’t a high-speed train at all,” said Quebec Solidaire candidate Emmanuelle Babin, who pointed out that this infrastructure has been neglected.

Michel Marin emphasized the importance of rehabilitating it, even adding that Quebec must develop a comprehensive rail system for its growth, noting that the project had regressed under the CAQ.

He even mentioned an old project from the 1950s in Haute-Gaspésie.

“If we’re talking about expanding rail service in the Gaspé Peninsula, my goal is to extend the rail line from Matane to the Haute-Gaspésie region. Going all the way around might be complicated,” the Liberal suggested.

Wind power

On several occasions in recent years, critics have spoken out against the use of wind turbine components sourced from outside Quebec to equip wind farms in the province.

“Yes, we need to have criteria, but we should develop a mechanism to compare prices with those on available markets to see if there’s any exaggeration,” says Michel Marin.

“We’re still focused on the lowest bidder. I always have this question because there’s an environmental cost to sourcing components from ever-greater distances. We need to reevaluate local procurement models. Why can’t the CAQ ensure a certain level of Quebec content?” asks Méganne Perry Mélançon, noting that the global market is changing.

“Energy is governed by a

free trade agreement. In an ideal world, we’d all like our wind farms to use components made in Quebec. With geopolitical changes and the trade war, we have decisions to make to stay within the bounds of our agreements. We hope our companies will be able to bid on our upcoming contracts,” says Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Health and social services

The labour shortage remains a major challenge for providing health care in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix points out that measures implemented by the CAQ have helped reduce the number of patients without a primary care physician, for example, and that additional funding for home care will help.

Several self-employed workers have joined Santé Québec Gaspésie.

“Emergency department wait times at our facilities are among the best in Quebec. I think that’s a concrete indicator of improvement,” says the CAQ candidate.

“We’ve neglected to take care of these people. With Québec solidaire, we want to offer attractive working conditions that make it easier to balance work and family life,” says Ms. Babin.

“There’s a lot of rhetoric in what Mr. Sainte-Croix is saying. I know people who still haven’t seen a doctor. We’re constantly understaffed, and we’re lucky to have immigrant workers stepping in to help,” notes Mr. Marin.

The Parti Québécois candidate says better results cannot be expected through putting more money in the health system’s management.

“We will no longer invest in the Santé Québec structure. These funds will be allocated directly to patient care, prevention, mental health—particu-

larly among young people—and promoting physical activity among the population,” says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

Murdochville

As Osisko increasingly raises the possibility of relocating the municipality of Murdochville in order to fully implement a potential restart of Mines Gaspé, the candidates are emphasizing social acceptability without taking a direct stance on the relocation.

“We mustn’t do this without taking the people of Murdochville into account. We need to consult with them. It

must be done responsibly and with respect for the people and the surrounding communities,” suggests Emmanuelle Babin, a Murdochville native.

“It’s an evolving situation. A consultation is underway. There are various scenarios on the table. This needs to be discussed with the citizens. I support the development project. We need to do this collaboratively. I’m looking to the future. I have big ambitions for the Gaspé Peninsula. As for the environment, I’ll tell you this: it takes resources if we want to take care of the environment,” says Michel Marin.

“It must be done with the citizens’ consent, in partnership with the local community. Social acceptability must be maintained to ensure structured and thoughtful development,” argues the CAQ candidate.

“Support will be essential for this project. We must be completely transparent about it. Yes, there are a few possible scenarios, but this is crucial for the development of the Gaspé Peninsula. We can’t just make an entire community disappear without finding out what people want in terms of relocation,” says Méganne Perry Mélançon. (with notes from Gilles Gagné)

No firm commitment from Méganne Perry Mélançon

Nelson Sergerie

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – While the Parti Québécois (PQ) is proposing measures to lower the cost of filling up a tank of gas during the election campaign, the candidate in Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, refuses to make clear commitments to voters, even though the riding has ranked among the top three most expensive places in Quebec to fill up for years.

On September 11, the PQ proposed cutting the Quebec sales tax (QST) on gasoline in half for at least one year and ending double taxation.

The party estimates this would save motorists about \$220 a year.

In addition, the PQ also wants to help nearly 50% of middle-class and lower-income Quebecers: all Quebecers with an individual income of less than \$40,000 would receive a \$125 gas price rebate due to the global oil crisis.

“This is one of the concerns raised by the people I meet,” notes Ms. Perry Mélançon during her election campaign.

Reports from the Régie de l’énergie have shown for the past decade that gas is sold at a higher price in the Gaspé riding.

Retailers’ profit margins are the most significant factor driving these higher prices.

At the start of the summer, the margin had doubled, averaging 25 cents per litre, while the average margin over the past year was 12 cents, according to the Régie.

When asked to specify a firm commitment regarding gas prices, the candidate remained rather evasive.

“I’ll have to look into the issue. The CAQ (Coalition Avenir Québec) has been in power for the past eight years. We’ll have to see what’s been done. It’s not among the commitments made during this campaign. I won’t go any further on the issue of a price cap. It’s more a matter of reviewing taxes. I can’t go any further than that for now regarding other solutions.”

The PQ candidate notes that the party wants to ensure there is no disparity between regions.

Chandler wharf deemed dangerous following recent inspection

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – A recent Transport Canada inspection of the defunct commercial wharf in Chandler has found that its condition has deteriorated to the point that it is dangerous for people to venture onto it.

The entrance is fenced off, but despite the warnings, some people continue to access the pier at their own risk.

Although the infrastructure is not the Town’s responsibility, mayor Gilles Daraïche says residents are directing their frustrations toward local authorities.

“It’s the last section that’s badly damaged. The steel caissons have come loose from the pier, and it’s dangerous. It doesn’t belong to us. Transport Canada is taking steps to close it down completely. We’re not the ones doing that,” says the mayor. Federal authorities have forwarded the results of the inspection to the Town.

The federal government has called upon the Sûreté du Québec to penalize repeat offenders. Fines could reach \$5,000 for repeat offences.

Recreational and tourism project

The deteriorated condition of the end of the wharf does not call into question the pro-

posed recreational and tourism pier project.

“People think the pier extends from the shore all the way to the end. The pier’s approach is still quite long. Everything that’s made of riprap is the pier’s approach. That’s going to stay there,” explains Mr. Daraïche.

Nearly a year ago, a 3D rendering of the proposed recreational and tourism pier was presented to residents.

While retaining the infrastructure’s current shape, the site would be revitalized with large green spaces along the shoreline, including a bike path.

At the approach to the pier, a dedicated fishing area would be added to the harbour and a marina would be built, providing a recreational boating facility between Gaspé and the Baie-des-Chaleurs.

A roundabout-style structure would be built at the end of the pier to allow vehicles to turn around and could also serve as a venue for cultural events. The boardwalk would provide space for street furniture and food trucks.

A refuelling station with electrical hookups would be provided for the marina, while a large winter storage facility is also planned for recreational boaters.

No cost estimate has been

submitted for the project, which must first go through the engineering phase.

In 2016, an assessment estimated the project at \$19 million, while a 2019 estimate put the cost of renovations at nearly \$40 million. More recent figures have reached as high as \$60 million.

The wharf was closed on September 30, 2016, for safety reasons because of its deteriorated condition. The facility was inaugurated in 1970 to serve the former Gaspésia paper mill, which closed in 1999. Between 2004 and 2018 inclusively, the wharf was mostly used by the cruise ship CTMA Vacancier.

Strong tourism season

The 2026 tourism season is going very well, according to feedback the mayor has received from local stakeholders.

“According to business owners, it’s been a very good season. Campgrounds have had a good season, and so have restaurants,” says Mr. Daraïche.

The Town allowed RV travellers to park in certain areas because campgrounds were fully booked.

“They could park on the side of the road or in public parking lots. We let them stay

there. It’s part of the camping experience. Sometimes you arrive at a time when there are no spots available. People were very happy. We’re glad to have been able to help them.”

Fighting vandalism

After a start to the season marred by vandalism, the incidents have since subsided. Chandler has purchased 50 surveillance cameras.

“We already had a few. The cameras have arrived. Fifty cameras will be installed in strategic locations to protect our assets,” explains the mayor.

The walking trails, Lake Vachon area and the channel will be among the locations equipped with cameras.

“These cameras are high-performance. They provide very clear images. We’ll be able to identify people and cars. This will give the Sûreté du Québec the tools to track down these individuals,” adds the mayor.

The cameras cost approximately \$60,000.

Lots on Commerciale Street

There is strong interest in the eight lots on Commerciale Street in the former Gaspésia



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Chandler Mayor Gilles Daraïche.

mill neighbourhood downtown.

“There have been offers. One is practically sold. Things are moving forward. We’re handling them one by one. In the medium term, there will be sales. We’re getting a lot of calls about these lots,” says the mayor.

However, there are no plans to build houses in the area.

“We might perhaps have an apartment on the second floor of a commercial building. We also want to preserve the character of Baie-des-Chaleurs,” says Mr. Daraïche, adding that the buildings will not be tall in order to protect the view of the sea.

A new director general for Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The Town of Percé has a new director general following the hiring of Sébastien Lajoie, who took office on September 21.

Town council approved his appointment by resolution on September 1.

He is the Town’s fifth director general in less than a decade and takes over from interim director general Claude Panneton, whose term ended on August 31.

Mr. Lajoie comes from Lac-Mégantic, where he served as fire chief.

“He has several years of experience working in municipalities as a director. He has a strong educational background: a master’s degree in public administration and is pursuing continuing



Photo: LinkedIn

Percé’s new director general, Sébastien Lajoie.

education in municipal law,” says mayor Daniel Leboeuf.

The mayor hopes the appointment will finally bring stability to the position.

“We hope so. But it’s Mr.

Lajoie’s intention—he’s ready to commit for at least five years. We’re encouraged by his enthusiasm,” says the mayor, who noted that the new director general is ready to settle in the municipality.

The new director general has a permanent contract.

Following Félix Caron’s departure in 2018, Percé has seen Jean-François Kacou, Jean-François Coderre and Michel Fréchette serve as director general.

The snack bar returns to the spotlight

The concession for the snack bar at the Tête d’Indien rest stop in the Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie sector continues to raise questions.

The concessionaire selected by the Town did not

operate the site this summer after being awarded the contract in late June, prompting Tia Caoile—who had operated at the site in recent years, offering an Asian-style menu, and is ready to resume operations—to question the contract award.

During question period at the September 1 council meeting, Ms. Caoile pointed out that council had given her the keys to the site even though it was scheduled to close in 2025 due to the bad state of the site.

She still has the keys in her possession.

Tensions rose at times during the discussion.

Ms. Caoile questioned the process that led to council’s decision and was supported by a few citizens who expressed their solidarity.

The mayor stated that even though no operations took place this summer due to delays in electrical work, the contract is being honoured.

“That’s the operator’s problem. As long as they pay their rent and fulfill their obligations—particularly site maintenance—that’s what they’re doing, to the best of my knowledge,” says the mayor.

The mayor responded to questions from Ms. Caoile, who raised concerns about what she considers a flawed process.

“It seems they are not satisfied with my answers from July, nor with those given tonight. If they suspect they have been financially wronged, sue us in small claims court,” he told them.

Local Business Directory

LOCAL BUSINESS
ADVERTISING SPECIALS
CONTACT US TODAY FOR DETAILS!



Sales Manager
Emily Hocquard

 **418-752-5400**
sales.gaspespec@gmail.com

LES ENTREPRISES
PEC INC.

No R.B.Q.: 8003-3228-31
ENTREPRENEUR GÉNÉRAL

152A Chemin de St-Edgar, New Richmond (Québec)

www.entreprisespec.com



AXIO
ARPENTEURS - GÉOMÈTRES

AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors
151B, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

Alexandre Babin, Arpenteur-géomètre
C abag@axioag.com
Guillaume Lapierre, Arpenteur-géomètre
C glag@axioag.com

Membre de l'Ordre
des Arpentiers-Géomètres du Québec

418 534-3113 / info@axioag.com
axioag.com

LFG
CONSTRUCTION

PROUD PARTNER IN YOUR
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
SINCE 1975 !
constructionlfg.com

418 364-7082 / 1-844-664-7082

Gaspésie-Les Îles | Côte-Nord | Bas-Saint-Laurent

BÂTIMENT ÉNERGIE ET GÉNIE CIVIL MÉCANIQUE INDUSTRIELLE



ENERGY
TRANSPORTATION GROUP

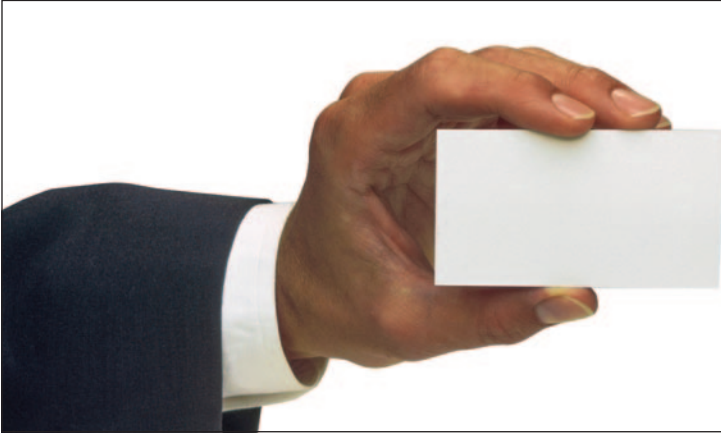
WHAT MAKES US
DRIVEN TO BE DIFFERENT?



www.shipENERGY.com



DISCOVER MORE



**This banner
could be yours!**

\$1495/year
Payment plans
available



**EASTERN QUEBEC
LITERACY
COUNCIL**

Helping Adults with Everyday Skills

We provide **free** one-on-one tutoring for adults 16+ who want to build confidence and **skills that matter**.
Get help with reading, writing, using your cellphone or tablet, understanding basic finances, and more!
Learn at your own pace with friendly, personalized support.

info@eqlit.ca   www.eqlit.ca



Hidden Treasures Flea Market

COME VISIT US AT OUR NEW LOCATION

HOURS

WEDNESDAY	1 PM - 4 PM
FRIDAY	1 PM - 4 PM
FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH	9 AM - 12 PM

 137, Boul. Gerard D. Levesque
New-Carlisle, QC G0C 1Z0

 **(418) 752-8514**  **DROP-OFF ON SITE**

**FLEA MARKET
DONATIONS WANTED!**

- Clothing (all sizes)
- Household Items
- Sports Equipment
- Baby Items
- Large Furniture



OGPAC +  = 

Gaspesian organization for
people affected by cancer

**SUPPORT
SHARING
ACCOMPANIMENT
MUTUAL AID**

1 888 924-5050 | ogpac.ca

Incumbent MNA Catherine Blouin targeted during electoral debate

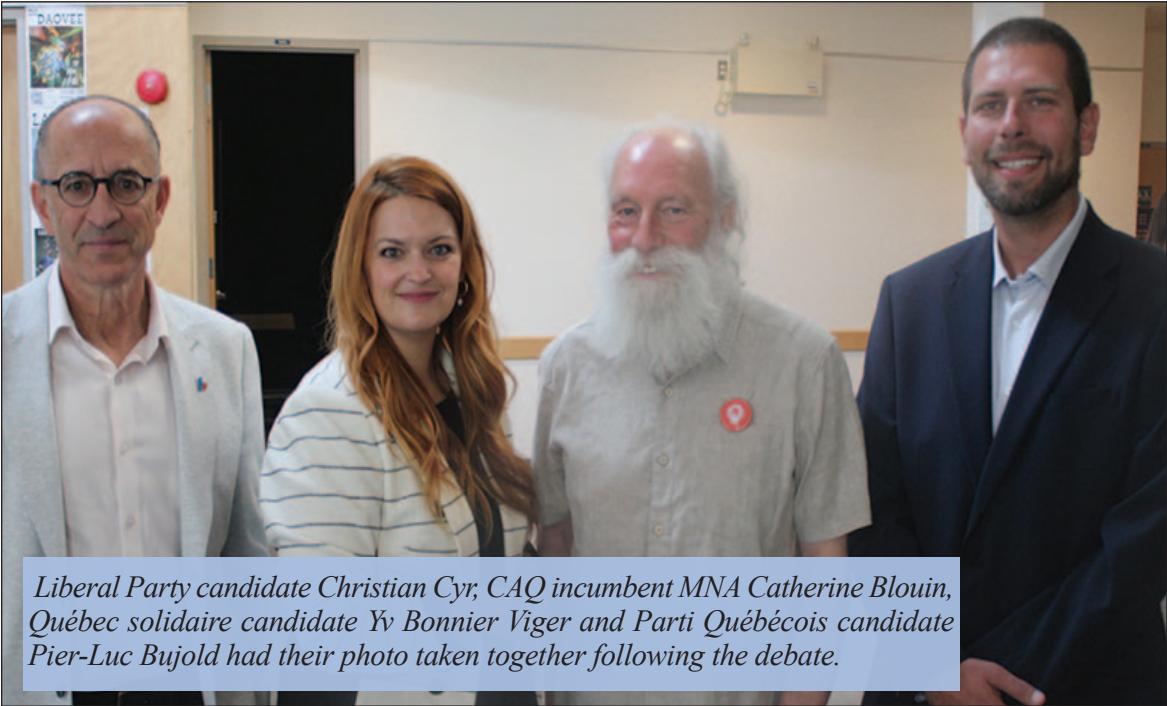
GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Catherine Blouin, Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Bonaventure, was frequently challenged by her three opponents during the September 16 debate organized by Carleton’s CIEU-FM radio station.

Most of the time, she responded energetically to questions from her opponents, although on some occasions she shifted to another topic rather than directly answering the question.

It was the first debate held in Bonaventure during the campaign. It was also the first public appearance of Ms. Blouin and the Liberal Party candidate Christian Cyr, on the 21st day of the electoral campaign. Québec Solidaire’s candidate Yv Bonnier Viger, a doctor, and Pier-Luc Bujold, a nurse running for the Parti Québécois, have been in regular contact with the media since the beginning of the campaign on August 27. Conservative Party of Québec candidate Dominique Côté has been invisible since the beginning of the campaign.

The debate was divided into 10 short periods, with one topic addressed during each period. SPEC presents some of the issues raised and statements made by the candidates.



Liberal Party candidate Christian Cyr, CAQ incumbent MNA Catherine Blouin, Québec solidaire candidate Yv Bonnier Viger and Parti Québécois candidate Pier-Luc Bujold had their photo taken together following the debate.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

Access to health care and related travel costs

“Travel fees after getting health care far from the user’s place should be totally reimbursed. Our health care is supposed to be universally free and this includes travel. The health system must be rehabilitated.” (Yv Bonnier Viger, QS)

Should the funding for private schools be abolished?

“People are not equal upon starting in life when we have a three-tier school system. Wealthy people get a head

start in a system that is allowed to pick and choose the best students. All the money sent to private schools should be repatriated to public schools.” (Yv Bonnier Viger) Note: Ms. Blouin did not state whether she favours cutting public funding for private schools.

Access to housing and ownership

“We can accelerate the construction of housing units through the use of pre-fabricated techniques. It is faster and we have already used them to build whole streets in the past.” (Christian Cyr of the LPQ)

“Housing is not a merchandise; it is a fundamental right.” (Yv Bonnier Viger)

The shortage of manpower and places in daycares

“It (the government) didn’t provide the working conditions and sufficient salaries to attract new daycare workers and keep them.” (Pier-Luc Bujold, PQ) Note: Mr. Bujold was the only candidate to raise the issue of daycare workers’ salaries during this portion of the debate.

The difficulties of the forestry industry

“We must use more wood

in public constructions.” (Catherine Blouin, CAQ)

“We must increasingly integrate wood in construction norms.” (Christian Cyr, LPQ)

Is it possible to curtail the price of gas?

“If we subsidize the price of gasoline, we will just consume more of it. We must improve transportation networks, and favour the affordability of electric cars.” (Yv Bonnier Viger, QS)

Is the political weight of the Gaspé Peninsula declining despite saving the region’s two ridings?

“Our plan was not to increase from 125 to 127 the number of National Assembly seats. We hadn’t expected the opposition of the Laurentides region to keeping our two seats while staying at 125 seats. We have more weight with two seats out of 127 than one seat over 125.” (Catherine Blouin, CAQ)

Following the debate, Fay Ministe, a fictional character played by Catherine Cyr Wright of the Feminist Roundtable of the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands, used the question period to deplore the lack of discussion about issues such as women’s rights, poverty and violence.

Gaspésie still relies on 100 independent contractors

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Santé Québec Gaspésie has been granted an additional year to meet its staffing needs internally, as the regional health network still relies on approximately 100 independent contractors to maintain services to patients.

The provincial government passed legislation requiring the health network to phase out the use of independent labour over a three-year period, with remote regions given until October 2026 to meet the requirement.

Faced with significant staffing challenges, the government has now granted an additional year to achieve that goal.

“We’re working hard to reduce the use of independent contractors. It’s yielding results. Time was passing, and mid-October was approach-



Photo: Santé Québec Gaspésie

Alain Vézina.

ing quickly. To maintain service availability and the quality of care in the Gaspé Peninsula, this extension will allow us to continue our efforts. This is good news for the people of the Gaspé Peninsula,” explains Alain

Vézina, director of human resources.

Since the provincial government announced plans to phase out the use of independent workers, their numbers have declined by approximately 30% annually over the past two years.

“We’ve reached in the past a number of independent contractors of over 200. Today, the figure hovers around 100. It’s important to understand that the people working as independent contractors here live elsewhere in Quebec. It’s a challenge not only to reintegrate them into the health-care system but also to convince them to move to the region,” says Mr. Vézina.

An initiative launched in recent weeks has resulted in the recruitment of approximately 15 people, using a personalized approach to attract workers to the region.

“We offer relocation al-

lowances for people who would like to move here. There are also incentives for certain job categories.”

Santé Québec Gaspésie now has another year to complete the transition away from independent labour.

“Yes. We have to. We’ve been given a reprieve. We’ll either have to hire more staff or reorganize the workload. We’re exploring different avenues because there are several solutions to the problem, and we’re trying to identify the most promising ones,” suggests Mr. Vézina.

According to the director, workers who come to the region have positive things to say about the regional health-care network.

Santé Québec Gaspésie is not currently able to quantify the costs of its recruitment efforts.

“There are several initiatives underway. There is a

current budget, but we’d need to define the accounting scope. However, everything we consider necessary is being done.”

Staffing needs remain in physical health care at hospitals, as well as in support services for seniors, residential care facilities, youth centres and rehabilitation services.

Internationally trained workers are another potential solution.

This year, workers already living in the Gaspé Peninsula who received professional training in their home countries are taking refresher courses to allow them to work in their respective fields.

“These people are back in school. We’re talking about about twenty people who are taking refresher courses with the goal of joining the workforce,” says Mr. Vézina.

2026 Bluegrass Festival “one of the best”

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The 24th Bluegrass Festival, held between September 2 and 6 at New Richmond’s Duthie’s Point, was marked by “excellent” attendance, despite some periods of heavy rain on the third day of the event and uncertain weather at times.

Reached nine days after the event’s conclusion, Bluegrass Festival coordinator and president Mike Geraghty rates the 2026 results as some of the best in 24 years.

“It was excellent, surprisingly, despite the weather. You never know. Last year, we had perfect weather but more people came this year. We have been working hard at trying to get the locals. We tried a free Friday, and that brought out more people from New Richmond. I’ll know a little more in a couple of weeks, when we will have all the numbers. For now, we are still busy tearing down some installations and paying the bills,” explains Mr. Geraghty.

The festival started very strongly on Wednesday, September 2, he mentions.

“A lot of people came on Wednesday night. In fact, it was packed. So, we had four big evening crowds. We had standing room only on Friday and Saturday. We hope, with the free night, if we decide to keep it, that the locals will keep coming. The idea was to get publicity from it and it worked,” underlines Mike Geraghty.

This year’s festival didn’t break an attendance record, but it was one of the best. “It rates in the top two or three. In 2024, we had Dan Tyminski, a huge name, and it was the best of the last several years. As I said, Wednesday night brought in a lot of people, and Pamela Rooney also draws big crowds. It was a very strong start,” he insists.

The rain, especially on Friday afternoon and Friday evening, had little effect on attendance. “Most of the people who come with RVs are ready for it. Often at the festival, people in RVs have their parties in their little corner and don’t always come to the barn. Where it helped this year is that the rain made people get to the barn,” says Mr. Geraghty.

He praises the contribution of the volunteers. “We have about 40 volunteers and a lot of them do a lot of hours, up to 40 hours during the week. They are willing to miss some shows in order to help us.”

Asked to pinpoint a personal highlight, Mike Geraghty pauses a bit. “I’ll go with Mike Pollard. His parents are in Cascapedia-St Jules. I must also mention Dave Atkins. I knew he’d be popular. On Friday night, he did a lot of country music, bluegrass style. He had a show in Maine the previous week and he arrived at the Harvey House, on the site, on Monday. He spent the whole week with us and visited Percé. A few of us at the Bluegrass Festival will go to Chattanooga in October. We are going to see them there. It is fun to spend time with musicians and get to know them,” he concludes.

The event is organized with a budget ranging between \$105,000 and \$110,000.



Tammy Adams played with Mike Pollard musicians, Dusty King Jr., Ken Post, Dale Rivard and Fred Lewis.

Photo: Courtesy of Tammy Adams



Dave Atkins and his band arrived days in advance and discovered a good part of the Gaspé Coast.

Photo:PNP Media

The Gaspé **SPEC** 50 YEARS
Keeping Gaspésians Informed

● SEA-COAST PUBLICATIONS INC

Annual General Meeting

Come and have a tea or coffee with the staff and Board of Directors of The Gaspé Spec. Learn about what’s happening at your local newspaper and tell us what you’d like to see more of in SPEC.

OCTOBER 28, 2026

AT 6 P.M.

**New Carlisle
Town Hall**

More Information

Inbox: Holly Smith on Facebook

Call: 418-752-5400

Email: holly.smith@globetrotter.net

Zoom link available upon request.



Spotlight on business: Construction boom in Bonaventure

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The cranes are active in Bonaventure these days as three important construction sites are visible from a distance, namely the refurbishment of the Harnois service station slightly to the east of the river, the new building that will house La Pétrie bakery and pastry shop, both on Highway 132, and the new daycare, on Louisbourg Street.

There is more, though, as construction permits from September 2025 to August 2026 total \$30 million. Housing, whether single units or multi-unit dwellings, also accounts for an important amount of that total.

“It is \$30 million without counting the projects on the drawing board that will pan out soon. We are not putting them in the total as long as they are not confirmed with the issuance of construction permits,” explains Pierre Gagnon, the mayor of Bonaventure.

The Harnois service station project also includes improvements to the existing oil products distribution centre and truck stop. The investment reaches just over \$6 million.

The Centre de la petite enfance de la Baie, a daycare under construction on Louisbourg Street, will have enough space for 100 children. Its permit is valid for 92 children, which is an increase of 13 places compared to the pre-expansion capacity.

As for La Pétrie, its announced construction cost amounts to \$1.5 million. The current bakery and pastry shop on Grand Pré Street will become a pizza restaurant.

“Both the daycare and La Pétrie are expected to be ready at some point over the spring,” says Mayor Gagnon.



The Harnois service station, convenience store, truck stop and storage depot require an investment of just over \$6 million.

Housing construction rush

Moreover, an impressive number of housing units are under construction or being renovated along Louisbourg Street and neighbouring streets, stresses Pierre Gagnon.

“Two of the three existing buildings located next to the town hall are undergoing extensive renovations. The third one was built more recently and doesn’t require refurbishment. The older buildings each include 15 units and the last one has 11 units. They are managed by the Municipal Housing Office,” he explains.

“On the north side of the town hall, Groupe G5 has finished the construction of two quadruplexes and the owners are planning three other quadruplexes on Des Cayens Street,” adds Mr. Gagnon.

“In the same area, three years ago, 50 pieces of land were put up for sale, and there are now only seven or eight lots for sale. Many duplexes and houses have been built since. On Des Aboiteaux Street, a set of 11 lots put up

for sale have almost all found buyers,” points out the mayor.

Another project, the Clinique Espace B clinic, which offers medical, physiotherapy, psychological and social work services, opened on September 23 on Grand Pré Street, representing an investment of close to \$2 million, reports Pierre Gagnon.

Three projects that are not included in the permits issued over the last year are getting close to fruition, adds Pierre Gagnon.

“On Thomas-Gravel Street, a project spearheaded by Habitat Bonaventure (Municipal Housing Office) is advancing well. The organization is about to reach another step, that of being tabled with the SHQ (Société québécoise de l’habitation) for a grant. It consists of three buildings each including eight affordable units. The rent will be lower than \$1,000 per month. We are talking about two bedroom and single bedroom units,” says Mayor Gagnon.

Bonaventure is also on the list of municipalities wishing to land a Han Logement project, consisting of three build-



The new daycare building should be open in the spring.



Photos: Gilles Gagné

La Pétrie bakery and pastry shop will be located along Highway 132.

ings of eight units for autonomous people living with a mild disability, whether either physical or intellectual.

“There is also a plan to expand Habitations Louisbourg, which is located near the town hall. Twelve units would be added to the existing 31. It would simply take the form of an extension of the current building,” explains Pierre Gagnon.

Is the population increas-

ing in Bonaventure considering all these housing projects? In 2021, the population was 3,000 people.

“I think so! We still haven’t received the latest census numbers. No matter what, the demand for new construction is strong enough that we are considering looking for additional land in order to make sure that future buyers will be able to find a lot,” concludes the mayor of Bonaventure.

An off-road vehicle playground in Avignon

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – The Avignon MRC has commissioned a study to identify suitable areas for a recreational space for off-road vehicles.

According to the plans, ATV and snowmobile trails, as well as off-trail snowmobile circuits, could be created.

Eventually, bike trails could be added.



Avignon wants to create an off-road vehicle playground in its backcountry.

Photo: Motoneige Québec

“We’re really at an interesting crossroads between the Matanie region, the Mat-

apia Valley, and our proximity to New Brunswick. This would bring visitors to

Avignon, benefiting our hotel and restaurant owners. We’d like to create a new tourist attraction this way,” says Prefect Mathieu Lapointe.

A study has been commissioned to analyze this opportunity.

No specific area has been targeted, but the backcountry near Pointe-à-la-Croix has been mentioned.

This aspect is also part of the study.

“We want to see if this idea is realistic or financially viable. The exact area hasn’t been specified yet, but the study aims to determine where it would be most strategic to establish such infrastructure and whether it is economically viable,” says the prefect.

In the Gaspé Peninsula, the economic impact is estimated at more than \$27 million for ATVs and \$45 million for snowmobiles.



présente

en collaboration avec



FESTIVAL LA VIRÉE TRAD



9th TO 11th OCT CARLETON-SUR-MER



TICKETS, INFOS, AND PASSES → www.lavireetrad.com → 418 364-6822 P.1

OCT 9 th	5:30 p.m.	Morgan Toney — <i>Heal the Divide</i>	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	Free
	8 p.m.	Michel Faubert — <i>30 years of wandering stories and fairytales</i>	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 30
	9.30 p.m.	La Bottine Souriante — <i>50 years!</i>	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	\$ 35
OCT 10 th	10-5 p.m.	Public market	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	11 a.m.	Violin workshop with Dâvi Simard	Rehearsal room	Free
	11 a.m.	Carleton cemetery guided tour	Carleton cemetery	Free
	12-4 p.m.	Activities for teens and kids – Satourne Circus School	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	12-5 p.m.	Various shows at the MRC Avignon stage	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	\$ 8 (access to site)
	1 p.m.	Ambulatory show with the Foutoukours	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	2 p.m.	Danças Ocultas — <i>Inspirar</i>	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 25
	5:30 p.m.	Cinema-lecture <i>Le quêteux Tremblay</i> with André Gladu	Foyer at the Quai des arts	Free
	8 p.m.	Les Mercenaires du terroir with Hélène Gaulin to the call. Traditional dance evening	Congress Center	\$ 10 standing \$ 15 seated
	11 p.m.	DJ Da0vee	Microbrewery Le Naufrageur	\$ 15
OCT 11 th	10-5 p.m.	Public market	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	10.30 p.m.	Foot-taping initiation with Michel Bordeleau	Rehearsal room	Free
	11 a.m.	Jig workshop with Yaëlle Azoulay from the Gigus Club	Studio at the Quai des arts	Free
	12-5 p.m.	Various shows at the MRC Avignon stage	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	\$ 8 (access to site)
	12-4 p.m.	Activities for teens and kids – Satourne Circus School	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	1 p.m.	Folkloric encounter with Michel Faubert and Yaëlle Azoulay	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 10
	2:30 p.m.	Ambulatory show with the Foutoukours	Cegep court	\$ 8 (access to site)
	5 p.m.	Cinema-lecture <i>Faut pas l'dire</i> with André Gladu	Foyer at the Quai des arts	Free
	7 p.m.	Les Charbonniers de l'enfer — <i>F-i fi, n-i ni!</i>	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 45
	8:45 p.m.	La Veillée de La Virée Trad with the artists participating in this 25 th edition. Jam Session. All trad musicians are welcome.	Foyer at the Quai des arts	Free

Over half a million dollars to decontaminate the former MTQ site

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – It will cost at least half a million dollars to decontaminate the site of the former Ministry of Transport service centre in downtown Gaspé.

The firm J.A. & L. Nadeau of Nouvelle submitted the lowest bid, for the amount of \$557,339, to carry out the project, which will eventually be awarded by the Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI).

There is a difference of nearly \$100,000 between this bid and the second-lowest, Dubé & Cassivi of Gaspé, which is asking for \$653,616 to perform the work.

Seven other bids were received, with the highest submitted by Sani Sable of Maria at \$989,881.

The SQI must verify that the bids received comply with the requirements before awarding the contract.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

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

According to the bidding documents, the SQI hopes that the decontamination work will begin between September 4 and 21. The project is expected to last eight weeks.

The selected contractor will be responsible for excavating, handling, loading, transporting, and disposing of contaminated soil, managing seepage water in the excava-

tion, backfilling, and compacting.

The process of transferring the land back to the Town of Gaspé can begin once remediation work has been completed.

An environmental characterization study was commissioned from the firm Englobe to assess the extent of contamination on the property.

The study confirmed last fall the presence of contaminants directly linked to the site's historical use by the Ministry of Transportation, particularly mechanical repair and storage activities.

The areas most affected are located at the rear of the property, where the former auto repair shop, the gas pump and the former traffic signal warehouse were located.

Hydrocarbons (including oil and fuel residues), volatile organic compounds (substances derived from solvents or fuels), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (compounds associated with petroleum products and combustion) were detected.

In addition to the hydrocarbons, a copper concentration exceeding the established threshold was also detected in a trench near the former garage.

Copper was also detected

in groundwater from a single observation well near the former abrasives warehouse, while the other five wells met the applicable criteria. The SQI notes that the groundwater does not enter the municipal water supply system.

Last fall, the SQI said the contamination was confined to the areas identified in the study and would be fully remediated, ensuring the site is safe and compliant before any reuse.

The contaminants discovered during the study are in addition to asbestos found on the site, which delayed demolition until the fall of 2024. The centre, built in the 1950s, contained lead and asbestos.

Gaspé has chosen the property as the site of its new arena, to be developed in partnership with the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation. The partners also plan to develop the remainder of the property.

Future arena: Studies underway to adapt plans to former MTQ site

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The Town of Gaspé spent \$26,161 on additional studies following the decision to relocate the future arena from the C.-E. Pouliot High School site to the former Ministry of Transport property in downtown Gaspé.

These studies focused on architectural, engineering and surveying aspects.

The complex designed to replace the current, aging arena can be built on the land selected in May by the municipal administration after the Chic-Chocs School Service Centre indicated that the original site was no longer available due to increased space requirements for vocational training.

"It was necessary. We had to make sure that the architectural plans we had were adjusted to fit the new site. The same goes for the engineering, surveying, and topographic surveys of the new lot to arrive at a site plan so we could submit the project to the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational, Sports and Outdoor Infrastructure (PAFIRSPA). We want this project, and since we want it exactly as we envision it, we have to stack the odds in our favour. That includes having



Photo: Town of Gaspé

The design developed for the new arena could be adapted to the former MTQ site in downtown Gaspé with minor adjustments.

up-to-date plans," comments mayor Daniel Côté.

The building can be constructed on the new site with some adjustments.

"We initially planned for a possible second phase of the building. We no longer plan for it. That part has been adjusted. That's essentially the most significant change. Overall, it's the same project," explains the mayor.

In 2022, the arena project was estimated at \$32 million. With inflation and the additional costs of updating the project, the total will increase.

"I can't give a specific figure. We'll probably be around \$34 million or \$35 million. The calculations will have to

be done."

PAFIRSPA, the sports infrastructure program under which the project will be submitted, covers 66% of the cost up to a maximum of \$20 million. The program allows projects to receive up to 90 per cent in government funding.

The remaining balance will need to be financed, notably through financial support from the partnership announced in June with the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation—a project described as the first major joint initiative since the two entities began collaborating in 2017.

"There's interest from private partners to contribute

funds. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars. We have an institutional partner in the Gespeg First Nation, which has access to federal—and possibly provincial—funding. On our end, we've applied for a federal program designed for arenas. It's difficult to have a precise financing plan. We're hoping for the \$20 million from Quebec, and as for the rest, several of us will share the burden, but part of it will be covered by a loan," states Mr. Côté.

After the summer holidays, negotiations to establish the partnership framework between Gaspé and Gespeg will take place.

Public consultations to determine what will be done with the remaining two-thirds of the property will also take

place this fall.

"The plan is still to come up with a specific urban planning proposal, along with the accompanying consultation period. Things will really get rolling this fall. I can't say that everything will be settled by December at the latest. But progress will be made this fall," says the mayor.

When the partnership between Gaspé and Gespeg was announced, reconciliation between the two communities was cited as a guiding principle.

A response from the Quebec government is expected around the beginning of 2027.

If the response is positive, a call for tenders for the final plans will be issued, with construction expected to begin in the summer of 2027 and completion scheduled for 2029.





VILLAGE
Real Estate Agency

Suzanne Landry
CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE BROKER AEO
418-752-0792
suzannelandry@royallepage.ca
www.suzannelandry.ca

**Friendly bilingual service
from Matapédia to Port Daniel
24 years experience**

Uncertain future for the Rosario Poirier Sawmill

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINT-ALPHONSE – The future of the Rosario Poirier Sawmill in Saint-Alphonse hangs in the balance after Investissement Québec rejected a proposal to modernize part of the facility.

The federal government, through Canada Economic Development for Quebec, had provided an \$800,000 loan that was later converted into a \$1 million grant.

On the afternoon of August 31, Investissement Québec announced the withdrawal of a \$2.6 million financial contribution.

The project was initially submitted in May 2025 at \$9 million, and later revised to reduce its costs to \$6 million in an effort to secure the necessary funding.

“We’re hearing about the general economic context in our industry,” explains the company’s financial controller, Patricia Poirier, who says she understands why Investissement Québec is pulling back from the sector.

“If we don’t go ahead with the modernization project, it will be the end of our reign,” says president and chief executive officer Luc Poirier, who took over the company founded by his father in 1973 and has held his current role since 2014.

The company currently employs 32 people, not including workers in the forest.

“Times are getting tougher and tougher. Timber prices and competition have become fierce. In the Gaspé Peninsula, we’re far from the markets. We have to stay on the cutting edge of technology,” continues Mr. Poirier, adding that this was the first phase of a larger modern-

ization plan for the coming years.

Company management hopes the election campaign will help bring about a solution.

Timber reserves are dwindling, and the company is expected to launch a restocking process estimated at \$6 million.

If the situation is not resolved quickly, the company could face closure.

“These are contractors who are going to come in, and we don’t want to drag anyone else down with us,” says Ms. Poirier.

“If we send people into the forest but don’t carry out our modernization project, we might make it through if the price of lumber goes up. But if it doesn’t go up, we won’t make it through this winter. I’ll consult with my forestry contractors, and we’ll make the decision together, but I think it will be an easy one. I want to be honest with them,” adds Mr. Poirier.

The company specializes in manufacturing pallets from aspen, a species that is abundant in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Investissement Québec declines to comment

Investissement Québec declined to comment specifically on the matter.

In an email, the Quebec government’s financial arm stated that it does not publicly discuss negotiations with companies that submit projects for funding.

However, the organization confirmed that it evaluates applications on their merits, taking into account both the factors that could contribute to a project’s success and the associated risks, with a view to ensuring the sound manage-



Photo: Rosario Poirier Sawmill website

The future of the Rosario Poirier Sawmill in Saint-Alphonse hangs in the balance.

ment of public funds.

“A funding application may be denied, in particular, if the company is unable to meet the conditions necessary to obtain funding,” Investissement Québec stated in an email.

Political reactions

Outgoing Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Bonaventure Catherine Blouin expressed concern about the decision.

“That is why my team and I have been working closely with the company for several months. We know that the forestry sector is fragile right now due to economic uncertainty. However, I am surprised by this reversal from Investissement Québec, since the message last week was different. I was informed a few minutes ago (Editor’s note: on the afternoon of August 31) and am in discussions with the company, the Ministry of Economy, Innovation, and Energy, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests to see if we can help in other ways,” Ms. Blouin stated in an email.

Liberal candidate Christian Cyr says the decision confirms what he describes as the CAQ government’s abandonment of

the forestry sector.

“When you think about the Rosario Poirier mill project, the Damabois mills that have closed, and the abandonment of forest management, the reduction in interventions is drastic. It’s unacceptable,” says Mr. Cyr.

The Liberal candidate says the forestry sector is a vital economic pillar for the Gaspé Peninsula.

“In the Liberal Party, we’re all for developing natural resources—whether it’s mining, forestry, or fisheries,” says Mr. Cyr.

Parti Québécois (PQ) candidate Pier-Luc Bujold also expressed concern about the situation and criticized his CAQ opponent, Catherine Blouin.

“We are very concerned. What we’ve learned is that the incumbent MNA, Catherine Blouin, reportedly refused to take calls. Radio silence. This radio silence is unacceptable,” says Mr. Bujold.

The PQ candidate highlighted the potential impact on workers and the surrounding area.

“It’s for issues like this that I’m running—to work directly with local residents and businesses. There could be significant impacts for Saint-Alphonse and many peo-

ple in the surrounding area,” says Mr. Bujold.

Investissement Québec’s decision runs counter to what the public corporation should be doing in the current context, according to Québec solidaire candidate Yv Bonnier Viger.

Mr. Bonnier Viger says he is dismayed by the decision, noting that although it involves a private company, the situation has significant social implications.

He believes the government has an important responsibility to act and that the project aligns with Québec solidaire’s goal of encouraging local processing of natural resources. He says a Québec solidaire government would step up to support such initiatives.

“This is the opposite of what we should be doing. The wood is there. The need for pallets may not be significant right now, but it will eventually become so again. What the company is proposing is a diversification of its operations. That’s absolutely the right direction,” says Mr. Bonnier Viger.

While aspen may not be a particularly strong wood, Mr. Bonnier Viger believes it could be successfully used in furniture manufacturing, particularly given its abundance in the Gaspé Peninsula.



Electricity - Plumbing
Automation
Industrial computing
Counter sales

3 Rue Cerisiers
Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1
Tel. (418) 368-5425
Fax (418) 368-7290
www.groupeohmega.com



LÉONARD LOISEL & FILS INC.
General Contractor
R. B. Q.: 2155-8705-95

Foundations - Landscaping
Sale and delivery of sand and gravel

Office: 176 rue Saint-Pie-X,
Paspébiac (QC) G0C 2K0
(418) 752-2028
Garage: 138 rue Day,
Paspébiac (QC) G0C 2K0
(418) 752-5061

☎ Pascal Loisel: (418) 752-0048
Luc Loisel: (418) 752-0407
✉ aloisel4305@gmail.com



MAC AUTO
REPAIR & SERVICES

581-886-3676
134 Boul. Perron Est
New Richmond, QC G0C 2B0

GENERAL AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS

✦ Alignments ✦ Brake Service
✦ Oil Changes ✦ Tires

And more!



Dr. Pascal Cyr
Optometrist



Dr. Stacey Starrak
Optometrist

CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE
L'ÉMERILLON

LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES

PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553
CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553
MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553



BILINGUAL SERVICE

MEMBER OF



Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists

Gaspé Town council news at a glance

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Unable to reach an out-of-court settlement, the Town of Gaspé will turn to the courts in an effort to recover \$700,000 in additional costs resulting from an unexpected issue that arose during the town hall renovations.

Discussions with the engineering and architectural firms that designed the plans failed to resolve the dispute.

The contractor responsible for modernizing the building—which was constructed in 1980 and had never undergone any major renovations—discovered that the facade structure designed by the professional firms was incompatible with the materials to be used.

“We had to redraw part of the plans and come up with a new structure for the town hall facade. In our view, mistakes were made by the professional firms,” says mayor Daniel Côté.

“It would be unfair to pass this error on to the taxpayers of the Town of Gaspé when there are undoubtedly insurers behind these professional firms



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The courts will be called upon to settle a dispute over an unexpected \$700,000 bill incurred during the town hall renovation project.

who could cover this cost,” the mayor explains.

With the three-year statute of limitations about to expire, the Town had no other choice to protect its rights.

The work had begun in the summer of 2024, primarily because water was seeping in through the roof and windows and the building had inadequate ventilation.

The Town had adopted a \$4.3 million borrowing bylaw

that included the plans and specifications. The construction contract came in at \$2.9 million, representing savings of approximately \$1 million.

That financial flexibility made it possible to carry out the unplanned work.

Although the town hall is relatively modern, it is nonetheless part of the built heritage of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC.

According to the Ministry

of Culture’s website, “the heritage value of this building lies in its history and its use.” This is Gaspé town hall, built in 1980 on a site that, towards the end of the 18th century, housed a military defense installation, of which the cannons positioned at the entrance to town hall are the last remaining vestiges. This building is representative of postmodern architecture, which in this case is expressed through a minimalist structure devoid of any ornamentation and a large curtain wall that covers the entire main facade.”

Safety concerns on Montée Sandy Beach

Safety concerns are growing along the first section of Montée Sandy Beach, between the intersection with East York Boulevard and the blue government building housing various government agencies.

Traffic has increased in recent weeks with the opening of a daycare centre, which is expected to reach 100 spaces within two years, as well as construction across the road on

buildings that will contain a total of 86 residential units.

The extension of Frémont Street toward the new Faubourg du Ruisseau, where more than 300 housing units are planned, will add to the traffic flow, along with the existing low-income housing complexes and Carrefour Gaspé.

“It’s starting to get pretty crowded on a hill prone to accidents—which wouldn’t be the case if all drivers respected the 50-kilometre-per-hour speed limit,” the mayor argues. The Town has been working for years with Carrefour Gaspé and the Ministry of Transport to improve safety in the area.

“Is a traffic light the solution? Or are other traffic mitigation measures needed? The Department of Transportation absolutely must look into this. This isn’t a criticism of the department. We’re just bringing the issue to light,” insists Daniel Côté.

A major collision occurred in the area this summer, fortunately without serious consequences for the drivers involved.

Gaspé seeks \$63M for water and sewer projects

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Town Council adopted three resolutions on September 8 to submit water and sewer projects for Rivière-au-Renard and a water project for L’Anse-au-Griffon to Quebec’s PRIMEAU program, representing a total investment of approximately \$63 million.

According to the Town’s three-year capital plan included in the 2026 budget, the two Rivière-au-Renard projects are valued at a combined \$58.9 million, while the L’Anse-au-Griffon project is estimated at \$4 million.

Several steps had already been completed before the three projects were formally submitted to the Quebec government.

Plans and specifications have been commissioned and other preparatory work has been completed.

“For drinking water in Rivière-au-Renard, there is increasing talk of a water treatment plant on Lake D’Amour, where drinking water is drawn. For wastewater in Rivière-au-Renard, it will be an aerated pond system. The properties have been acquired. Preparatory work has been done,” says mayor Daniel Côté.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Mayor Daniel Côté

The situation in L’Anse-au-Griffon is more complex. The formerly private water system has experienced numerous problems over the years and continues to provide non-potable water.

“This is an issue that has dragged on for far too many years, but solutions aren’t exactly falling from the sky. We don’t yet have the ideal solution in hand. Various scenarios are on the table. We’ll continue to work on it, but we wanted to include it in the financial assistance package,” says the mayor, who did not want to discuss the options being considered.

“If there had been a suffi-

cient supply of groundwater, there probably would never have been a private water system that the town had to take over. We’ve plugged the leaks over the past year, but we’re still working on it. What we want is the most effective solution,” he says.

The system serves approximately 40 homes, but the cost will be shared among all users of the Greater Gaspé water systems.

Pointe-à-la-Renommée Lighthouse

The Town is commissioning plans and specifications for restoration work at the Pointe-à-la-Renommée Lighthouse site.

Water has been infiltrating through the lighthouse roof, while its paint has faded to the point that it now appears pink rather than red. The entire site also needs to be assessed.

“This project is a priority in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC’s heritage program. It has even been prioritized at the MRC level within the government’s heritage preservation program. It is an A1 priority. Architectural plans are underway, and work is scheduled for 2027,” says the mayor.

The contract for the plans

and specifications is valued at \$33,117, while the restoration work itself could cost approximately \$1.5 million.

Vanlife under fire

Private campground operators in the northern sector of Gaspé have complained about recreational vehicles being parked overnight at various locations this summer despite municipal signs prohibiting the practice.

The restrictions were introduced during the pandemic following problems with overcrowding, particularly on beaches and at various municipal sites at night. The Town can only enforce the restrictions on properties where it has jurisdiction.

The overflow parking lot at the Élias-Dufresne site was among the locations specifically identified.

“I don’t know why the signs were removed this summer. The posts are still there, but the signs are gone. We recommended new signs and asked for them to be reinstalled. But when it comes to the pier, church parking lots, or shopping centres, we have no jurisdiction,” explains Mr. Côté.

The municipal bylaw can be enforced on private prop-

erty if the property owners request it.

The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) is responsible for enforcement. “We agree that if a patrol car is on duty throughout the Town of Gaspé and an accident occurs or a situation arises where the health and safety of citizens is at risk, will the priority be to issue a ticket to a camper?” asks the mayor.

The Town has requested increased monitoring from the SQ.

To the mayor’s knowledge, campground owners have not contacted the municipal administration directly, although he has seen the recent controversy on social media.

“We’ve put a bylaw in place, and even if we’re getting flak from vanlifers who say we don’t understand them, we have a bylaw and we’re keeping it in effect. If Gaspé didn’t have many campgrounds, it would be different,” he says, supporting the campground owners’ concerns.

The mayor points out that there are approximately 1,000 campsites in Greater Gaspé and says there are also options available for vanlifers if they travel slightly outside the municipal boundaries.

Court orders bilingual voter reminder cards

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES- A Quebec Superior Court judge has ordered Élections Québec to prepare its upcoming voter reminder cards in both French and English, partially granting an injunction challenging the decision to mail provincial election information in French only.

Judge Sylvain Lussier rendered his decision on September 16, ordering the Chief Electoral Officer to prepare the reminder card—which includes the list of candidates in the electoral district and indicates where to vote on election day—in both languages.

However, the court did not order Élections Québec to re-send in English the election guide or notice of entry that had already been mailed. The judge determined that doing so at this stage would be unrealistic and extremely costly.

The court also suspended the application of the relevant provision of Quebec’s Charter of the French Language to the Chief Electoral Officer for 10 days for the purpose of mailing the reminder cards.

On September 1, Elections Quebec officials announced that voter information cards, which are mailed out to registered voters and households throughout the province,

would be provided only in French for the October 5 election. This is the first time in the history of Elections Quebec that the information has not been sent out by mail in both French and English.

The decision is based on new legislation passed since the last election. Previously called Bill 96, the Act respecting French, the official and common language of Quebec, stipulates that all information from the Quebec government to citizens must be in French only. Under the law, certain exemptions are made for “historic” anglophones — those with the right to receive education in English in the province. Following a letter from Elections Quebec earlier this year asking for clarification, the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government decided not to allow Elections Quebec to send out the cards in English.

Élections Québec added QR codes to the French documents, providing access by cell phone or computer to a website where electoral information can be found in English.

Vision Gaspé-Percé Now and the Committee for Anglophone Social Action put out a joint statement on the issue: “VGPN and CASA are concerned that provincial election

information will no longer be mailed in English. While English information will remain available online, requiring electors to seek it out creates an additional barrier, particularly for seniors and those with limited access to technology or reliable internet. Information about when, where and how to vote should be easily accessible to all Quebec electors, including members of the English-speaking community.”

Geoffrey Chambers, vice-president of the Task Force on Linguistic Policy, took the province to court in a bid to have the decision overturned through an injunction. Arguments were heard by Superior Court judge Sylvain Lussier on September 10.

Task Force lawyer Doug Mitchell told the judge that French-only electoral notices violate the Canadian Constitution. He argued that some English-speaking voters may not understand the information they need to vote. The province’s lawyers argued that if such information is made available in English what would stop people from asking for the information in all languages?

The Quebec government used the notwithstanding clause in adopting Bill 96, but Section 3 of the Canadian

Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects citizens’ democratic right to vote, cannot be overridden by the notwithstanding clause.

Task Force president Andrew Caddell had told SPEC before the ruling that the government “probably made this decision months ago and only brought it out at the last minute. This is unfair and undemocratic, a mean-spirited and under-handed way to prevent anglophones from getting information about the election.”

Mr. Caddell had also noted that if the government relied on the exemptions under Bill 96 for citizens who have the right to receive education in English in Quebec, about half a million English-speaking Quebecers could still be excluded. He expressed hope that a favourable ruling could set a precedent to help ensure respect for the rights of English-speaking Quebecers in future elections.

Meanwhile, in a post on Facebook, Vision Gaspé-Percé Now encouraged anglophones to call a toll-free line to ask Elections Quebec to send them information in English.

Shelley Duguay of Shigawake tried it out. “I was refused in my request to receive any Elections Quebec papers mailed to me in English. The

person said this was not possible and the only way to get the information in English is to scan the bar code on the French papers. Yes I know how to do this but imagine all the people who are not great at computers or do not even have a cell phone capable of scanning it?”

In her Facebook comment, Ms. Duguay encouraged others to call, even if she was unsuccessful herself. “Why call and go through all this? Because we have to let ourselves be known to this absolutely awful government! If we say nothing they win.”

SPEC’s journalist tried the line as well, without luck. The very polite but firm response was that information could not be mailed directly to voters in English. When reminded that not everyone has access to the technology required to use a QR code, the answer was “this information giving the hours and location of voting is very simple, so even if it is in French people should be able to understand.”

The Elections Quebec official did say that if someone called, gave their address and asked for the details of where and when to vote, they could be told over the phone. The number to call is 1-888-353-2846. *(With files from The Canadian Press.)*

Rocher-Percé MRC outlines election priorities

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Small-craft harbours and a university branch campus in the Rocher-Percé MRC are among the priorities being raised ahead of the October 5 provincial election.

In addition to the priorities recently unveiled by the Gaspé Prefects’ Table, the MRC considers these two issues important drivers of regional development.

“As for the harbours, we know our facilities are getting old. There’s good news for Newport, but when it comes to gantry cranes, costs are rising and the infrastructure is aging. We want to ensure that these facilities are upgraded and that we align with Quebec’s Strategy,” says Prefect Samuel Parisé.

The prefect would also like to see university-level training offered in the MRC.

“There have been some



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Samuel Parisé, Prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC

discussions with UQAR (Université du Québec à Rimouski) about establishing a university branch at ÉPAQ and exploring how we can move this project forward. A student housing project with ÉPAQ is one we want to pri-

oritize. Since we have a national school here, we want to ensure it reaches its full potential,” the prefect continues.

Demographic issues are also an important consideration.

“We want to ensure a certain degree of decentralization that is adapted to our regional reality. We want flexibility and adaptability. What’s happening in the Gaspé Peninsula is not the same as on the North Shore or in the major urban centres,” notes Mr. Parisé.

Transportation is another priority, particularly local road infrastructure and the development of additional air service from the MRC’s airport.

The MRC also wants to see passenger rail service restored to Gaspé, while ensuring the railway can support both tourism and freight transportation.



Photo: Salle de spectacles Desjardins

Marguerite Oaks to launch album on October 2

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – New Richmond’s Salle de spectacles régionale Desjardins invites the public to the launch of Marguerite Oaks’ new album, *Under the Rolling Moon*, on October 2 at the regional concert hall, starting at 7:30 p.m.

The Gaspé-based band, formerly known as Lily of the Valley, will mark its fifth release with a musical performance in a cabaret-style setting in the venue’s foyer. A complimentary celebratory drink will also be served, courtesy of the Town of New Richmond.

For the occasion, the group, comprising singer Véronique Parker, guitarist Kevin Litalien and drummer Julien Cyr, will be joined by multi-instrumentalist Jean-Philippe Lemieux, a member of the band HALL. Marguerite Oaks presents intimate indie-folk music.

The concert hall will also feature Carl Mayotte on October 8, also in a cabaret-style setting. The show, *Claude*, is a tribute to Carl’s father, who recently passed away. The musical styles are diverse, ranging from contemporary jazz and indie-pop to the current English fusion scene.

There’s a tea for that

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE - There is something comforting about a cup of tea. Whether it is the first cup of the morning, something warm on a chilly afternoon or a caffeine-free brew before bed, tea has been enjoyed for centuries.

But tea can offer more than warmth and comfort. Different varieties contain different plant compounds, and some have been studied for possible health benefits. So, what should you put in your cup? It might depend on what you are looking for.

Need a little boost? Try green tea. Green tea contains antioxidants called catechins and has been studied for its potential benefits for heart health. It also contains caffeine, although generally less than coffee, making it a popular choice when you need a little energy.

Looking for something stronger? Try black tea. Black tea has a bolder flavour and usually contains more caffeine than green tea. Like green tea, it contains plant compounds called polyphenols and has been studied for possible cardiovascular benefits.

Ready for bed? Try chamomile. Chamomile is naturally caffeine-free and has traditionally been associated with relaxation. Research into its effects on sleep is limited, but a warm cup can be a soothing addition to your bedtime routine.

Overdid it at supper? Try



Photo: Metro Creative Graphics

A warm cup of tea can be the perfect way to slow down, relax and enjoy a few quiet moments—with The Gaspé Spec, of course.

peppermint. Peppermint tea is commonly associated with digestion and may help some people with digestive discomfort. However, people with acid reflux may find peppermint makes their symptoms worse.

Feeling queasy? Try ginger. Ginger has a long history of use for nausea and digestive complaints. Its warm, slightly spicy flavour can also make it particularly comforting on a cold day.

Want something different? Try hibiscus. Bright red and slightly tart, hibiscus tea has been studied for its potential effect on blood pressure. It shouldn't replace medication or medical advice, but it makes a refreshing caffeine-free drink.

Cutting back on caffeine? Try rooibos. Rooibos is naturally caffeine-free and has a mild, slightly sweet flavour. It is a good alternative for people who enjoy traditional tea

but want to avoid caffeine later in the day.

Feeling under the weather? Try echinacea. Echinacea is often associated with cold and flu season. Evidence about whether it prevents or shortens colds is mixed, but a hot cup can certainly be comforting when you aren't feeling your best.

Tea isn't medicine, and no brew can cure everything that ails you. Herbal products can also interact with medications, so check with a health professional if you have concerns.

Still, whether you reach for green tea in the morning, peppermint after supper or chamomile before bed, there seems to be a tea for almost every occasion.

So put the kettle on, pick your favourite tea, find a comfy spot and curl up with The Gaspé Spec. After all, a good cup of tea and the Spec might just be the perfect blend.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



How are you doing?

September is Suicide Prevention Month in Canada. That means it might be time to talk about something none of us enjoys talking about. However, some conversations are too important to stay away from.

In the Gaspé, we are made up of numerous smaller communities. This might include our linguistic community (Anglophone and / or Francophone), our town, our church, our place of work or even our coffee group. We are not alone. That is part of the beauty of living here. If you live in a big city, you may not ever know your next-door neighbours.

Those levels of friendship can vary greatly. It may be casual, such as chatting at the post office, meeting someone at the store and complaining about the weather or having a heart-to-heart talk with your closest friends. Talks can be very superficial or very intimate and personal. Having people that you can speak to is an important part of a healthy personal life.

The statistics are a startling reminder that suicide is not a problem that other people know about. I have had two fairly close people to me die by suicide, both under very different circumstances. One was clearly struggling and the other gave no indication that they were so immensely unhappy. According to the Institut national de santé publique du Québec, there were 14 reported suicides in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region in 2023. In addition, there were 52 hospitalizations related to suicide attempts that same year.

Perhaps you are shocked, or not, by those numbers but they represent real people, who are no longer with us. This is why being aware of a friend, family member or neighbour who is suffering from depression is your business. You don't have to be a psychotherapist to help someone.

If someone has detached themselves from you, don't be afraid to ask how they are doing. Perhaps they stay home most of the time or don't call or answer texts or emails. What you should notice is a change in behaviour. If you ask how they are doing and they give you a quick answer such as "I'm fine," it is perfectly okay to ask a bit more. If they are annoyed, so be it. You just might save their life.

Your help can be in the form of just listening. Put on the coffee. Walk on the beach, there's no better place to let things come out! They are members of numerous small communities and any of those might be able to help. Suggest that.

Here comes the hard part. Ask them if they are thinking about suicide. Asking the question does not put the idea into someone's head. They may be relieved to have you ask, giving them permission to talk freely about how they feel. Maintain contact with them, without being too pushy. You know this person, be gentle. They will know you care.

People on the Gaspé understand the importance of helping each other out when needed. We have a tradition of doing just that. You cannot "cure" them of suicidal thoughts. But you can provide the first step.

If a friend needs support, ask how they are doing. Tell them you have noticed something different. Just listen. We can't fix everything, but it is very important for them to know they are not alone. If they need to connect with a professional, help them do just that.

But you can be of help just by asking that first question, "How are you doing?"

This article is for your information but if your question leads you to fear for the person's life, call a professional immediately. For a person in immediate danger, call 911. In Canada, Talk Suicide Canada is available 24/7 at 1-833-456-4566; in Quebec, 1-866-APPELLE (1-866-277-3553)

Brews Crew wins B Series



Brew Crew are this year's B Series winners.

Photo: Elaine Sexton

ELAINE SEXTON

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES - The Brews Crew wrapped up a great men's softball season by capturing the B Series championship with a 13-11 victory over the Chiefs.

Both teams played a strong game, with the close final score

reflecting the competitive spirit shown on the field.

The championship brought another successful softball season to a close in Cascapedia-St-Jules.

Organizers also extended a special thank-you to the volunteers who helped call the games throughout the season,

as well as the spectators who came out to support the players and teams.

Congratulations to the Brews Crew on their B Series win and to all the players who helped make it a great season.

The community will now look ahead to its next gathering — the Fall Festival.

Announcements



In Memory

SIMON: Courtney

In loving memory of a dear father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away on September 21, 2002.

*Down the path of memories,
We gently tread today.
Our loving thoughts are with you,
As life goes on its way.
We often think of you,
With love and sad regret.
For those who love you dearly,
Never will forget.*

Always loved and remembered by Eleanor (Clayton), Garfield (Sandra), Donald (Frank) and families.

Announcement deadlines

September 30 for the October 7 issue
October 14 for the October 21 issue
October 28 for the November 4 issue
November 11 for the November 18 issue
November 25 for the December 2 issue
December 9 for the December 16 issue

Thank you



ADAMS: Allan - 1945 - 2026

We would like to thank family and friends, from near and far, for their support and love during our sad time when Allan passed.

We would also like to express sincere thanks to the medical team at the Gaspé Hospital. A special mention of gratitude to Dr. Catherine Blais Morin. We are deeply grateful.

*His wife, Leonette English
and the Adams and English families.*

The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the families of
Earl Wellman and
Yolande Poney Martin.

With Deepest
SYMPATHY



**Four Generations
of Monument Craftsmen**

HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES

MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING,
LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS

SALES REP:

Steven Imhoff **418-752-6041**
581-233-2101

Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

COAST ROUND-UP

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

HOPE:
Hope Baptist Church
Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

NEW CARLISLE:
St. Andrews Anglican Church
September 26: A fall yard sale will be held at the old New Carlisle High School from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Donations of quality items are being accepted, including kitchenware, tools, furniture, art, clothing, toys, etc. To arrange pickup, contact Jean at 581-233-2234. Proceeds will go toward a new heating system.

NEW CARLISLE:
New Carlisle Legion
October 3: A harvest supper will take place in the

basement of St. Andrew's Anglican Church from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Cost: adults, \$15; children, \$10. Takeout is available. Delivery is available between 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Reserve your delivery by contacting Carol Flowers Smollett at 905-987-3294. All proceeds will go toward the New Carlisle Legion.

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, September 27
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, October 4
10 a.m. Service

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

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES 50 Plus Club
September 23: Donations for the book room will be accepted from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
September 25: Donations for the book room will be accepted at the 50 Plus Club from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, September 27
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, October 4
10 a.m. Service
Services streaming from New Richmond

September 26: Harvest Fest bingo will begin at 1 p.m., with doors opening at noon. Four cards for \$15 and \$1 for each additional card. Canteen service will be available, with sandwiches, hot dogs and sweets.
November 7: A Spaghetti supper will be held from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Cost: adults, \$15; children under 12, \$10. Garlic bread, Caesar salad, spaghetti and dessert will be served. Everyone welcome.

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, September 27
No service
Sunday, October 4
St. Andrews - York
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
2 p.m. Blessing of animals

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES Book Room
Wednesdays: The book room will be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, September 27
New Carlisle
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Hope Town
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, October 4
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
2 p.m. Blessing of animals
Port Daniel
9 a.m. Holy Baptism

The Perfect Gift For Anyone

Name: _____
Address: _____

Your gift Message: _____

Canada: 1 year: \$50 6 months: \$29

Name: _____
Address: _____

Your gift Message: _____

Canada: 1 year: \$50 6 months: \$29

Mail your form along with your cheque or money order to:
The Gaspé Spec
208-B Gérard D. Levesque Blvd,
New Carlisle, Quebec, G0C 1Z0

Call with your credit card at
418-752-5400 or
order online at
thegaspespec.com

Answers: A. leaves B. rake C. pumpkin D. corn

[illegible]

Pisces, continue to bring the right people into your inner circle. One person in particular has your eye.

New youth drop-in centre opens in Barachois

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPE - Vision Gaspé Percé Now recently opened the Seascap Hangout, a drop-in centre for the youths living between Corner-of-the-Beach and Prevel. That opening followed five years of work, beginning with the release of the project outlines in 2021.

The Seascap Hangout is located in the Barachois Recreational Centre. The centre was initially supposed to open in September 2024, but a few obstacles delayed the project.

“We wrote the grant application in 2021. The idea came from a youth need assessment project that we had. One of the things that came out is they wanted their own space, for the Percé East area,” explains Jessica Synnott, executive director of Vision Gaspé Percé Now (VGPN).

The area between Corner-of-the-Beach and Prevel, including Bougainville, corresponds to Percé East. It is a large area, and transportation shortcomings represent a challenge.

“We try to provide more services, new services there. We did a further survey with youth from that area,” adds Jessica Synnott while describing the 2021-2022



Photos: Courtesy of Vision Gaspé Percé Now

Vision Gaspé Percé Now employees Courtney Touzel and Cole Lucas cut the ribbon at the official inauguration of the Seascap Hangout.

process. The grant application sent to the Department of Canadian Heritage, seeking funding from the Community Spaces Fund, was successful. The grant totalled \$283,000 and provided 90% of the money needed to carry out the project at the time.

Most of the necessary work at the Barachois Recreation Centre was located on the second floor. “However, it didn’t work out with the first contractor. We did find a second contractor, but the cost had gone up in the meantime,” adds Jessica Synnott.

The project was now nearing \$400,000 and required a revised schedule. The shell of the walls had been installed by 2024, but a lot of finishing work remained to be carried out.

“We had already received money from Canadian Heritage. It was very difficult to find \$120,000. We tried La Ruche, but we needed to reach \$25,000 so that they could match it. It didn’t work. We were very lucky to be allowed by Canadian Heritage to apply again. We received another amount of \$80,000 to bring their contribution to

\$360,000. That really saved us. We also received important contributions from the Town of Percé, Desjardins, the Barachois Recreation Centre and little donations here and there. With everything, we came pretty close to \$400,000,” explains Ms. Synnott.

Over the last few months, the renovations on the second floor of the building were completed.

Two employees of VGPN, Courtney Touzel and Cole Lucas, are staffing the Seascap Hangout. They were asked to cut the ribbon

at the well-attended official opening of the centre.

“The aim is to be open 14 hours a week, rotating week-ends and after-school hours. There is an extension that connects to a room made for smaller activities. There is gym equipment, not ready yet, but it will be ready soon. There are couches, electronics, a pool table and a ping pong table, as well as musical instruments,” describes Jessica Synnott.

She highlights an important service that will gradually develop over the next few weeks, in collaboration with the Aire Ouverte program, associated with Santé Québec Gaspésie, which provides a range of health services.

“It will cover mental health, sexual education, the possibility of getting an appointment for youth looking for a nurse, who will go once a week to the centre,” points out Ms. Synnott.

Another development will take place in the spring. “We will have an outdoor basketball court, funded through the Rocher Percé MRC,” she concludes enthusiastically.

Meanwhile, Vision Gaspé Percé Now will hold its annual general meeting on Tuesday, September 29, at 5 p.m. at the Douglstown Community Centre.

Fall Fest returns to Cascapedia-St-Jules

Holly Smith
CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES – Fall Fest will return to Cascapedia-St-Jules from October 1 to 4, offering four days of activities, entertainment and community celebrations for all ages.

The festival gets underway Thursday with a senior celebration featuring music by John, followed by gift bingo and the start of the softball tournament. Friday’s activities include children’s activities, softball, a silent auction, pumpkin carving, a darts tournament, the Antics Roadshow and DJ WAVE.

Saturday will be packed with events beginning with a market and silent auction. Families can enjoy a bouncy castle, Soapbox Derby, kids’ carnival, face painting and balloons. A washers tournament, line dancing and live country music are also planned. The evening will feature an Indian taco fundraiser for New Richmond High School and music by the Big Bad Party Band.

Sunday begins with brunch hosted by the Rotary Club. Other activities include a guide competition along the Cascapedia River, face painting, a fall dessert baking contest, goldfish races, line dancing and a performance by Tammy Adams.

With activities ranging from traditional fall favourites to live entertainment and friendly competitions, the four-day celebration offers plenty of opportunities for residents and visitors to get together. Organizers have put together a varied program designed to appeal to children, families, seniors and festivalgoers of all ages.

Fall Fest activities will take place at 55 Route Gallagher in Cascapedia-St-Jules. The full Fall Fest schedule, including event times, can be found on page 24 of this week’s issue of The Gaspé Spec.

FALL Festival D'AUTOMNE

Oct. 1st-4th

55 ROUTE GALLAGHER
CASCAPEDIA ST JULES, QUEBEC G0C 1T0

Cascapedia-St-Jules Fall Festival: An event you won't want to miss!

FALL Festival D'AUTOMNE 2026

THURSDAY OCT. 1

- 4PM** - Senior Celebration,
Music with John
- 6PM** - Gift Bingo for all ages
- 6PM** - Start of softball tournament

FRIDAY OCT. 2

- 6PM** - Kids activity, ages 6-12,
in front of the MGC
- 6PM** - Softball Tournament
- 6PM** - Silent Auction room is open!
- 7PM** - Carved pumpkin contest!
- 7PM** - Darts Tournament
- 8:30PM** - Antics Roadshow
- 11PM** - DJ WAVE

SATURDAY OCT. 3

- 9AM** - Market
- 9AM** - Silent Auction room is
open. Come place your bids!
- 10AM** - Bouncy castle
- 11AM** - Soapbox Derby
- 1PM** - Washers Tournament
(pre register with Jenna Boudreau)
- 1:30PM** - Classic Country music
with GWEZEE
- 2PM-5PM** - Kids carnival, face
painting, & balloons with Madame
Lulu Berlu
- 3:15PM** - Line dancing with BOOTS FIRE
- 6PM** - Indian taco fundraiser
with NRHS! Come get your tacos at
the MGC
- 9PM** - Big Bad Party Band

SUNDAY OCT. 4

- 9AM** - Brunch with the Rotary Club
- 10AM** - Guide competition along
the Cascapedia River
- 10AM** - Face painting with
Léa Chamberlan
- 10:30AM** - Baking contest.
Theme: Fall Desserts. Registration
required.
- 11AM-12PM** - Gold fish races
- 12:30PM** - Line dancing with
Marielle Thériault
- 2PM** - Tammy Adams

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR AMAZING
SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS
FESTIVAL A REALITY!

Enjoy the Fall Festival,
be safe and have fun!

50 YEARS
The Gaspé
SPEC
"Keeping Gaspésiens Informed"



ROYAL LEPAGE
VILLAGE
Gaspésie

Enjoy the festival!

Christian Cyr
Residential and commercial real
estate broker covering the Baie-
Des-Chaleurs

(418) 392-9927

109, Boulevard Perron Ouest
New Richmond, G0C 2B0

A&R DECORATIONS
ENJOY THE FEST!

166 Rte 299
Cascapedia G0C 1T0
418 392-4686

HYUNDAI
GASPÉSIE AUTO
Bonaventure

339 Avenue de Port Royal
Bonaventure G0C 1E0
418 534 2191
gaspesiehyundai.com

TOYOTA BAIE
DES CHALEURS

Wishing you a wonderful weekend!

20 boul. Perron ouest
Caplan G0C 1H0
(418) 388-5544
toyotabaiedeschaleurs.com

Municipality of
Cascapedia-St-Jules

Wishing you a
wonderful
Fall Fest!

(418) 392-4042

Annie Malerie
pour le bien-être de vos animaux

All you need for your pet!

A team attentive to your needs
with
your animal at the heart of our
concern!

255, boul. Perron Est
New Richmond, G0C 2B0
(418) 392-4144

Wishing you a happy
and memorable
weekend

MAC AUTO
EST. 2011

WISHING YOU A FUN
FILLED FESTIVAL!

134, boul. Perron Est
New Richmond, G0C 2B0
581-886-3676

Happy Fall Fest from the
team at **Garage Pizzeria!**

GARAGE PIZZERIA
EST. 1999

134, boul. Perron Est
New Richmond, G0C 2B0
(418) 392-4385

Garage Pizzeria

RIVER LODGE

277 RTE 299
CASCAPEDIA, G0C 1T0
ROOM RENTAL - SHORT TERM

(418) 392-7302 OR (418) 392-4686