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Partridge Hunt raises record $20,120 for Gaspé Cancer Foundation

HOLLY **SMITH**

GASPÉ – What began four years ago as a family's effort to help local people fighting cancer has grown into a major fundraiser for the Gaspé Cancer Foundation.

The fourth annual Partridge Hunt raised $20,120, bringing the event's four-year total to $44,417.

"This is going to help so many families in our community," organizer Jennifer Jean-Clark wrote on social media following the event.

This year, 65 hunters registered and approximately 200 breakfasts were served to people who came out despite the cold and windy weather. The event's 50/50 draw reached $13,425, with Angela Dorion winning $6,712.50.

For the Gaspé Cancer Foundation, the amount raised came as a surprise.

"We were extremely surprised with the total amount raised by the 2026 Partridge Hunt. Though we knew that our community is very generous in supporting fundraisers in our name, this amount surpassed our expectations," says foundation president Tony Patterson.



Photo: Jennifer Jean-Clark Facebook

Family, friends and volunteers gathered for the fourth annual Partridge Hunt in honour of Sharon Jean. The September 19 fundraiser drew 65 registered hunters, served nearly 200 breakfasts and raised a record $20,120 for the Gaspé Cancer Foundation.

According to Mr. Patterson, it is the largest community-raised donation the foundation has received.

"With several requests for travel assistance each week, all donations are greatly appreciated, but larger ones like this help secure our future," he says.

The volunteer-run foundation provides financial assistance to members who must travel outside the MRC of Côte-de-Gaspé for cancer treatment, consultations and follow-up appointments. Last year, 98 people received assistance, with some patients requiring numerous trips.

On social media Ms. Jean-Clark says the event's success would not be possible without the people who support it.

"We organize, plan and prepare everything but without the support of our community, the hunt wouldn't be the success it has grown to be," she wrote.

She also thanked the Sinnett family, who have worked alongside her family for the past two years, as well as everyone who cooked, sold tickets and volunteered during the event.

"We are a small community and to have a family dedicate so much time and effort into fundraising for our foundation is very heartwarming," says Mr. Patterson.

Membership in the Gaspé Cancer Foundation is open to residents of the greater MRC of Côte-de-Gaspé, from Grande-Vallée to Coin-du-Banc, including Murdochville. Membership costs $15 per person or $25 per couple, including children under 18. Members must be in good standing for at least 30 days before becoming eligible for financial assistance.

About 250 participate in Gesgapegiag Orange Shirt Day march

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

GESGAPEGIAG – The sixth Orange Shirt Day event once again drew strong public participation on September 30 in Gesgapegiag. Up to 250 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people took part in a solidarity march to commemorate and learn about the history of residential schools. September 30 is also recognized as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The march began at Wejgwapniag School and ended at the Mawiomi Grounds after taking highway 132. Traffic was stopped on the highway for about 15 minutes, with drivers able to use a detour through Cascapedia-St. Jules.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

About 250 people marched in Gesgapegiag on September 30 to commemorate Orange Shirt Day and learn more about residential schools.

The participants, from babies to elders, gathered at the Mawiomi Grounds, where they formed a circle. Spiritual leader William Jerome explained to the attendees why it is important to remember what happened in residential schools over 165 years.

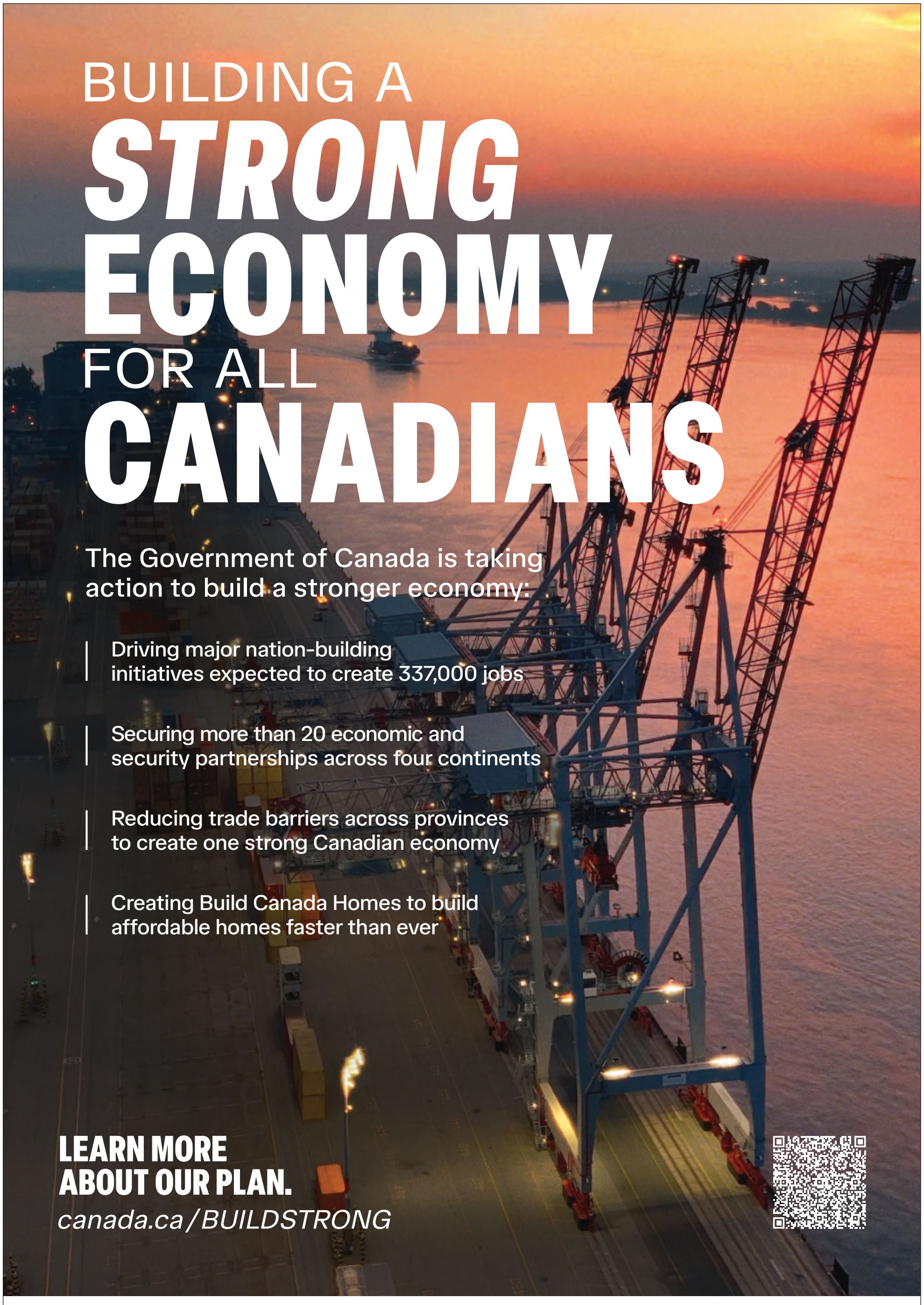
He explained that Indigenous children were forced to learn another language and abandon their mother tongue and culture. He emphasized that thousands of children never returned home, having died while attending residential schools. He added that it is vital to imagine and remember what the parents of these children went through when their children never returned home.

William Jerome then made a prayer in Mi'gmaq, "the language I learned from my mother", he said with pride.

The story behind Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day might

Cont'd on Page 14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Nearly 1,000 people attend the Truth and Reconciliation march

NELSON **SERGERIE**

GASPÉ – Nearly 1,000 people marched through downtown Gaspé under bright sunshine on September 30 to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

"This is an extremely important day. We're coming together to highlight that Indigenous Peoples have a history. Gespeg isn't directly affected by the history of residential schools, but we stand in solidarity with other communities," says Céline Cassivi, Chief of the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation.

Among the approximately 1,000 participants, at least 700 young people from the English-language schools in Gaspé and Percé, C.-E. Pouliot High School, and the Les Butineurs daycare centre in Gaspé took part in the march.

"The fact that the schools are coming and participating means that young people—who are our future—are being educated. It is these young people who, later on, will be able to pave the way and share this history," says the chief.



Céline Cassivi, Chief of the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation.

The day aims to pay tribute to the survivors of residential schools for Indigenous children and to those who never returned home.

For the mayor of Gaspé, reconciliation is an ongoing process, with efforts to build closer ties with Gespeg underway for a decade.

"This is a very important day. We've been working on reconciliation with the First Nation for years. It's more than a symbolic gesture. We live it every day. For me, it's a duty to be here," explains Daniel Côté.

The partnership between Gaspé and Gespeg for the construction of the new arena—a project costing over $30 million in the town centre—is the most recent example of this collaboration.

The incumbent member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, believes that more work is needed to advance reconciliation, as he stands "wholeheartedly" with the community.

"We can always do more. By continuing the dialogue, working together, and collaborating, we can move forward," he says.

His federal counterpart, Alexis Deschênes, noted that this day is one of truth, given that the federal government spent a century attempting to erase Indigenous identities through assimilation policies, with the last federally operated residential school closing in 1996.

"We need to send a message to First Nations by acknowledging the hardships they have endured and helping them get back on their feet. Our role is to stand with them and highlight this horrific truth, which is part of our history. We're seeing a lot of effort. The public is more aware. We're making progress as a people. I'm fairly optimistic," says the member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj.



Photos: Nelson Sergerie

Nearly 1,000 people marched through downtown Gaspé during the sixth Truth and Reconciliation March.

While working as a legal aid lawyer, the MP witnessed Indigenous suffering firsthand as he represented First Nations members in court.

"There is still a great deal of suffering, and the consequences for people who attended residential schools—who returned and had children who struggled. They are still healing from these issues," says the elected official.

Meanwhile, Indigenous Peoples have gained greater access to marine resources and opportunities to participate in the development of wind energy projects in the region.

The Catholic Church also played a role in the residential school system.

"There are two key words: reconciliation and truth. I believe we must embark on a journey of truth—among ourselves and among peoples. Reconciliation is the very seed at the heart of our Christian message. We must live it out in solidarity with people who, throughout history, have needed this truth and this reconciliation as a people," says Bishop Claude Lamoureux of Gaspé, who was among the 1,000 marchers.

"The Church has taken very concrete steps to build bridges with Indigenous communities and to move forward with hope," he added.

Children from the CPE des Butineurs daycare in Gaspé were also present with their teachers.

"It's about fostering a sense of community in them. It's rare that we get to bring young children to events of this magnitude. We want to raise their awareness of Indigenous realities. It's a very culturally enriching experience for the children," says special education teacher Angie Bérubé.

The word "reconciliation"

A philosophical debate has arisen over the word "reconciliation," which some argue does not accurately reflect the profound impacts experienced of Indigenous residential schools.

According to the Larousse dictionary, "reconciliation is the act of restoring friendship or harmony between people who were in disagreement or at odds."

"I often hear people say that this isn't really the word that should be used. For me, First Nations never wanted to be in conflict. We were victimized. This word should be changed, but for now, it's the word that's used," comments Ms. Cassivi, who hopes that Quebec will declare September 30 a statutory holiday.

"That's a good question. I really like the theme of truth. For over a century, the federal government's policy was to assimilate First Nations, and in doing so, it committed abuses that still have repercussions today. It's a deep wound. Moving forward, we need to work as equals. Perhaps that's what reconciliation is all about," says Mr. Deschênes.

"We hope that one day we'll be truly recognized. In Quebec, there is systemic racism. We hope that one day, those in power will acknowledge it," says the chief of Gespeg.

In a press release, prime minister Mark Carney emphasized that his government is working to eliminate long-standing inequalities in Indigenous communities.

According to the prime minister, survivors are owed more than just a duty to remember; they are owed concrete action. *(With files from The Canadian Press)*



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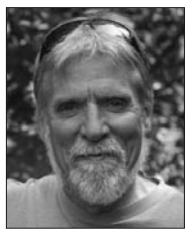

Gilles **Gagné**

Commentary

Will all those pipelines be built?

Mark Carney was in Fort McMurray on October 1 to announce the first project designated as being of national interest, the Pacific Link, a $35 billion to $43 billion initiative that is supposed to send oil from the Alberta tar sands to the port of Roberts Bank, south of British Columbia, by 2033 or 2034. The target market consists mainly of Asian countries.

Very little was mentioned that day about the fact that seven or eight years down the road, the oil market might be weaker than it is now. Very little was mentioned about the fact that, as the initiative is currently presented, the Canada and Alberta governments will pay 90% of the tab for now. The private partner responsible for the remaining 10% had not been clearly identified as of October 1.

The project had been in the works for quite some time. Mark Carney was talking about it back in 2025. At the time, he said that the initiative would be financed entirely by the private sector.

Where have all the private companies gone since?

They'll probably wait until the project proves its profitability and leave the financial risk to the government in the meantime.

A project designated as being of "national interest" means the federal government is on board with the project as far as regulatory hurdles are concerned, such as environmental and operational approvals. The federal and provincial authorities are eventually going to say "yes". In the case of the Alberta government, there is no surprise. Premier Danielle Smith would drink oil if it wasn't lethal.

The conditions for the project's implementation remain to be determined. Its assessments will be conducted simultaneously, but the bottom line will be a "yes", and nothing else.

The accelerated approval process is a condition imposed by private companies, even if some of them have not committed to investing in the project. That's how it goes so far in "national interest" initiatives.

Without questions from journalists to spokespersons for environmental groups, very little would have been said about the fact that the project will significantly increase Canada's greenhouse effect gas (GHG) emissions. The oil and gas industry already generates 207 megatonnes of GHG emissions annually in the country. It accounts for 30% of Canada's total emissions.

Using carefully crafted language, the press release mentioned that the Pacific Link project does not contribute to meeting Canada's GHG targets! The governments are confident that carbon recuperation initiatives will nullify its effects.

The math doesn't work, though, since the Pathways carbon capture project will hardly catch 40% of Pacific Link's GHG emissions after its first phase. Guess what? The Pathways projects are heavily subsidized by the federal government. So, Canadians will pay both ways.

Too many pipeline projects?

The Pacific Link is joining a rather large slate of other pipeline initiatives.

Trans Mountain completed a $34 billion pipeline expansion in 2024 that nearly tripled its first version's transmission capacity. The project was financed by the previous Liberal Party government under Justin Trudeau because no private company wanted to take the risk. Trans Mountain recorded a net surplus of $1.25 billion in 2025 and could bring that figure close to $2 billion this year.

The federal government expects to recover the $34 billion investment within 15 years. However, that does not account for the interest paid by the Canadian government during construction and since its completion. The amount is probably calculated in 2020 dollars, without being adjusted for inflation, so it does not account for the loss of purchasing power over 15 years.

The bill doesn't include another Trans Mountain project that would add 360,000 barrels a day to the current capacity of 890,000 barrels.

Another initiative, South Bow, which replaced the former Keystone project, is weighing the option of building another pipeline with a capacity of 750,000 barrels a day.

That's not counting a second version of an Enbridge venture, with a capacity of 150 000 barrels a day, which replaces a former project with a capacity of 250,000 barrels a day that was put on hold because of a lack of… customers ready to buy that volume!

What will be the need for oil?

The Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately 20% of the world's oil supply passes, will not remain closed indefinitely, as it is now. The oil coming from the Arabic Peninsula is way cheaper than that of Alberta's tar sands, which might no longer be very economical, 10 years down the road.

The October 1 announcement of Pacific Link leaves many unanswered questions. As said before, what will be the need for oil in 2033 or 2034? Will industrialized countries have reduced their consumption, realizing all the effects of additional gas emissions on the environment, on citizens' health, on the oceans' water level, on the wildlife and air quality? When will human beings realize that they have gone too far regarding gas emissions, despite the valiant efforts of a limited number of countries to reduce them?

Will the artificial intelligence craze completely obliterate the vision requiring human beings to lower their energy consumption, whether it is coming from hydrocarbons or renewable sources? In fact, humanity must reduce its consumption, period.

When will the tipping point be reached, that tipping point being either the conscience of human beings starting to be reasonable, consumption-wise, or reaching a point of no return, damage-wise?

The political context

And then, there are political considerations. What if Mark Carney adopted that Pacific Link project because he needed the support of premier Danielle Smith in order to have Alberta onboard regarding the adoption of future GHG reduction measures?

Amidst the current trade conflict with the United States, Canada is trying to diversify its options and increase the number of commercial partners. It must therefore cope with countries, notably in Europe, that have environmental requirements in mind before swinging deals.

Moreover, Alberta is about to hold a referendum that could be followed by another similar consultation on the province's future in Canada, including the possibility of separation.

At times over the last years, Danielle Smith waved the sovereignty flag as a way to get more from Central Canada. Recently, she rediscovered Canada, thanks to the promises made by Mark Carney over oil and gas development. He could have used the development of hydrocarbons projects with federal support only to barter future Alberta GHG reductions later, even if it seems paradoxical for now.

One sure thing is that Canada will likely miss its greenhouse gas emission targets in 2030 and in 2050, thus complicating its trade goals with other countries that are likely to reduce our dependency on the United States.



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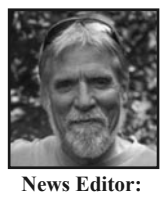
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Police Report



Photo: N. Sergerie

Alleged fraud at CPE Voyage de mon enfance: Mathieu Tapp arrested

After facing a civil lawsuit last February for allegedly misappropriating a sum estimated at $206,417, Mathieu Tapp, former assistant director of the CPE Voyage de mon enfance daycare in Gaspé, was arrested by the Sûreté du Québec on September 24 and charged in connection with the case. He appeared via videoconference at the Percé courthouse.

The 36-year-old man faces several charges: two counts of fraud exceeding $5,000, possession, directly or indirectly, of vehicles and trailers knowing they were obtained through fraud, attempting to conceal his actions, using computer equipment to commit the acts and falsifying the daycare's accounting documents.

The alleged acts took place between October 30, 2023, and November 13, 2025. During his appearance, Mathieu Tapp was unrepresented by counsel and did not appear particularly nervous. He was released under conditions, including not changing his address (he resides in Petit-Cap), not contacting the daycare's management, and not possessing financial documents not issued in his own name. He is also prohibited from making references to the management on social media. He is due back in court on November 16 for further proceedings.

The accused intends to be represented by a lawyer. Meanwhile, his partner and alleged accomplice, Anne-Renée Beaudoin-Minville, faces two charges, obtaining vehicles and travel trailers knowing they were acquired through the commission of a crime involving more than $5,000, and transferring possession of these assets in order to conceal them.

The CPE had initiated civil proceedings in an attempt to recover $206,417. CPE auditors had flagged a $233,000 deficit for the 2024–2025 fiscal year. On December 19, a Honda Pilot Trail Sport, a Kia Rio, and a travel trailer were seized by the plaintiff prior to judgment. A portion of the misappropriated funds was allegedly used to purchase the Honda, a Mazda CX-90, and the travel trailer.

In a sworn statement, CPE director Gilles Chapados claimed that an educator, the accused's partner, had colluded with Mr. Tapp and benefited from the misappropriation, notably by expressing an intention to transfer certain assets into her name to shield them from Mr. Tapp's creditors.

However, the judge rejected these allegations, deeming them mere speculation that contradicted the documentary evidence submitted by the plaintiff. In a decision handed down on January 28, Judge Damien Saint-Onge ordered that one of the vehicles be returned to the woman, who was challenging the seizure and arguing that the vehicle was exempt from seizure. By that time, Mr. Tapp had already returned $75,000 and proposed various terms for repaying the debt. According to our information, the allegedly misappropriated amount could exceed $300,000.

Pier-Luc Desbois-Sheehan sentenced to 30 months in prison

A 36-year-old man, Pier-Luc Desbois-Sheehan, has been sentenced to 30 months in prison for a domestic violence and sexual assault case. He recently pleaded guilty to the five charges brought against him at the Percé courthouse. While in custody at the New Carlisle prison following a conviction for a similar offence against a different victim, he pressured his new partner to withdraw the complaint she had filed against him.

According to CHNC, he called the woman daily, despite a no-contact order being in place. Mr. Desbois-Sheehan demanded that she withdraw her report and tell the police and the Crown prosecutor that she had lied. The man also pressured the victim to file an ethics complaint against the criminal prosecution office and the investigators.

The victim was so shaken by death threats, threats of a report to child protection services to cause her to lose custody of her children, and threats of physical violence that the trial was aborted. Mr. Desbois-Sheehan continued his harassment, repeatedly demanding money. The victim lost her home, unable to pay the rent, "while he was living like a king in detention," she remarked.

The man has 340 days left to serve, which is a tad over 11 months. He must provide a DNA sample and will be listed on the sex offender registry. Mr. Desbois-Sheehan, who in the past served a sentence in Trois-Rivières, where he underwent therapy at one point, is prohibited from entering the Gaspé district for the duration of his three-year probation. His criminal acts were perpetrated in that district.

Drug bust in Ristigouche South East…

On September 24, police officers from the Avignon MRC auxiliary station arrested a 54-year-old man and a 42-year-old woman from Ristigouche-Sud-Est in connection with drug trafficking. Following questioning, both were released pending further proceedings. They will likely be summoned to appear in court.

Two searches were also conducted, one at a residence in the same municipality and another in a vehicle. The following items were seized: nearly $2,000 in Canadian currency, approximately $100 in U.S. currency, four hunting weapons, two other types of weapons, five cellular phones, computer equipment, approximately 150 grams of cocaine, approximately one gram of crack cocaine, just over 1,300 prescription pills and nearly 750 methamphetamine pills.

This operation involved approximately 10 police officers, namely patrol officers and investigators. The operation was made possible and achieved these results thanks to information received from the public.

…and in Grande-Rivière

On the morning of September 28, police officers from the Rocher-Percé MRC arrested two women, aged 36 and 53, in the Grande-Rivière area in connection with drug trafficking. Both were questioned and subsequently released pending further proceedings, which will probably take the form of a court appearance at a date that remains to be confirmed.

Two searches were also conducted—one at the residence and one in the vehicle of one of the women. The following items were seized: nearly 50 grams of cocaine, about 20 methamphetamine pills and 0.15 grams of hashish, a bag of prescription medication, two electronic scales, various plastic bags intended for sales, just over $50 in Canadian currency, a ledger including an accounting list, a telescopic baton, brass knuckles and a cellular phone.

The operation involved approximately 10 police officers, including patrol officers and investigators. The operation was successfully carried out following information received from the public.

…and in Listuguj

While investigators with the Listuguj Police Department were conducting drug surveillance operations on September 25, they were approached by an individual who offered to sell them controlled substances, which led to the arrest of the 36-year-old man. A quantity of controlled substances was subsequently seized.

The accused, Leo Joe Bernard, of Listuguj, is facing, according to the Listuguj Police Department, charges of possession of controlled substances, possession of such substances for the purpose of trafficking, trafficking controlled substances, possession of breaks-in instruments, possession of a weapon contrary to a prohibition order, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of an unauthorized firearm, possession of a firearm knowing its possession was unauthorized and breach of an undertaking.

He was kept in custody following his arrest and appeared in court virtually on September 26. The criminal prosecutor objected to his release, and he returned to court in Carleton on September 28 before Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida. She postponed the case until October 1, the date of SPEC's deadline. Leo Joe Bernard was looking for a lawyer following his September 28 court appearance.

Young man from Chandler found dead in his vehicle

The Sûreté du Québec confirmed on September 22 that the 19-year-old man who was the subject of a missing person alert issued on September 21 had been located. Emergency services responded to an incident around 1:30 a.m. on Highway 132 east in Percé. Preliminary information indicates that a vehicle ended up in a river beneath a viaduct. One person was inside the vehicle. He was unfortunately pronounced dead at the scene.

The deceased has been identified as Pierrick Tremblay, 19, of Chandler. He was the subject of the earlier missing person alert. A police officer trained in collision investigation was dispatched to the scene to determine the causes and circumstances of the incident. He had been reported missing the previous day. He had last been seen in Gaspé on September 20.

SQ operation yield results

On September 17, the Sûreté du Québec, in collaboration with its partners, conducted a province-wide road safety operation targeting key high-risk behaviours. School bus safety and student protection were the priorities of this enforcement initiative. The operation aimed to raise awareness among all road users about the importance of obeying signals related to school buses, adhering to speed limits in school zones, and exercising caution near student pick-up and drop-off points. Particular attention was paid to young pedestrians walking to or from school.

In total, more than 5,700 traffic violation tickets were issued by the participating agencies, including over 3,400 for speeding, over 200 for using a cell phone or other electronic device; and over 2,600 for various other violations. Notably, two individuals were arrested for impaired driving.

Man without fixed address gets 36 months of prison

Jean-Philippe Leclerc, a man of no fixed address, has been sentenced to 36 months in prison for a series of thefts and break-ins in Maria, Carleton-sur-Mer, and Caplan. He pleaded guilty to 16 charges on September 18 at the New Carlisle courthouse. Mr. Leclerc stole his first vehicle in the Quebec City district on November 21. Four days later, he arrived in the Gaspé region and, over the course of three days, stole three vehicles: a pickup truck, an ATV, and a snowmobile. Mr. Leclerc also broke into garages and sheds to steal various items, including gas cans, a trailer, a chainsaw, and a firearm. On November 27, 2025, the stolen snowmobile suffered mechanical issues and became immobilized on a lawn.

Local residents recognized him and prevented him from fleeing while they waited for the police. Holding a bottle of Jack Daniel's, Mr. Leclerc also admitted to driving while intoxicated. "I'd like to apologize for wreaking havoc in your area," he told Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier. Having been in custody since his arrest, he was credited with 444 days off his sentence. During his three-year probation period, Leclerc is barred from entering the Bonaventure judicial district.

Former MTQ Lot: The SQI has still not awarded the decontamination contract

NELSON **SERGERIE**



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

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

GASPÉ – Although the call for bids closed on August 14, the Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI) has still not awarded a contract to decontaminate the site of the former Ministry of Transport (MTQ) service centre in downtown Gaspé.

As part of the bidding process launched last summer, one section of the document indicated that work could have begun no later than September 21.

When asked about this, the SQI stated in an email response to questions that the bid documents specify a probable start date for the work.

"This information does not constitute a definitive timeline, but rather a guideline for interested bidders," the SQI states in its response.

The SQI is conducting the usual compliance checks in preparation for awarding the contract.

The work schedule will be established at the conclusion of the bidding process, once the contract has been awarded.

The firm J.A. & L. Nadeau of Nouvelle submitted the lowest bid of $557,339 to carry out the project.

There is a difference of nearly $100,000 compared with the second-lowest bidder, 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.

According to the bidding documents, the SQI wanted the decontamination work to begin between September 4 and 21. The project was scheduled to last eight weeks.

According to information obtained from sources familiar with the matter, the work is still scheduled for this fall.

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

The Town, in partnership with the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation, hopes to build its future arena on a portion of the decontaminated land and develop plans for the rest of the site.

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

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

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

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 found.

Montée de Sandy Beach is safe, according to MTQ

NELSON **SERGERIE**

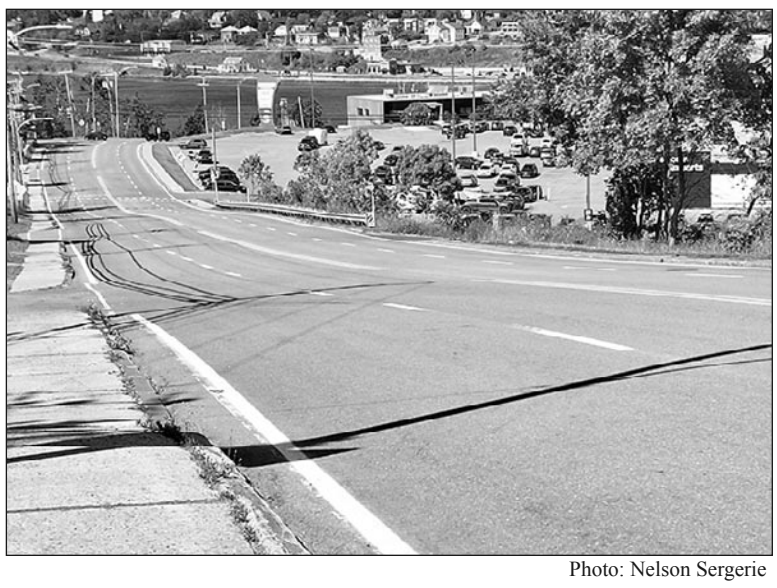

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The section of Montée de Sandy Beach in Gaspé considered problematic.

GASPÉ – While safety concerns about the first section of Montée de Sandy Beach were raised at the Gaspé Town Council meeting in August, the Ministry of Transport (MTQ) says the section meets safety standards despite new developments in the area.

Traffic has increased with the construction of a 100-space daycare centre near Carrefour Gaspé and an 86-unit housing project across the street.

Eventually, Frémont Street will see even more traffic once the new Faubourg de la Rivière neighbourhood, with more than 300 housing units, opens to traffic.

Contacted by email, the MTQ said it reviewed the concerns raised by a citizen.

"The area where the daycare centre is located is subject to a 50 km/h speed limit and is near an 80 km/h zone. The established limit corresponds to the road environment and the layout of the area. The ministry wishes to remind the public that ensuring road users comply with speed limits is the responsibility of the Sûreté du Québec," the ministry writes.

Regarding increased traffic volumes and traffic flow in the area, the MTQ explained that developers undertaking new construction must apply for an access permit before building or modifying a private driveway along a provincial highway.

Once an application is received, the ministry conducts a site analysis to determine whether a new access point or a change in the use of an existing one could compromise traffic safety or flow.

"In the cases involving the daycare centre and the eco-neighbourhood, the project developers contacted the ministry. After analysis, the department does not believe that these new constructions will have a negative impact on traffic flow in the Montée de Sandy Beach area. However, the department has asked the CPE developer to improve the connection to Montée de Sandy Beach—since it is on a slope—to facilitate access when people are waiting at the road," the ministry states.

For the 86-unit housing project, no application for an access permit has been submitted.

The ministry says it continues to monitor the area and will make changes when they are deemed necessary.

"Discussions have taken place between the ministry and the Town of Gaspé regarding the installation of educational speed cameras at various locations within the town limits. One of the targeted locations is on the Sandy Beach hill," the email continues.

In August, Mayor Daniel Côté noted that traffic was becoming heavy on a hill prone to accidents, an issue that would be avoided if all motorists respected the 50 km/h speed limit.

The Town has been working for years with Carrefour Gaspé and the MTQ to improve safety in the area, notably by reconfiguring access points and installing a traffic light.

The mayor also invited the MTQ to examine the situation, while stressing that he was not criticizing the ministry.

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Gaspé and Grande-Rivière strengthen fire-fighting co-operation

NELSON **SERGERIE**

GASPÉ – Gaspé and Grande-Rivière are collaborating to ensure better coverage of the area in the event of an incident requiring a fire department response.

The two municipalities have entered into an intermunicipal agreement for mutual assistance.

"Just within the Town of Gaspé, there are about 100 active firefighters serving on a volunteer basis. Not all 100 firefighters are available at all times. When there's a major incident, it's important to have mutual aid, and it's important for others to benefit from Gaspé's support," says Mayor Daniel Côté, commenting on the importance of such a partnership.

Agreements are also in place with Cloridorme, Grande-Vallée, Murdochville and Percé.

The mayor, who is himself a volunteer firefighter, says other agreements are also possible.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The Gaspé Fire Department has a new communication system that makes its job easier, particularly when communicating with other fire departments during joint operations.

The department is modernizing, particularly in terms of communications. Firefighters across all municipal fire departments within the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC will use the same communications protocol, known as the NOMADE system.

This new network provides more reliable, faster and more efficient communications between the various fire departments in the region, particularly during operations requiring the coordination of multiple teams.

The project represents a total investment of approximately $100,000 for all fire departments.

The modernization of the communication systems aligns with the guidelines and actions outlined in the Fire Safety Risk Coverage Plan.

The next step for Gaspé is a new fire station in the downtown area.

"We purchased land through a right of first refusal between the hospital and the Augustines industrial park. This is one of the locations being considered for a future fire station," adds mayor Côté.

The Town has allocated $9 million in its three-year capital plan for equipment and the future fire station, which will be able to house a ladder truck.

Anse-au-Griffon wharf

Ten years after the Anse-au-Griffon wharf was transferred from the federal government to the Town of Gaspé, the Town wants Ottawa to dredge the site.

In December 2016, the federal government transferred the infrastructure to the Town, along with funds to restore it.

The issue was known and raised at the time in Ottawa.

"We were led to believe that they might take care of it. We had agreed to take on a dilapidated piece of infrastructure. We managed to negotiate a substantial budget to bring it up to standard, but that excluded dredging," the mayor recalls.

The mayor hopes that the federal government will carry out the work rather than the Town.

"If the Town does it itself, we're talking about a few million dollars plus endless environmental permits. If the federal government does it, they don't need environmental permits. We think this could be the last little thing they need to do to make up for the burden they handed us," the elected official states bluntly.

In December 2016, the federal government announced it would hand over the wharf to the Town of Gaspé with a budget of $1.9 million, which was later increased to approximately $2.4 million due to higher-than-expected costs.

This summer, Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament Alexis Deschênes held a consultative meeting to hear the requests of neighbourhood residents.

Political parties promise aid to municipalities

NELSON **SERGERIE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – In an effort to win over Quebec's mayors, political party leaders took turns addressing elected officials from the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ,) making commitments to address the municipal infrastructure deficit.

The event, held on September 18 in Quebec City, aimed to get candidates to commit to specific ways of addressing the infrastructure maintenance deficit, now estimated at between $50 billion and $60 billion.

In Quebec, 60% of infrastructure is municipal, but municipal infrastructure accounts for only 4% of the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI). Currently, there are 200 programs.

"Just about every leader from just about every political party came to tell us: Okay, let's streamline this! Several arrived saying: we're going to have a single municipal infrastructure program modeled after the TECQ program," comments Daniel Côté, ex officio president of the UMQ and mayor of Gaspé.



Photo: Daniel Côté's Facebook page

Daniel Côté was one of the panelists discussing public transit during a Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ) meeting on September 18 in Quebec City.

The Quebec Water and Community Infrastructure Transfer Program (TECQ), a Canada-Quebec agreement, provides $3.3 billion to municipalities over five years to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure essential to the well-being of the population and the quality of their living environment.

The federal government provides two-thirds of the funds, with the Quebec government covering the remainder, providing financial support to municipalities for projects related to drinking water, wastewater treatment, climate change resilience, local road networks, and other types of infrastructure.

The mayor of Gaspé notes that this is possibly the most flexible infrastructure program available.

The UMQ has a strategy to remind the premier of the commitments made.

"We're making sure that what was said on stage is repeated in the media so we can hold it over their heads if they ever backtrack," the elected official explains.

Without being naive, the mayor asserts that the terms and commitments were clear.

Public transit

Public transit was the subject of a discussion on the sidelines of the party leaders' visit.

The mayor, who also serves as president of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transit Authority (RéGIM), participated in a panel discussion on public transit.

Representatives from the political parties were on hand to listen to the discussions.

"Several leaders mentioned regional public transit in their speeches, calling for programs tailored to these realities, which differ from those of major urban centres," the president reports.

The leaders offered insights into how to fund regional public transit by taking a broader view.

"Government programs are not adapted to the realities of the regions. That is a fact. And once again, most leaders acknowledge this fact and are committed to regionalizing these programs and placing greater trust in the regions," explains Mr. Côté.

The mayor of Gaspé hopes that, after some 20 years of centralizing power, the current government will finally take action.

The president of RéGÎM notes that the programs are not adapted to the regional organization's structure, which operates across multiple regions rather than within a MRC. This complicates interactions with the Quebec government.



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Santé Québec Gaspésie still short 105 staff members

NELSON **SERGERIE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – Despite efforts to hire staff, Santé Québec Gaspésie still has 105 positions to fill at various levels, including 44 nurses.

This is the assessment of president and chief executive officer (CEO) Martin Pelletier, as the network must phase out its use of independent contractors by October 2027.

The situation is precarious from a medical standpoint, but also across several staff categories—both specialized and non-specialized—given that teams are small at each site. The task is not easy, particularly in Gaspé.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Martin Pelletier.

"We have two critical care situations that are causing us problems. That's two departures, plus two more from the obstetrics department. We're talking about four positions over the course of the summer. Right now, we're relying on contract staff," says Mr. Pelletier.

Absences due to health issues are also taking a toll on the organization.

Approximately 20 international nurses, currently in training, will help fill part of the gap.

"Then there are nursing assistants, social workers, nutritionists, respiratory therapists and psychologists," explains the president and CEO.

The goal remains to have zero vacancies in a year, but it will be difficult.

"If we're successful in getting staff back to work over the next year, we'll be able to fill about 60% of the 105 vacant positions. But it will be hard to bring that number down to zero given that even if we hired someone today and trained them, it would still be difficult. The idea is that we're aiming for zero use of independent contractors within a year. We'll see if we can make it happen, but it won't be easy," says Mr. Pelletier.

The provincial mobile team is providing support to the Gaspé Peninsula.

The $583 million 2026–2027 budget shows a yellow light on the dashboard, to use the expression coined by Martin Pelletier.

"We're not in the red; we're not in the green. We're somewhere in between. It's not that bad. We're in a deficit context, but it's not that bad, given the allocated budget," he says.

Even though the total available funds are up by $23 million compared with the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the financial gain isn't enough to cover all system costs and inflation.

"We're looking at how to balance the budget. The reduction in hours worked due to unfilled positions is helping us save money. But there are services not being offered in certain areas because we can't fill the positions," explains the manager.

For the most recent fiscal year ending March 31, the budget was balanced.

"This is again due to the hours not worked. We've also significantly reduced our use of independent contractors. It was $30 million, and in the end, we managed to break even," Mr. Pelletier continues.

Loss of arena, a "heavy blow," says Nouvelle mayor Richard Saint-Laurent

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

NOUVELLE – The loss of Nouvelle's arena following a September 12 fire delivered a "heavy blow" to Mayor, Richard Saint-Laurent and the community. Although most of the building is still standing, it is expected to be declared a total loss by the municipality's insurance company.

The fire broke out shortly before lunchtime at the Louis-Sleigher Sports Centre, the official name of the building. An electrical problem was identified as the cause of the blaze, ruling out foul play.

"It's a heavy blow; I'm not sure I've recovered from the shock yet. For 50 years, the arena has been the heart of the village. There is just sheet metal and concrete left. It was built by volunteers in 1977 and 1978, based on an idea from the early 70s. It took years to get all the details sorted out," sums up Mayor Saint-Laurent.

He adds that the group of volunteers and business people who spearheaded the project during the 1970s accomplished quite a feat. They raised a significant amount of money in the community to build it before getting support from the various levels of government.


Photo: Courtesy of Richard Saint-Laurent

Nouvelle mayor Richard Saint-Laurent is far from ready to give up on rebuilding the arena.

"It was really done by volunteers, with help from the construction sector of the area; workers who knew some construction trades helped operate the loader and other pieces of heavy machinery," recalls the mayor.

"Local people put out a book about that time, years ago. We presented it to the council so that younger people, who didn't live through that era, could realize what was accomplished," he underlines.

Rebuilding is the plan

Richard Saint-Laurent is focused on rebuilding the arena, despite soaring construction costs in recent years. For example, it cost just under $7 million to repair the Carleton arena.

"Yes, absolutely, that's what I have in mind. It hasn't been debated by the council yet. There are still a lot of loose ends to tie up. Clearing away the debris is the immediate priority. We've already held five or six meetings. Unofficially, it's a total loss. Officially, that still needs to be confirmed by the insurer," he explains.

The context is not easy, but the sum likely to be received from the insurance company represents a good start.

"Getting a project off the ground remains difficult. We were insured for $5.7 million. There are still percentage-related issues to solve, but we think we will get a percentage that aligns with the needs, which is the total amount of $5.7 million," says Mr. Saint-Laurent.

"We'll get over the shock. We answer the questions that are coming to us, and then it's settled. It is easier to rebuild from scratch, then recuperate a structure that was submitted to a heavy heat. We are getting to work with knowledgeable people. The numbers will tell the story," he analyzes.

The replacement of the Nouvelle arena will require a lot of work, he warns.

"The economic climate is gloomy. We don't want to raise taxes. We have to succeed in accessing a government program where we were rejected a dozen times in recent years. In reality, it was a heavily used venue. Kids were walking to it from the nearby school. The local hockey league, garage sales and many more activities were all taking place there. In the past, we hosted the Truckers' Festival dinners. There were even weddings! We can't afford to lose a building that was used year-round. We aren't exactly spoiled when it comes to services here in Nouvelle," he explains at length.

The arena users were far from coming exclusively from Nouvelle, as people from Pointe-à-la-Croix to Maria, including Escuminac, took part in the local hockey league.

Richard Saint-Laurent went to see the principal of the nearby school to emphasize that the municipal administration is already looking for solutions for the coming winter activities.

"We're exploring options, digging into it. People want to help us. The coming winter represents a challenge. We might be able to offer an outside rink, but I hope we can offer something next year. I know the people of Nouvelle. I know they can really pull together. I'm going to need everyone. I am happy with the feedback I'm getting. Personally, I need to get to work on something. Otherwise, I get depressed," he says.

He is optimistic, even though it is too early to make promises. He hopes to find a long-term solution within the next two years.

One scenario seems to be ruled out: rebuilding the arena the way it was built 48 years ago.

"If we tried to organize a community work bee like they did in the '70s, we'd end up in jail. Everything in Quebec is so heavily regulated, it's ridiculous," concludes Richard Saint-Laurent.

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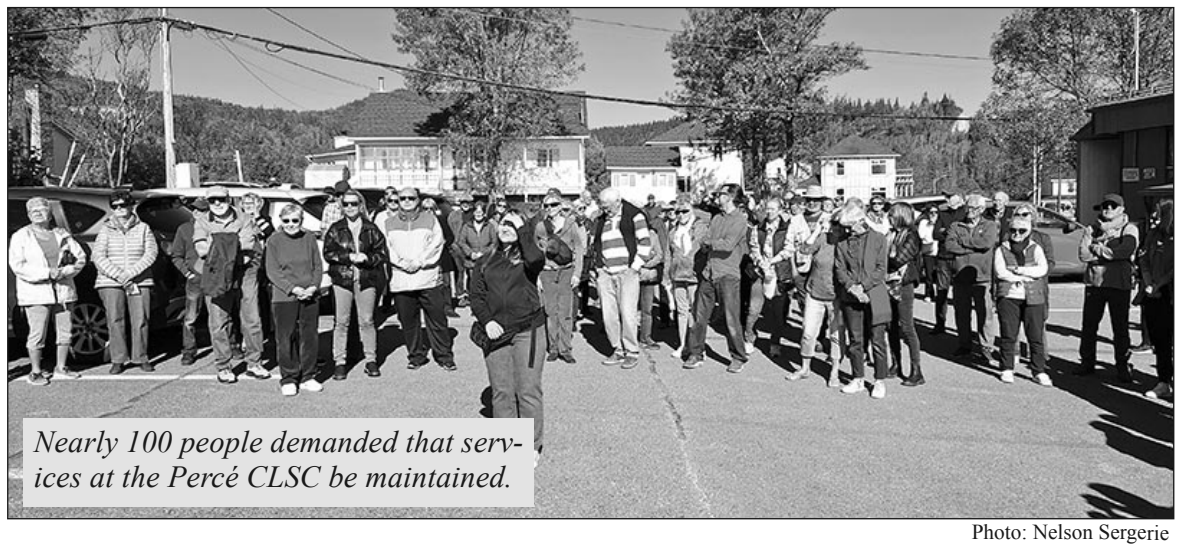
Percé residents demand services as CLSC introduces temporary measures

NELSON **SERGERIE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE



Nearly 100 people demanded that services at the Percé CLSC be maintained.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ – Nearly 100 people gathered on September 24 to demand that services at the Percé CLSC be maintained following the departure of its only doctor due to burnout. Five days later, Santé Québec Gaspésie began implementing temporary measures to maintain access to health care at the facility.

The doctor's absence was the last straw for residents, who say the CLSC has lost a wide range of services over the years.

"We want a CLSC; we want doctors; we want to be treated, too. We don't want to spend our time running around and traveling long distances," summarizes the event's organizer, businessman Jean-Claude Méthot.

The nearest hospital is in Chandler, 44 kilometres from Percé. The Barachois CLSC, which offers limited services, is 20 kilometres away.

Santé Québec Gaspésie says it is making every effort to maintain medical services while awaiting the eventual return of the doctor assigned to the facility.

As part of its temporary measures, specialized nurse practitioners (SNPs) are now providing services at the CLSC. Beginning September 29, two SNPs were assigned to alternate Wednesdays, seeing patients on a walk-in basis.

The social worker and general care nurse remain on site, while nursing, psychosocial and home care services continue. The general care nurse is also completing vaccination training, with vaccination services expected to become available shortly.

These temporary arrangements will be regularly monitored and reassessed according to the population's needs and staff availability.

Santé Québec Gaspésie also issued a call for interest to family doctors in Rocher-Percé to establish a temporary rotating presence at the CLSC. Its longer-term goal is to integrate the facility into the Rocher-Percé Family Medicine Group to ensure continuity of services.

For now, however, there is no doctor practising at the CLSC.

Years of declining services

For residents, the latest measures do not fully address concerns about the gradual loss of health services in Percé.

The CLSC once had three doctors, home care nurses, a dentist and a dental hygienist, a psychologist and a social worker.

"I've felt a real lack of support, especially over the past decade. Little by little, people have lost interest and become demotivated," says Dr. Luc Rehel, who practised at the facility for 30 years before retiring two years ago.

He criticizes the regional health administration, formerly the CISSS, for not adequately responding to the situation at the Percé CLSC.

Residents attending the protest also pointed to the disappearance of other local services in recent years, including the village school, the gas station, the Desjardins branch and, more recently, its ATM.

The September 24 demonstration, held ahead of the October 5 provincial election, also attracted three candidates.

The two Parti Québécois candidates in the Gaspésie region and the Québec Solidaire candidate in Gaspé attended the gathering.

Parti Québécois candidate Pier-Luc Bujold, a former president of the Gaspésie nurses' union, says the widespread shortage of resources requires a provincewide commitment to rebuilding the CLSC network.

"We need stable, multidisciplinary teams. That's what's missing in centres like the Percé CLSC," he says.

Fellow Parti Québécois candidate Méganne Perry Mélançon, who represented Gaspé in the National Assembly from 2018 to 2022, also calls for renewed investment in community-based health services.

"The health care system's model is more curative. We need prevention. We need full, multidisciplinary teams in the CLSCs," she argues.

Emmanuelle Babin, the Québec Solidaire candidate in Gaspé and a Percé resident, expressed solidarity with those concerned about access to local health care.

"It's no fun having to drive 45 minutes to get to the hospital. It's important to keep this service here. As a fellow citizen, I want to tell you that I stand with you. We're going to make sure this changes," she says.

No magic solution

The departure of the only doctor from the Percé CLSC highlights the broader physician shortage affecting the Gaspé Peninsula.

Martin Pelletier, president and chief executive officer of Santé Québec Gaspésie, acknowledges that recruiting doctors remains difficult. (See separate article.)

While the introduction of nurse practitioners provides an alternative for patients, the long-term availability of physician services at the Percé CLSC remains uncertain.

Significant shortage of doctors in the Gaspé

NELSON **SERGERIE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE



Photo: Sante Quebec

Martin Pelletier, president and CEO of Santé Québec Gaspésie.

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – The unexpected departure of the only doctor at the Percé CLSC due to a work stoppage once again highlights the precarious staffing situation facing Santé Québec Gaspésie.

Often, health-care service disruptions or shortages are linked to a lack of nurses, but the shortage is also affecting doctors, as demonstrated by the situation in Percé on September 21.

"You can't just replace a doctor like that. There's a severe shortage of doctors in the Gaspé Peninsula. It's not that we aren't trying to recruit, but there are few family doctors who want to come practice in the Gaspé Peninsula," explains Martin Pelletier, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Santé Québec Gaspésie.

Measures are being taken to temporarily fill the gap, such as finding a specialized nurse practitioner who could take on part of the workload. Since there isn't one available in Percé, the network is looking for someone in Gaspé.

The nurse practitioner in Rocher-Percé works at the Chandler Family Medicine Group, and the Percé CLSC is not part of the Family Medicine Group (GMF) satellite network.

Recruitment remains difficult

"We're operating at the limits of our staffing capacity. We often have only one doctor per location. For the past three, four, or five years, we haven't been able to fill our medical positions. This year, we can hire up to 11 doctors if we find interested candidates," says the CEO.

In Rocher-Percé, two candidates have expressed interest but have not yet signed an agreement.

"We're even having trouble filling our residency positions in the GMFUs. This doesn't bode well because there are even fewer students coming to hone their skills in the region, and right now, we're missing opportunities to attract them," continues Mr. Pelletier.

The emerging medical training program at the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) could provide a boost, but its impact remains limited.

"UQAR serves the Côte-de-Gaspé region. In the Baie-des-Chaleurs area, it's the Université de Montréal because our GMFU is affiliated with that university. That doesn't stop students from the Université de Sherbrooke who volunteer to come to the Gaspé Peninsula, and we'll welcome them with open arms," adds Mr. Pelletier

The same could happen with Université Laval in Quebec City.

Another challenge is looming at the Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis CLSC, as a doctor has announced his retirement for next November.

"We don't have a solution to replace him. I can't promise that we'll have a doctor to replace a doctor," the CEO admits.

Elsewhere in the network, the staffing situation remains precarious, particularly when there are departures or sick leaves.

The situation is particularly concerning in Gaspé.

"We've been hit hard by two departures in intensive care. Two nurses have left, and there have also been departures in obstetrics. Four nurses left this summer. For now, we're filling the gaps with independent contractors," says Mr. Pelletier.

Nearly 200 attend meeting on Murdochville mining project

NELSON **SERGERIE**

MURDOCHVILLE – Nearly 200 people gathered on September 16 at the Murdochville Community Centre to hear about the various steps taken by the town as Osisko Mining increasingly makes clear the need to relocate residents to access the copper deposit beneath their homes.

"The main goal was to take on a more active, leading role. We had incredible citizen participation. It was a start: listening to people, hearing positive feedback… The idea of staying united and showing solidarity. That doesn't mean agreeing on everything all the time, but finding compromises and common solutions to move forward," says Mayor Stéphane Gamache.

Earlier, the mayor summarized what was accomplished during the trip to Abitibi-Témiscamingue to see what happened in Malartic, which experienced a situation similar to what could happen in Murdochville.

The mayor promised to provide a detailed report on the various discussions soon to inform his constituents.

"It's about determining what resources we have available. A new scenario has emerged. It complicates urban planning considerations. It complicates the costs for us," the mayor says, suggesting that he would like more government support.

Last summer, Mr. Gamache mentioned the lack of resources and expertise needed to properly prepare for what lies ahead.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Mayor Stéphane Gamache presents the steps that will be taken over the coming months.

"We're going to try to get help from the mining company. It's not ideal. "

Concerns

The main concerns raised include the value of residents' properties, learning about project developments through the media, quality of life and outdoor recreation.

"Fifteen to twenty percent of the town's residents are people who came here for the outdoors," notes Richard Jinchereau.

The funds needed to buy back the properties are also a major issue.

"I came here by choice. Do we want a hole right in the middle of the Gaspé Peninsula? Fair market value after announcing a move out of town… Don't talk to me about fair market value. The house I own would cost $450,000 elsewhere. I doubt the fair market value will come close," he says.

"It's going to go round and round. It's going to close… It won't close. They'll keep dithering for six years. It's good to have information, but I don't think much information has actually come out," notes Yvan Fournier, who maintains that some people want to leave while others want to stay in Murdochville.

Raphaëlle Molaison, who is involved with the Murdochville Youth Centre, feels she has received some answers to her questions.

"In my heart, I'd love to be able to keep my little house, which I've paid for with the sweat of my brow, but I'm confident in how things will turn out. I trust the Town; I still trust Osisko—it's up to them to prove me wrong," she says.

Guillaume Molaison has built an entire sector around outdoor activities in Murdochville over the past 20 years.

"It's a wonderful outpouring of solidarity and shared concerns. We feel a little less alone in loving where we live, and we feel that we're not the only ones who want to protect our quality of life," says the developer, who supports the project because the Gaspé Peninsula and Murdochville need it.

"It's about making sure we make the right decisions to seize the opportunities this project offers and have the greatest possible impact at the regional level. That's where we highlight the importance of tourism through this project. There will likely never be a greater opportunity for adventure tourism to establish itself in the heart of the Gaspé Peninsula and influence year-round structural dynamics," argues the developer, who spoke out in the hours leading up to the meeting to serve as a spokesperson for stakeholders in the Gaspé Peninsula's recreational tourism industry.

This sector is important in the winter not only for Murdochville but also for the entire region.

"It would be difficult to recreate such strong synergy," he believes, noting that his various projects have spurred an economic revival in the mining town.

"People have felt rushed over the past few months. A move fraught with uncertainty. A lack of information to help them decide where they stand. They have concerns about their quality of life: Will they still have access to nearby outdoor spaces? Health care? Their elementary and high schools? We need to clarify things better. Today, the goal wasn't to take a position," the mayor continues.

The mining company still has several steps to take before reaching the point of potential operations. The minimum timeframe is estimated at six years.

Candidates listen to residents

Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) candidate Stéphane Sainte-Croix and Liberal candidate Michel Marin took time during their campaigns to attend the meeting and listen to residents' concerns.

"This is an important step in the public consultation on the mining project. It's important to hear what they have to say. One thing is clear: social acceptability is non-negotiable for a project of this magnitude," notes the incumbent Member of the National Assembly (MNA.)

Michel Marin owns land in Murdochville. "We're dealing with an industrial project and an existing community. This community has already experienced the closure of a mine, which led to various social problems. People have built their lives here. I wouldn't want to be in their shoes," he says.

"It is the government's responsibility to assist citizens so that their rights and the value of their property are respected, ensuring they are not left to face a corporation alone," says Mr. Marin.

Parti Québécois candidate Méganne Perry Mélançon and Québec solidaire candidate Emmanuelle Babin did not attend the municipal event.

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC is keeping a close eye on developments in Murdochville

NELSON **SERGERIE**

GASPÉ – The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC is keeping a close eye on developments in the Osisko Metals project, which hopes to revive Mines Gaspé around the turn of the 2030s.

Among the scenarios mentioned by the mining company is the complete relocation of the town to make way for a massive open-pit mine and fully exploit the copper reserves beneath the ground.

On September 16, nearly 200 people gathered at the Murdochville Community Centre to hear about the various steps taken by the town.

"The MRC's position will align with that of the Town of Murdochville. The Murdochville Town Council is sovereign, and the mayor serves on the MRC," comments prefect Daniel Côté.



Prefect Daniel Côté.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

He recalls events in Gaspé surrounding oil development in the 2010s and does not want to see the community divided.

"We see economic opportunities, but we also see social risks. The community must not turn against one another. Debates raged in Gaspé even though all authority lies with the Quebec government, which is responsible for natural resources and can suspend urban planning regulations. The Quebec government has a major role to play. I hope it will fulfill its role," says the prefect, who is also the mayor of Gaspé.

The prefect is in regular contact with the mayor of Murdochville, Stéphane Gamache.

The town hopes to secure more resources to take the right steps regarding the mining company.

"Some aspects are being handled by the town and the MRC. If we need to go further, we'll certainly reach financial limits at some point. The Quebec government will have a role to play, since it's the one collecting the royalties," says Mr. Côté.

"If it can't provide on-the-ground support, there should at least be some form of financial and technical support to help the municipality," continues the prefect.

During the September 16 public hearing, the main concerns raised by residents included the value of their properties, learning about project developments through the media, their quality of life, and outdoor recreation.

The mining company still has several steps to complete before it can begin operations. The minimum timeframe is estimated at six years.

No trilingual main signs from Parks Canada at Forillon Park

NELSON **SERGERIE**

GASPÉ – Parks Canada has introduced trilingual signs in certain parts of the Maritimes, a practice that has not yet been implemented at Forillon Park.

For example, in Prince Edward Island, it is common to see main signs indicating historic sites or Cavendish Beach with text in French, English, and Mi'gmaq.

This practice is not yet standard at Forillon Park or the Battle of the Ristigouche site in the Gaspé Peninsula.

When asked about this issue, Parks Canada's Gaspé Field Unit indicated that it is working toward this goal.



An example of Parks Canada's trilingual signs in Prince Edward Island.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

"Parks Canada's Gaspé Field Unit supports trilingual signage in French, English, and Mi'gmaq as part of a commitment to reconciliation and to recognizing and celebrating the Mi'gmaq presence and history in the region. In fact, several initiatives to this end are already in place at Forillon National Park and the Battle of Ristigouche National Historic Site," Parks Canada replied via email.

Among the examples cited are the Mi'gmaq welcome messages at Forillon on the facade of the Visitor and Discovery Centre, as well as at the entrance to the administrative office.

The new Gespeg kiosk, located at the entrance to the Visitor and Discovery Centre, also incorporates this approach, as does the place-name sign at Anse-aux-Amérindiens.

"At the Battle of the Ristigouche National Historic Site, the exhibition module dedicated to the Mi'gmaq canoe also features trilingual content, reflecting a commitment to highlighting the Mi'gmaq language and culture," the statement reads.

"Parks Canada views these initiatives as first steps in the right direction and remains open to continuing this work in collaboration with its Mi'gmaq partners," the statement continues, without specifying what the next steps might be.

Parks Canada declined our request for an interview to further explain the approach.

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No increased surveillance in the forest during hunting season

NELSON **SERGERIE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE



Photo: Archives

Wildlife officers will not be present in large numbers in Gaspé Peninsula forests during hunting season, according to the Wildlife Officers' Union.

CHANDLER – Hunters should not expect increased wildlife officer surveillance during this fall's hunting season, as the Wildlife Officers' Union says no large-scale surveillance operations are currently planned in the Gaspé Peninsula.

In recent years, personnel from the Southeast District and elsewhere in the province have come to the Gaspé Peninsula to conduct additional patrols during hunting season.

"As for large-scale provincial operations, so far we haven't heard of any planned for the Gaspé Peninsula or the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. There will be work done at the local level, such as patrols," says union president Martin Perreault.

But there are only two wildlife officers at the Chandler office.

"In the right place at the right time'—that's not true. We're going to stop saying that during hunting season in the Gaspé Peninsula. There's no operation. There are places and days when there won't be any officers," says Mr. Perreault.

When asked about the situation, the ministry responded that operations are based on operational planning that takes into account reports received, information gathered by officers, and the prioritization of wildlife issues.

For the sake of efficiency, no further details can be disclosed.

However, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) says officers will be present in the region during the hunting season.

While hunters fear that the lack of wildlife officers will lead to intimidation and threats in the forest, the SQ says its officers will continue to carry out their usual duties, particularly regarding traffic safety, impaired driving, Criminal Code violations, conflicts or altercations, as well as any other situation within its jurisdiction.

Police officers will have a greater presence in the area during the hunting season.

The future of the Chandler Wildlife Office

The future of the Chandler Wildlife Office is back in the news as the current lease is set to expire on July 5, 2027.

Concerns have been raised once again as wildlife officers are scheduled to be transferred to the Ministry of Public Safety next April. A base in Chandler remains strategic.

"Staffing levels should remain the same, and this was confirmed by Catherine Blouin during a debate (on CHNC on September 17). Of course, there's an election coming up. But the process must continue," says Mr. Perreault, who was interviewed before the end of the electoral campaign and before SPEC's deadline.

There have been calls to consolidate peace officers for 30 years.

As for maintaining staffing levels in Chandler, the president is keeping his fingers crossed.

"With the transfer to the Ministry of Internal Security, I remain fairly confident. But we need commitments after October 5," says Mr. Perreault. Wildlife officers would be consolidated with agents from Contrôle routier Québec, according to the scenario being considered for Chandler.

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

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

In the 1990s, the office had 26 wildlife officers, now there are only two. The Southeast District has approximately 60 wildlife officers to cover the territory.

No merger between the Gaspé Coast and South-Central Gaspé credit unions

NELSON **SERGERIE**



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

If the merger had been approved by the members, the new credit union's headquarters would have been located in Chandler.

CHANDLER – Although members voted by a simple majority in favour of merging the Desjardins credit unions of the Gaspesian Coast and the south-central Gaspé, the required two-thirds majority (66.67%) was not reached for the merger to go through.

Members had the opportunity to voice their opinions following two evenings of consultation on September 8 and 9. The results of the vote were announced on September 15.

In total, 57.72% of the members of the Caisse Desjardins du Littoral gaspésien and 51.82% of the members of the Caisse populaire Desjardins du Centre-sud gaspésien expressed support for the proposal.Consequently, the merger cannot move forward.

"We have taken note of the result. We respect our members' decision. Democracy has spoken. But one thing is certain: we will continue to serve our members in the region in the best way possible," explains Robert Nicolas, president of the Caisse Desjardins du Littoral gaspésien.

Had the merger gone ahead, the Caisse Desjardins du Grand-Littoral gaspésien would have become operational on January 1, 2027.

The new financial cooperative would have had just over 20,000 members, a business volume of $1.681 billion and assets of $945 million.

"As for what happens next, we'll see. The board of directors is going to take a step back following the members' decision. We'll see," said Mr. Nicolas.

The Caisse Desjardins du Littoral gaspésien had its own executive director. A co-management arrangement had been in place with the other credit union since November 2025.



Dépanneur Langlois closes in Saint-Godefroi

GILLES **GAGNÉ**



An apartment will eventually occupy the space that was occupied by Dépanneur Langlois until September 30.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

SAINT-GODEFROI – The eastern part of the Bonaventure MRC lost another convenience store as Dépanneur Langlois closed its doors on September 30 after various attempts to find an operator over recent months. There is now no convenience store between Paspebiac and Port Daniel.

Carole Langlois had been operating the convenience store for close to 14 years. She and the owner of the building, Réal Thériault, tried to find another operator, without success.

"There was an offer, but it didn't work out," says Ms. Langlois, on September 29, the next-to-last day of operations. She didn't want to comment further.

The owner of the building confirms that the talks conducted over recent months with potential operators didn't pan out.

"Unfortunately, we are losing our convenience store in Saint-Godefroi. We tried hard to find an operator, but making profits is getting harder and harder. The last few years have been tough for Carole. Everything is expensive. Food is expensive. Running a convenience store is hard. People are increasingly going to supermarkets and bigger stores. Running a convenience store is hard," explains Réal Thériault.

"I ran the store for 28 years, with my wife Ginette. It was called Dépanneur Thériault. It's really too bad that we are losing the store in Saint-Godefroi. We will turn that space into an apartment. It will fill a need, but I would have liked it to stay a convenience store. The population is aging and young people aren't willing to work as much anymore, and I understand them! Realities change as time passes. Most of the time, you can't afford to have employees when you run a convenience store. We know we were serving a lot of anglophones among our clients. We had a lot of people from Shigawake at the store," stresses Mr. Thériault.

There are two apartments on the second floor of the building and one at the back. We're going to draw up plans for the next unit, but first, we must clear everything out of there as soon as possible," concludes Réal Thériault.


Photo: Daniel Côté's Facebook page

Approximately 110 people walked for the cause.

110 walkers and $28,350 raised at the Kidney Walk

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ — The ninth Kidney Walk on the Gaspé Coast, held on September 19 in Gaspé, had raised $28,350 as of September 20, towards a goal of $30,000. Committee chair André Fortin notes that additional funds will be added as the campaign continues until the end of December.

The chair is confident that the goal will be exceeded. Approximately 110 people walked for the cause on Saturday, September 19. Last year, nearly $35,000 was raised. With more than $28,000 raised so far, the event has now reached the $300,000 mark over its nine years of activities.

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ORANGE SHIRT DAY:

Cont'd from Cover

never have existed if Phyllis Webstad, born in 1967 on the Dog Creek Reserve, 85 kilometres south of Williams Lake, British Columbia, had not told a friend, in late April 2013, the story of her first day at school, which took place in September 1973.

As reported in the Canadian Geographic magazine in 2020, Phyllis Webstad "is Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band). She lived with her grandmother, who in preparation for her first day of school in 1973, took her shopping for a new outfit. The girl carefully picked out an orange shirt that was both bright and exciting, reflecting her feelings on going to a new school."

However, her arrival at the school took a distressing turn."When she arrived at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School, just outside Williams Lake, British Columbia, her emotions quickly went from excitement to terror when her shirt was taken away from her. The shirt represented a piece of home, a piece of her heart and life as she knew it. This would be the first of many atrocities and traumas she would experience during her year away from her home on the rez," Canadian Geographic also reported.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

William Jerome explains why it is important to remember what took place in residential schools over more than a century and a half.

Joan Sorely, the first person to hear Phyllis Webstad's story, attended a public presentation the following day as a member of a St. Joseph's Mission Residential School commemoration project planning committee.

Ms. Sorely told Canadian Geographic that "Phyllis's story is so simple and yet powerful. And it's pretty much everybody's story. You know everybody (residential school survivors) lost their clothes on their first day of school. I was trying to figure out how we can keep this momentum going. And I thought 'well, there's Pink Shirt Day (to take a stand against bullying) — why don't we have Orange Shirt Day."

The movement grew from there, first in British Columbia and then across Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 2008 and held hearings across the country to document the history and lasting impacts of the Indian residential school system in Canada. Its report was released in 2015 and notably concluded that Indigenous Peoples had been subjected to cultural genocide.

Between 1831 and 1996, up to 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend residential schools, and approximately 3,200 never returned home.

Family Ties' Heather MacWhirter hopes that the new government will increase community funding

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

NEW CARLISLE – A little over a week before the start of the National Week of Community Organizations, Family Ties' executive director Heather MacWhirter hopes that the new Quebec government will provide more resources to organizations serving people in need of various services.

The National Week of Community Organizations will take place from October 18 to 24, inclusive, across Quebec. This includes the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, where about 100 organizations play an important role in many aspects of community life. Family Ties is one of them, having been founded in 1995.

"For decades, community family organizations have been maintaining a vital safety net for thousands of families in Quebec. Everywhere, they welcome, listen, support, prevent exclusion, and strengthen parenting skills, all while building connections with families and the many partners in their communities. Yet, despite the importance of their role and their impact on families, they remain underfunded, and their autonomy is threatened by government decisions that are out of touch with the reality on the ground," explains Ms. MacWhirter.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Heather MacWhirter wants greater considerations for organizations that support families.

"Today, needs are skyrocketing: too many families are living in vulnerable circumstances, like financial insecurity, isolation, waiting for professional health and social services and so on. Furthermore, new realities are amplifying the need for community family organizations, like immigration, a lack of daycare spots, increased parental anxiety, rising cost of living, persistent social inequalities, and food insecurity, among others. Despite the urgent need for action, the resources for the organizations that support them are not keeping up," she adds.

Given this general context, Heather MacWhirter hopes that a new government will be more responsive to the organizations working with vulnerable segments of the population.

For organizations such as Family Ties, the challenge is not only maintaining existing services but also responding to changing family needs.

These organizations provide support, information and activities that help families navigate everyday difficulties. Having sufficient resources allows them to continue offering these services while adapting to the needs of their communities.

Speaking before election day, Ms. MacWhirter emphasized the importance of increased funding and maintaining the independence of community organizations.

"We expect a call for an increase and indexation of funding, and above all, emphasis on the fact that our organizations must remain autonomous so they can act quickly and effectively in step with the needs of families, not at the pace dictated by government ministries and agencies. It is time for government agencies to honor their commitments and recognize that our community-based organizations are essential partners in prevention efforts to support and assist families throughout Quebec," she concludes.





The economy is Alexis Deschênes' top priority

NELSON **SERGERIE**

OTTAWA – The economy, in the broadest sense, is the focus of the Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) who represents Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj as the parliamentary session resumed in Ottawa on September 21.

Throughout the summer, constituents in his vast riding frequently raised issues centred on this theme.

"One thing that came up often was unemployment insurance: many seasonal workers are worried about the 'black hole'; and increasing old-age pensions for seniors. These are two demands from the Bloc Québécois that address people's concerns about the cost of living," says the MP, who took the time to discuss these issues with constituents, something he particularly values because it provides him with what he calls the "raw materials" needed to determine which battles to fight.



Photo: Courtesy of the Bloc Québécois

Alexis Deschênes, accompanied by his leader Yves-François Blanchet, and others, as he exits the Bloc Québécois' preparatory caucus on September 20.

The management and processing of immigration applications by Ottawa also came up.

"Of course, the trade war with the United States is a concern, especially as we need to defend our economy and ensure we build a strong economy in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands."

All these themes can be summed up in one word: the economy.

"We absolutely must build a more resilient economy to weather the ups and downs of the global economy. Tariffs and retaliatory tariffs are slowing down our economy. Our American partner is less trustworthy than before. This means supporting our businesses and industries that want to modernize. But it also means helping low-income people so they can earn a decent income, which will benefit both them and the economy as a whole by stimulating the domestic economy," the elected official summarizes.

During the debates in the House of Commons, Quebec's unique circumstances must be taken into account.

"We will also focus on environmental protection, because this government is embarking on many investment projects, and we in the Bloc Québécois believe that this must be done while protecting the environment. We must not sidestep environmental assessments. Nor should we send $40 billion in public funds to enrich oil companies that are already making record profits. We must support our businesses."

Culture is also a priority, given that the digital services tax has been shelved by prime minister Mark Carney's Liberal government.

"There must be tax justice with the tech giants that make money off our creators' content, and that money must be returned to the media and artists," says the Bloc Québécois member.

Mark Carney's efforts to strengthen ties with the European Union are viewed favourably by the MP, given the difficult economic relationship with the United States.

"We believe that Quebec and Canada are free to develop relationships with any country in the world. Quebec has a special role to play in our desire to move forward. Europe offers important economic partners and shared democratic values. We want to help bring us closer to Europe," the MP concludes.

Mia Kelly and Wooden Shapes take the stage

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

NEW RICHMOND – Mia Kelly and Wooden Shapes will hit the New Richmond concert hall stage on two consecutive October nights, with the Gatineau-born singer performing on October 21 and the versatile band taking the stage the following night.

Mia Kelly is making her mark on the international folk music scene with a distinctive blend of folk, rock, and blues. Weaving stories and songs in both French and English, she is recognized as a poetic lyricist with a powerful and versatile voice.



Photo: New Richmond Salle de spectacles

Mia Kelly released her first album in 2022.

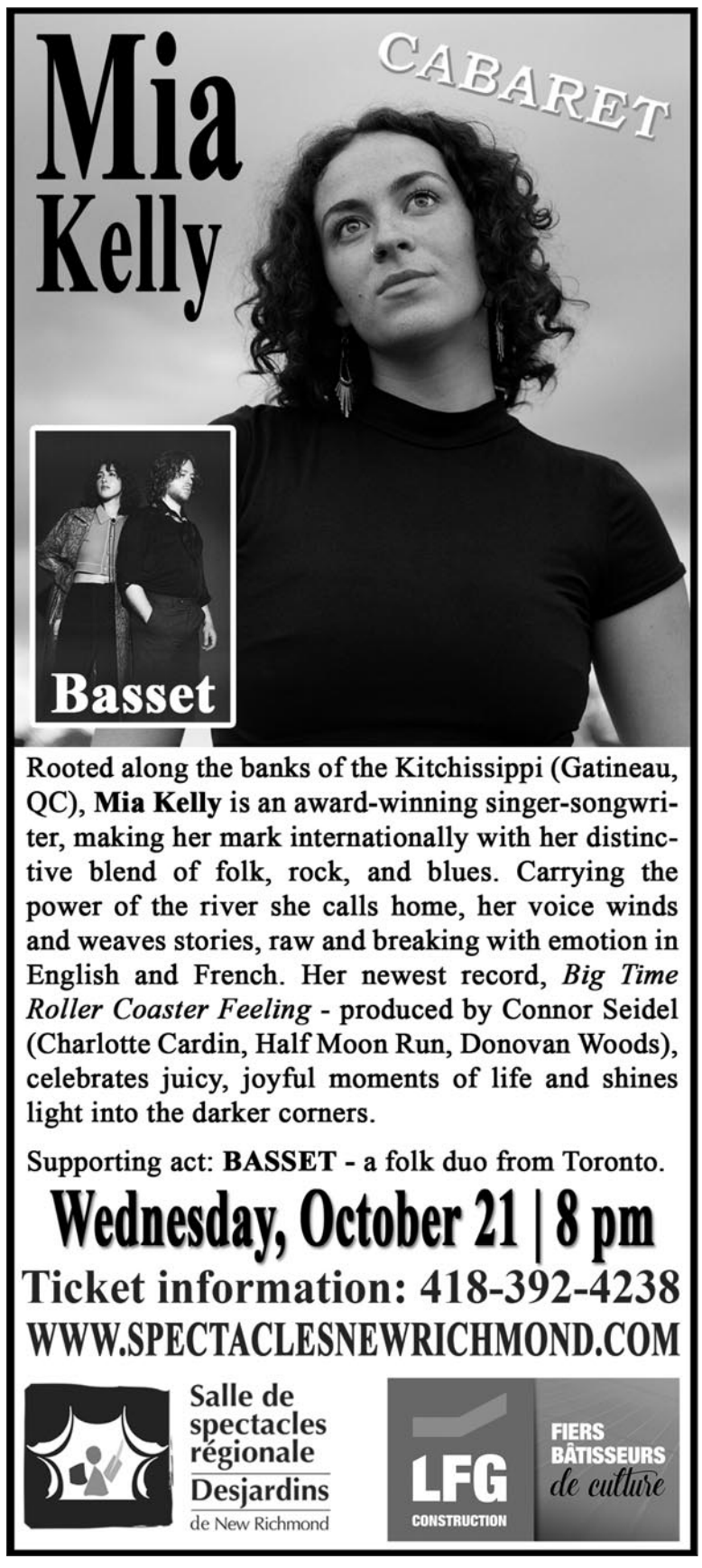
Her newest release, Big Time Roller Coaster Feeling, was produced by Connor Seidel, also known for his work with Half Moon Run, Charlotte Cardin and Donovan Woods.

Her debut album, Garden Through the War, was released in 2022. Her second album, To Be Clear, released in 2024, launched her career on the world stage, leading to extensive touring throughout Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, as well as performing at major festivals and opportunities to open for renowned artists such as Bobby Bazini, The Franklin Electric, Good Lovelies, and Kim Churchill.

To Be Clear received critical acclaim worldwide. The record featured "Meaning Well," nominated for single of the year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards, and went on to earn four nominations at the 2025 Capital Music Awards. Mia took home the award for single of the year for "Bonefish Boys".

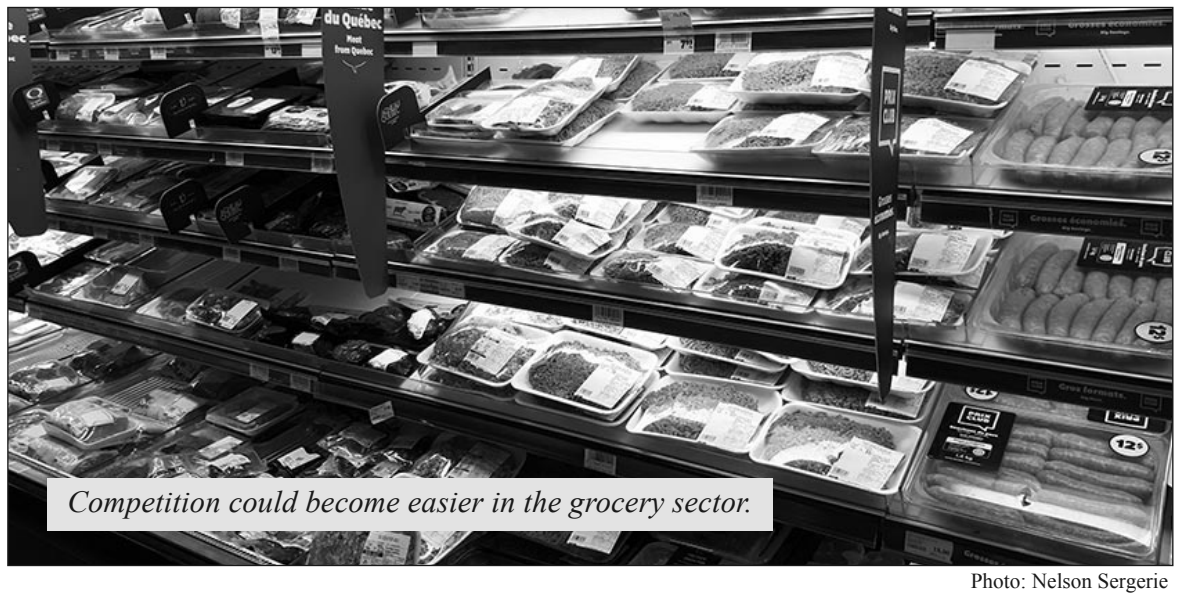
Toronto-based folk duo, Basset, featuring singer Yasmine Shelton and guitarist Sam Clark, will perform during the first part of the evening.

On October 22, Wooden Shapes will follow with a show that presents the band's wide repertoire, ranging from Metallica, Led Zeppelin, System of a Down, David Bowie, Muse, Pink Floyd, Iron Maiden, and Guns N' Roses to Harmonium, Les Cowboys Fringants, and many more—all reimagined and performed exclusively on string instruments.



One less obstacle for a second grocery store in Paspebiac

NELSON **SERGERIE**



Competition could become easier in the grocery sector.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

PASPEBIAC – A decision by the Competition Bureau announced September 22 opens the door to more competition in the food sector, which could pave the way for a second grocery store in Paspebiac.

The Competition Bureau reached a consent agreement with Empire, the parent company of Sobeys, to address concerns about its use of property controls in the Canadian grocery sector.

Empire owns several grocery store chains. In Quebec, the best-known banners are IGA, Marché Bonichoix and Les Marchés Tradition.

Elsewhere in the country, Sobeys, Farm Boy, Safeway, Foodland, and FreshCo are among the banners in Empire's portfolio.

The mayor of Paspebiac, Jérémy Laplante, declined to comment on the anticipated decision during an interview. He simply said that he is more optimistic than ever about the success of a project to open a second grocery store in his municipality.

In Paspébiac, an anti-competitive clause prevented another grocer from setting up shop in the building or on the land of the former Robin store, directly across from the IGA supermarket.

What the Bureau says

In explaining the agreement reached between the parties, the Bureau states that "ownership controls in the grocery sector restrict the use of commercial real estate for the sale of food products. The Bureau found that these restrictions make it difficult, if not impossible, for businesses to open new stores or sell certain products, and that they can reduce competition in local markets across Canada."

In a consent agreement filed with the Competition Tribunal, Empire committed to no longer enforcing existing restrictive clauses, entering into new restrictive clauses or requiring other parties to implement restrictive clauses that benefit the company. It also agreed to limit its use of exclusivity clauses.

"This consent agreement will help provide greater certainty and remove barriers for market participants seeking to enter or expand in the food retail sector. The Bureau recognizes the significant steps taken by Empire to change the way it uses ownership controls in the Canadian grocery sector," the federal agency stated.

The Bureau's investigation into the use of property controls by other grocery retailers is ongoing, and it continues to monitor the industry closely.

Property controls are restrictions that limit how real property may be used by third parties.

They include exclusivity clauses, which are commonly found in commercial leases and prohibit a landlord from leasing premises to another tenant who competes with the current tenant.

Restrictive covenants are land use restrictions that prevent the buyer or owner of a commercial property from using the premises to operate certain types of businesses or from leasing them to such operators.

In June 2023, the Bureau published its market study on the grocery sector, which concluded that property controls can limit competition from new retailers and deprive consumers of the benefits of competition, including lower prices, greater choice, and increased innovation.

In June 2025, the Bureau announced that it was monitoring Loblaw's commitment to end its use of property controls in Canada.

In June 2026, the Bureau launched an investigation into competition across Canada's entire food supply chain, with the aim of assessing potential competition issues in the production, processing, transportation and distribution, as well as in retail pricing practices.

August was warmer and drier than normal

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The drier and warmer weather continued throughout August on the Gaspé coast.

According to monthly data from Environment Canada, 67 millimetres of rain fell at Michel-Pouliot Airport, about three-quarters of the normal amount of 91 millimetres.

For the meteorological summer, from June 1 to August 31, 198 millimetres of precipitation were recorded, representing 73% of the normal 270 millimetres.

That was slightly more than the 144 millimetres recorded during the very dry summer of 2025.

New Carlisle received 283 millimetres of precipitation over the summer, while Carleton-sur-Mer received 190 millimetres.

The average temperature in Gaspé for August was 17.7 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees above normal.

A record was set on August 5 when the temperature reached 33.1 degrees, surpassing the previous record of 32 degrees set in 1990.

The monthly average temperature was 18.3 degrees in New Carlisle and 18.7 degrees in Carleton-sur-Mer.

Few forest fires despite dry weather

Despite the hot and dry conditions, the Society for the Protection of Forests Against Fire (SOPFEU) reported only one forest fire in the Gaspé Peninsula in August.

The fire, which was caused by human activity, resulted in little damage, with the affected area recorded as less than one hectare.

It was located along Route Awtiget, the road connecting the Augustines Industrial Park to the port of Sandy Beach in Gaspé.

Since the beginning of the season, 14 fires have burned a total of 3.2 hectares.

Each fire this season has burned less than one hectare of forest.

The 10-year average is 15 fires, burning a total of 23.5 hectares.

Last year, SOPFEU recorded 35 forest fires that burned 86.3 hectares in the Gaspé Peninsula.



Mi’gmaq fiddler Morgan Toney to present a show at Carleton’s Virée Trad on October 9

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

CARLETON - Morgan Toney, a Mi’gmaq folk singer-songwriter and fiddler from Nova Scotia, will open the 25th Virée Trad, presented in Carleton on October 9, 10 and 11. A member of the Wagmatcook First Nation, he performs music blending Celtic folk and traditional Mi'gmaq music.

His album Resilience, released in 2023, received a Juno Award nomination a year later for Traditional Roots Album of the Year. At the 2026 Juno Awards, he won the same award for Heal the Divide, the title of the show he will present in Carleton.

Morgan Toney first played music as a drummer, before learning the fiddle in the late 2010s. He then met singer-songwriter Keith Mullins. Both musicians had planned to record an album, but their plans were obstructed by the pandemic. He nevertheless performed in the 2020 virtual edition of the Celtic Colours festival, sharing the stage with Ashley MacIsaac.

Meanwhile, the Virée Trad lineup features a wealth of key artists in traditional storytelling, music, song, and dance: a festival debut for La Bottine Souriante, one of the final performances by Les Charbonniers de l'enfer, and a total of some fifteen shows and a dozen activities.



Photo: Courtesy of La Virée

The two albums by Morgan Toney, centre, were nominated for Juno Awards in 2024 and 2026. He will perform at the start of the event on Friday, October 9, at 5:30 p.m. under the Quai des arts tent. The show is free.

To mark this quarter-century milestone and blend the epic with the traditional, 34 artists from Quebec, Acadie, Portugal, and Indigenous communities will come together for the 7,500 expected festival-goers. Attendees can also enjoy the popular dance party, workshops, presentations, jam sessions, and the Gaspésie region’s largest public market.

The four Portuguese accordionists are part of a band called Danças Ocultas. As for La Bottine Souriante, the traditional band was founded 50 years ago, hence the title of the show, “50 ans”!

In one of their very last performances, Les Charbonniers de l'enfer are honouring the festival with their show “F-i fi, n-i ni”! The members have fewer than 10 shows to perform between now and December.

Finally, to add a touch of whimsy to the site and enhance the family programming, Les Foutoukours will present three roving clown-theatre performances.

Four main venues

La Virée Trad will feature other artists such as Michel Faubert, a member of Les Charbonniers de l’enfer who is also a storyteller; fiddler Dâvi Simard; Les Mercenaires du terroir; Hélène Gaulin; Jérôme Cyr and Yaëlle Azoulay. They will take the stage at four venues: the Quai des arts studio, with a capacity of 168 seats, the MRC Avignon stage tent (300 seats), Le Naufrageur microbrewery (130 seats) and the Gaspésie Convention Centre (400 seats).

For festival director Samuel Téguel, this anniversary edition is an opportunity to acknowledge the loyalty of festival-goers. “For a quarter of a century, the festival has consistently strived to promote and showcase traditional storytelling, music, song, and dance.

Launching a living heritage festival in the Gaspé region in October was no small feat! If the event is more popular than ever after 25 years, it is largely thanks to the loyalty of our festival-goers. And it is to thank them that we are presenting this landmark program,” he says.

The festival offers a major showcase for the region’s agri-food products and craftsmanship. Freshness, flavours, tastings, and short supply chains are on the agenda at the Gaspésie’s largest public market, which will bring together 37 producers and 20 artisans from the region.

In collaboration with Gaspésie Gourmande, the public, artists, and volunteers can enjoy a meal or snack prepared by local restaurateurs: Chez Seb and Le Comptoir cuisine végé. The festival bistro and the mobile pub from Microbrasserie Le Naufrageur will also be on site.

Safety work underway on Haldimand railway bridge

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

GASPÉ – Quebec’s Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility is carrying out safety reinforcement work on the Haldimand railway bridge over the next several weeks. The work involves reinforcing one of the bridge’s foundation units. The contractor began the work on September 17.

The Ministry is asking for the public’s cooperation in respecting the designated work zones and reminds everyone that travel on railway tracks is prohibited at all times, regardless of the mode of transport, the infrastructure’s condition or the presence of trains or construction work.

“The railway bridge near Haldimand Beach in Gaspé presents safety concerns, as the foundation unit at the western support shows signs of damage requiring short-term repairs,” writes Sophie Gaudreault, spokesperson for Transports Québec.

“Following an inspection last May, the Ministry needed to carry out safety-related work to preserve the structure's integrity. This work is unrelated to the Gaspésie railway rehabilitation project. It will involve reinforcing the foundation unit,” she adds, in a written response to SPEC’s questions.

Work began on September 17 and is expected to be completed in early November. The project is being carried out by the company SEMA, with an estimated cost of $1.1 million. Sophie Gaudreault did not use the words “emergency measure” despite SPEC’s question to that effect.

The Haldimand bridge crosses the Saint John River and links the Haldimand and Douglastown beaches. It is arguably one of the bridges most exposed to the elements along the Matapedia-to-Gaspé railway, along with the Barachois bridge.

Both bridges were targeted for major upgrades through a $10.5-million grant announced in May 2013 by then-Quebec premier Pauline Marois. The project was not completed by the following government of Philippe Couillard, elected in April 2014. The materials, including galvanized steel plates and beams, were left near the bridge and eventually vanished.

The deterioration resulting from nearly 13 years of inactivity, coupled with inflation in the construction sector, will greatly increase the cost of repairing both bridges.



$4 Million in wind energy royalties for municipalities

NELSON **SERGERIE**

PERCÉ – The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Energy Authority will distribute $4 million to its members for the 2026 fiscal year, as allocated in the current year's budget.

The authority has already set aside an equivalent amount for the 2027 fiscal year.

Wind conditions have been more favourable over the past year. In recent years, the annual royalty distribution had been $3.5 million.

"We had the worst years for wind conditions in 2023 and 2024. At the time, we had reduced the distributions. We're back on track, and in the interest of sound management, we've begun building a financial reserve to ensure we can distribute the budgeted amount," explains the authority's president, Simon Deschênes, who is also mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The reserve stands at $2 million. The authority has already paid out $6 million in royalties.

"We want to avoid this inconvenience. By creating a reserve, we ensure that we distribute the amount allocated in the budget."

Since 2016, the authority has paid out $37 million, which has become a significant source of funding for municipalities, through its participation in the four existing wind farms: Roncevaux, Le Plateau, Nicolas-Rioux and Dune du Nord.

Wind study

The authority commissioned a study on wind potential in the context of climate change following the difficult years of 2023 and 2024. The results are not yet available.

"It's still under analysis. We're projecting a return to balance for 2025 and 2026. There's also the issue of turbine availability. Our wind farms have been in operation for several years. There are some current or planned operational shutdowns. That can influence the results," notes the president.

Additional royalties on the horizon

The Eastern Energy Alliance, which regroups the Gaspé Peninsula, Magdalen Islands and Lower St. Lawrence energy authorities, is building or planning to build new wind farms in the Rivière-du-Loup and Montmagny-L'Islet regions.

The PPAW1 wind farm near Rivière-du-Loup is expected to be commissioned by the end of December. Funding will be finalized in 2027.

"This means we expect to make distributions only in 2028. We just want to make sure we don't repeat the past.



Simon Deschênes.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

We've made distributions for four wind farms several times now. PPAW1 will come online by the end of this year, and in the years that follow, the others will come online, and the authority will receive larger distributions," says Mr. Deschênes.

The decree for Grosse Île has just been issued.

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) for PPAW 2 (350 megawatts) has just been completed.

Environmental impact assessments for Canton MacNider (122 megawatts), La Forêt Domaniale (180 megawatts) and Madawaska (270 megawatts) are underway.

"For all the wind farms currently under construction, there are no issues with the timeline for commissioning on the scheduled dates," he notes.

The Rocher-Percé MRC may get its own attorney

NELSON **SERGERIE**

CHANDLER – The Rocher-Percé MRC wishes to hire a full-time attorney to perform various tasks that are currently outsourced.

"We want this person to serve in an advisory role, providing legal opinions when we draft agreements and contracts. They would provide legal support not only for the MRC but also for the towns. Previously, we relied on outside counsel, but we want someone specialized in municipal law to improve our practices and reduce costs," explains Prefect Samuel Parisé.

The elected official is unable to quantify the potential savings.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, through the intermunicipal collaboration program, will cover the equivalent of 50% of the salary at the start of the project.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Prefect Samuel Parisé.

"We want to ensure we have control over the costs associated with legal services," he says.

Percé had hired its own legal counsel a few years ago, but the MRC approach will be different.

"It's somewhat similar, but this person will actually advise all the towns and the MRC. This person will not represent the MRC in legal cases. It's truly an advisory service. If the MRC needs to go to court, we may call on outside counsel," the prefect continues.

The MRC has already municipalized its computer service department to serve its own needs and those of the towns.

"The towns are facing certain challenges. We're exploring other possibilities for pooling certain services. We're in the process of analyzing options, and nothing is off the table if it's a win-win for the MRC, the towns and the residents," the prefect concludes.

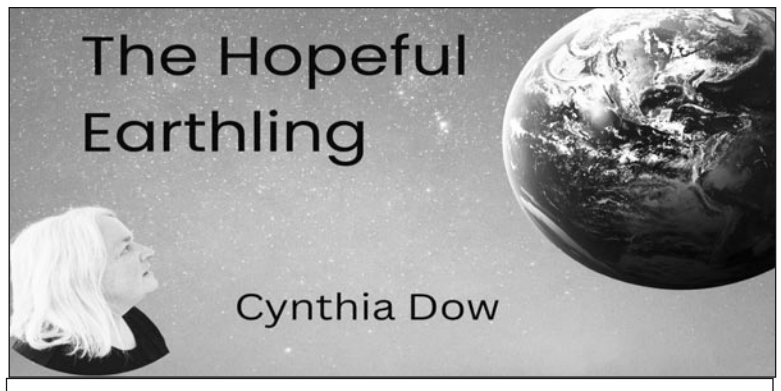




Photo: Courtesy of Jacynthe Babin

A bald eagle prepares her nest for a new generation.

Back from the Edge

When I was a kid, my neighbours and cousins and I practically lived at the mouth of the Cascapedia River, a short walk from our homes. The tiny beach was a great place for wildlife: minks and weasels, deer and moose, cormorants and ducks. But something we did not see when we were young was a single bird of prey.

At the time, I was not aware that anything was missing. But I remember well the first time I saw an osprey. It was in 1994, shortly after I had returned home to stay. I was walking two little puppies back on Lynd's alley on the way to the river, when this huge bird was suddenly floating above me, taking a good look at those puppies!

I have been an enthusiastic birder from a very young age, a passion ignited in me by my paternal grandmother, Olive Beatrice Skene. I was intrigued to see this huge bird that I frankly did not recognize until I got home and looked up the species.

During World War II, a chemical called DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) had been used liberally on clothing, bedding and in the environment during outbreaks of lice, bedbugs and mosquitoes. After the war, chemical companies were looking for alternative uses for their product, and they found one: the spruce budworm. Starting in the 1950s until the mid-1960s DDT was sprayed over large areas of eastern Canada to protect trees used by the forest industry.

The result was catastrophic for the environment. Birds of prey were among the many victims of this spraying campaign.

In her groundbreaking 1962 book Silent Spring, Rachel Carson warned the public about the high cost of using DDT. By the late 1960s, the use of the chemical was curtailed. But the damage had been done: it is estimated that 90% of Canada's birds of prey had disappeared. At the top of the food chain, the birds had absorbed huge quantities of the chemical from the fish they ate, resulting in eggs whose shells were too weak to withstand the pressure of nesting.

Once DDT was no longer in use, ospreys, eagles and falcons gradually returned to their usual haunts. Today I am delighted to live in a place where I see eagles and ospreys almost every day, wheeling above that same river looking for their next meal.

In the face of the climate catastrophe we are facing, and what scientists are warning is a sixth mass extinction event, I am still a hopeful Earthling because I have seen, in many instances, the fabulous resilience of nature once human beings get their act together.

It is tempting, given our current circumstances, to live in despair. Or we can be active, creative, hopeful Earthlings, ready to do our part. This is the first in a series of personal essays about environmental issues and how we can all play a role in helping protect and rejuvenate the ecosystems in which we live.

Rotary Club hands out annual donations to 22 community organizations

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

NEW RICHMOND – Twenty-two Baie-des-Chaleurs organizations and four initiatives received donations from the New Richmond Rotary Club on September 22. The donations totalled $21,000 and were made possible once again through the Lucky calendar fundraising campaign.

The four initiatives were organized by Rotary Club members and received a total of $7,000. The biggest contribution, $2,320, went to the annual salmon dinner, attended by seniors.

Five high school students from the Cascapedia-St-Jules and New Richmond area each received $1,000 bursaries as part of the Rotary Club's annual bursary program. The club itself contributed $2,200, a sum that was supplemented by $2,800 from a fund managed by the Rotary Club, explains former president Louis Forest.

"It is a Gaspésie Community Foundation fund that was sort of abandoned by the organization that put it up. We are managing it for the benefits of youths, our priority," points out Mr. Forest.

The Rotary Club also used proceeds from Lucky calendar sales to provide $1,480 for various community assistance initiatives and $1,000 for youth.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Rotary Club president Jacinthe Desjardins, centre in the front row, and other members of the club, greeted representatives of organizations benefiting from the annual Lucky calendar sales.

"In the latter case, the money is used to help families who cannot afford the extra curricular activities of their children," adds Mr. Forest.

New Richmond's Rotary Club celebrated its 60th anniversary on March 16.

"In 60 years, we have contributed more than $1 million to the community, including sums that did not come from the Lucky calendar sales. We also contributed with our muscles, our volunteer actions, at times," points out Jacinthe Desjardins, who has served as president of the New Richmond Rotary Club since July.

Ms. Desjardins also points out that the New Richmond club solicited the International Rotary Club in order to secure $7,000 for Accroche-Cœur an organization specializing in social pediatrics, for a project in Pointe-à-la-Croix. Accroche-Cœur already operates a social pediatrics centre in Chandler.

Meanwhile, Jacinthe Desjardins told representatives, "you make a difference in order to improve the lives of the area's people," on September 22, when the Rotary Club made the donations to 22 Baie-des-Chaleurs organizations.

Those organizations and the amount they received are listed below.

Recipients of $1,000

- Baie-des-Chaleurs Health Foundation
- Organisme gaspésien des personnes atteintes du cancer (support forcancer patients)
- Maison de la famille Bonaventure MRC (support for single-parent families)
- Maison Maguire (respite for families of people with disabilities)
- Alzheimer's Society Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands
- Guignolée New Richmond (Christmas baskets)

Recipients of $500

- Linda Lemore Brown Foundation (travelling expenses for cancer patients)
- Fonds Leblanc Lobo Turcotte
- Ressources d'aide aux personnes handicapées de la Gaspésie
- Volunteer Action Centre (Le P'tit bonheur)
- Maison des jeunes de New Richmond
- Eagles Club of Cascapedia-St. Jules
- New Richmond's Swimming Club (Les Saumoneaux)
- Association des TCC et AVC (various forms of trauma)
- Cascapedia 50 Plus Club
- Association des personnes handicapées Action Chaleur
- Pin rouge Ski Club (competition)
- Maison Oasis (mental health)
- La Passerelle (mental health)
- L.I.F.E. Association (support for people with disabilities)
- New Richmond Soccer Club
- Naval League of Canada



Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Smells like October

The smells of October are so distinctive. For many, fall is their favourite season, and I'm pretty certain that the colours of the leaves and the smells of October explain why. You can smell October outside and indoors as well.

There is a particular smell in October on the Gaspé. It is difficult to describe, but once you know it, you know it.

The damp smell of the soil, piles of leaves, and woodsmoke from stoves lit in the early morning to take away the dampness are all part of it. Certainly, the salty smell of cold ocean air is a big part of the joys of where we live. You may even catch the smell of someone baking something spicy, such as zucchini loaf from a bumper crop of zucchini. Zucchini loaf is surprisingly delicious with the addition of pumpkin spice and cinnamon.

The leaves are beginning to turn, and a walk in the woods becomes a sensory overload. Take a long walk and breathe it in deeply. You might even come home smelling like the forest. Not a bad thing.

The intoxicating smell of the first wood fire of the season is just about at the top of my list. The smoke drifts, so stop for a moment and breathe it in. It smells like warmth. It smells like evenings to come. Yes, it reminds us that winter is coming, although let's not discuss that just yet.

October also smells like apples. There are apples in the kitchen destined to be used in pies. Too many apples? Make applesauce because homemade is a totally different food from the applesauce you buy. Make it chunky if you like it that way. The smell of cooking apples and cinnamon coming from the kitchen is also one of the best smells of October.

There are new beverages to sample. A pumpkin spice latte might be your pleasure. You can make a nice mug of hot cocoa. It's not too soon. Remind yourself how comforting it feels to hold your mug, whatever is in it, while it warms your hands.

Even the salt waters of the Gaspé seem to have a different smell come October. The air is colder, and walking on the beach or a boardwalk, where you might be the only person, is a lovely October experience.

Then there's Thanksgiving, whether at home or at a community harvest supper, with its own cornucopia of smells. Where to begin? There is turkey with lots of savoury stuffing, warm rolls, Brussel sprouts and cranberry sauce, with whole berries, of course.

October reminds us that the change of seasons waits for no person. The grass has had its final cut before winter. The evenings become shorter, so lights go on earlier. The shorts and T-shirts are swapped for sweaters and warm clothing. Before you know it, the unique smells of October will be gone.

But for now, we have October and all she has to offer. So, take a walk and kick the leaves. Carry in some wood for the stove. Breathe deeply. That's the unique smell of October on the Gaspé. I'm sure you have heard about how great it is to "live in the moment." Notice those sweet smells of the sea, smoke, damp earth and the foods of October.

One day soon, October will be done and the countdown to Christmas will begin. Perhaps Anne of Green Gables expresses it well. "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers. It would be terrible if we just skipped from September to November, wouldn't it? Look at these maple branches. Don't they give you a thrill–several thrills?"

Go outside and smell October!

Announcements

Obituaries



COCHRANE: Judy Elva

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Judy Elva Cochrane, who passed away peacefully on the afternoon of August 26, 2026, at Maria Hospital at the age of 78.

Judy was born on December 8, 1947, the youngest daughter of Charles Cochrane and Evelyn McColm of New Richmond. She lived most of her life in her family home on the Fourth Range.

A fixture in the local community, Judy dedicated her life to her family and to helping others. She was a proud lifetime member of the New Richmond Legion, the Women's Auxiliary and St. Andrew's United church, as well as being active in the Cascapedia 50 Plus Club and a dedicated volunteer at the Maria Hospital. She was a breast cancer survivor and raised money for the Relay for Life walk each year at Taylor's Point.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 58 years, Norman Willett, sons Walter (Brenda) and Troy (Trisha); and grandchildren Tyler and Hannah-May Judith. Along with many nieces, nephews and cousins. She was predeceased by her sister Patsy.

The family wishes to thank the CLSC staff, Maria hospital staff and the many neighbours and friends whose care and compassion will always be remembered. A graveside memorial at the Black Cape Cemetery is planned for the summer of 2027 (time and date to be announced later).



MACNAUGHTON: Bruce Baden

It is with heavy hearts that Bruce's loved ones have to say goodbye. He left us unexpectedly on July 8, 2026.

We mourn his passing deeply, but celebrate his presence just as deeply.

Bruce was born in Toronto on April 5, 1960. As a toddler, he moved with his family to Montreal. There, he spent the next sixteen years becoming his true self, excelling in sports, making lifelong friends and annoying, but also protecting, his sisters.

His late teenage years brought him to Simcoe, Ontario, where he naturally added to the inventory of people who loved him. As an adult, he ventured west and found his home in British Columbia. He spent the next 40-plus years in the place he treasured with the person he treasured.

In the last couple of years, he wandered east to Cascapedia, Quebec, and found another "family." If Bruce walked into any gathering alone, he walked out with friends. That's who he was. Most recently, British Columbia called him back home.

We, his family and friends, love him deeply and hope he will join his mom and dad, Rita and Charles, in a warm embrace.

A memorial celebration of life will be announced at a later date.



MCCADDEN: Lydia (Lee) (née Carroll)

June 12, 1922, - September 14, 2026.

It is with great sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Lydia in Montreal at the very respectable age of 104.

Lydia is predeceased by her cherished husband, James (Jimmy) and beloved daughter, Lorrie. She leaves behind to mourn her eldest daughter, Elaine, and sister, Rena, as well as multiple generations of dear nieces and nephews, cousins and sisters-in-law.

Lee was born on the beautiful family farm located in the tiny Gaspe town of Maria, Quebec. She was the eldest daughter of Annie (née Sexton) and Augustin Carroll. She was predeceased by her five brothers, George, Elmer, Brian, Warren and Patrick, and two of her three sisters, Brenda and Mary.

She came to Montreal at a very young age, as many family members and friends did at that time, to earn money to send back home. She met and married Jimmy McCadden in 1958, and together they raised their two daughters. She never forgot where she came from, and made sure that summers were spent "down home," surrounded by the family and friends she adored, for as long as she could.

Lydia's family would like to express sincere gratitude to the staff on 2nd floor E. at Maimonides Geriatric Centre, for the wonderful care she received in her final years.

Visitation took place on Thursday, October 1, at 11 a.m. at St. Monica's Church, 6405 rue Terrebonne, followed by a funeral Mass at 12:30 p.m. Burial took place at Cimetiere Notre Dame des Neiges at 2:50 p.m. Lorrie's urn will be buried at this time too.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alzheimer's Society or to an animal welfare group of your choosing.

thegaspespec.com
418-752-5400
holly.smith@globetrotter.net

In Memory



ASTLES: Mary Beth (née Hocquard)

In loving memory of a dear wife, mother and grandmother who passed away on October 11, 2019.

You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide,
Although we cannot see you,
You're always at our side.

Love always: Raymond, Dean, Sandy and families.

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Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

Announcements

In Memory



In loving memory of those we lost so suddenly eighteen years ago.

RENOUF: Charlene

November 19, 1978, - October 12, 2008.

Our daughter, stepdaughter and sister, loved and forever in our hearts and on our minds by Mom, Darin, Adam (Melody, Gideon, Sybil, Nathaniel and Caleb) and Christopher (Bethany, Benjamin and Claire) and

BENWELL: Rebekah

October, 4, 2001 - October 12, 2008.

Our granddaughter and niece, cherished and dearly missed by Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle Adam (Melody, Gideon, Sybil, Nathaniel and Caleb) and Uncle Christopher (Bethany, Benjamin and Claire.

This month comes back with deep regret,
It brings back a day we won't ever forget.
You fell asleep without saying goodbye,
But our memories of you will never die.
We miss you more than anyone knows,
As each day passes, our emptiness grows.
The tears we shed will wipe away,
But the ache in our hearts will always stay.
No one knows the grief we bear,
When our family meets and you're not there.
You left us suddenly, your thoughts unknown,
But you left us memories we are thankful to own.
We miss that light, and ever will,
Their vacant place there's none to fill.
Down here we mourn, but not in vain,
For up in Heaven we will meet again.
What would we give,
Their hands to clasp,
Their patient faces to see,
To hear their voices,
To see them smile,
As in the days that used to be.
But some sweet day,
We'll meet again,
Beyond the toil and strife.
And clasp each other's hands once more,
In Heaven, that happy life.

Always loved and will never be forgotten, Aunt Brenda, Uncle Donald, Steven (Jessica), Gregory (Jenny), and their families.

RENOUF and BENWELL:

In sweet loving memory of two precious girls who left us so suddenly in a tragic accident eighteen years ago on Thanksgiving, October 12, 2008.

Granddaughter, Charlene Ada, age 29 and great-granddaughter, Rebekah Joan, age 7.

We can't have the old days back,
When we were all together.
But secret tears and loving thoughts,
Will be with us forever.
When family ties are broken,
And loved ones have to part.
It leaves a wound that never heals,
Deep within our hearts.
The special years will not return,
When we were all together.
But with all the love in our hearts,
You will be with us forever.

I will always love and remember you both. Till we meet again. Love, Nana (Pearl).

RENOUF: Charlene

November 19, 1978, - October 12, 2008.

BENWELL: Rebekah

October 4, 2001, - October 12, 2008

Time speeds on, eighteen years have passed.
Since death its gloom, its shadows cast.
Within our home, where all seemed bright,
And took from us a shining light.

SULLIVAN: William (Bill)

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather, brother, brother-in-law and uncle.

May you celebrate,
The life he lived.
Honour the memories,
He left behind.
And know that the love he shared,
Will stay in our hearts forever.

Wife Marcelle, son George, daughter Lynn and their families.

Announcement deadlines

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

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YORK:

FADOQ

October 25: The FADOQ York River Senior Citizens Club, will be hosting a Harvest Supper at the York River Community Hall. Takeout will be available from 4 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. The first seating will be at 5 p.m., with a second seating at 6 p.m. Cost: $15 per person. Diners over the age of 18 are permitted to bring their own wine, as the Club has obtained a liquor licence. Everyone welcome!

HALDIMAND:

Camp Fort Haldimand

November 14: Camp Fort Haldimand will be hosting its Christmas Market from 9 a.m. to noon at the Gaspé Elementary School. Tables are available to rent for $15 by contacting forthaldimand@gmail.com. There will be a bake sale, with proceeds going to Camp Fort Haldimand. Donations of baked goods are greatly appreciated.

BARACHOIS:

Mountain View Golden Age

October 17: The Mountain View Golden Age 50 Plus Club will hold a turkey supper. Takeout will begin at 4 p.m. The first seating will be at 5 p.m., and the second seating will be at 6:30 p.m. Cost: $10 for members and $15 for non-members Advance ticket sales only. Contact Janet Harvey for tickets at 418-355-4899.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

Sundays: Sunday school begins at 10 a.m. Worship begins at 11 a.m.

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel Meetings

Sundays: Breaking of Bread for believers at 9:30 a.m., Gospel meeting and Sunday School at 2 p.m.

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

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES

50 plus Club

November 7: A spaghetti supper will be held from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Cost: $15 for adults and $10 for children under 12. Garlic bread, Caesar salad, spaghetti and dessert will be served. Everyone is welcome.

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.

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, October 11
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, October 18
10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

Sunday, October 11
Sunday, October 18
10 a.m. Services streaming from New Richmond

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, October 11
St. James - Wakeham
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, October 18
St. Philip and St. John Sandy Beach
9 a.m. Holy Communion

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, October 11
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Shigawake
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, October 18
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

On the Lighter Side...

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



Home, Family and Thanksgiving

The blessings of the harvesting are coming to an end, but each family is preparing for the spirit of togetherness that surrounds Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a time filled with a multitude of blessings that surrounds and gratitude, along with laughter and the joyful sound of praise.

Families in our communities throughout the Gaspé Peninsula carry that sense of perpetual blessings, often expressed through family gathering and a spiritual rhythm of giving thanks.

Thanksgiving reminds us all of the abundance in our hearts and how often we Gaspesians are known for our cheerful giving and generosity. That atmosphere of laughter and sparkle of glory fills each one of our homes with understanding and unconditional love.

Ken Ross
New Carlisle, Quebec.

The Magic of Autumn Along Chaleur Bay

The air is crisp and the skies are clear; October whispers that autumn is here. In each small town along our magnificent Chaleur Bay, gardens and flowers have faded, giving way to chilly mornings and heavy frost that glisten across the fields and lawns as far as the eye can see.

Amber colours mix with the leaves scattered across the ground while bare branches signal that squirrels are scampering about, hurriedly filling their hiding places for the months ahead.

We reach for that extra sweater or whatever gloves we can find. Gaspesians know that the cool Chaleur breeze may dampen outdoor festivals, but it cannot take away from the beauty and magic of one of the loveliest seasons of the year.

Ken Ross
New Carlisle, Quebec.

Weekly HOROSCOPES

HOROSCOPES - October 4 to October 10

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, some free time opens up this week. Focus on social outings and keeping things light. Use the time to relax and recharge.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Tact may be required in the days ahead, Taurus. You have strong opinions about how to approach a situation, but present your views with kindness and express a willingness to be flexible.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Gemini, save up your energy for something fun instead of getting swept up in someone else's drama. Patience is your best friend this week, even if it doesn't always come easy.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
You tend to be very careful with money, Cancer. Financial discipline is a great asset that will pay dividends for you in the days ahead.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
You may find yourself in a highly visible position this week, Leo. That means you will need to be on your best behavior at all times . People will notice your every move.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, steer clear of any controversial subjects this week because they may escalate into something that can be off-putting for all involved. Try to keep your opinions to yourself.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Embrace a challenge for all it has to offer, Libra. A unique situation arises this week, and you can learn something about yourself and feel a strong sense of accomplishment.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Harsh words can be hard to forget, Scorpio. Be careful about how you communicate with others. Your intentions are good, so take a thoughtful approach to how to express them.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
This week you are juggling many things, including work, appointments and family obligations. Optimism and patience will be key for the time being, Sagittarius.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Concerns about money may be on your mind, Capricorn. If you can get a handle on your finances, you will feel more secure about spending money.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
There is no winning if you enter a fray between family members right now, Aquarius. It is best if you keep your distance and do your own thing this week.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Your input will be sought this week, Pisces. Carefully consider an emerging situation, and then use your critical thinking skills to come up with the right advice.

Small ways to support someone with breast cancer

JILLIAN **O'CONNELL**

NEW CARLISLE - Breast cancer is often talked about through statistics, screenings and treatments. However, behind every diagnosis is a real person whose everyday life can suddenly change. It could be a family member, friend, neighbour, or someone in our community. Even if someone seems strong while going through appointments and treatments, they may still need support. Sometimes, small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

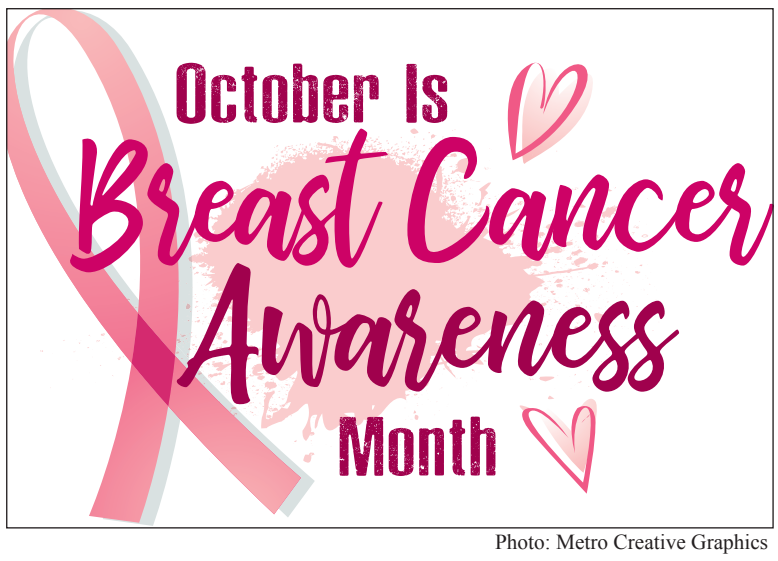


Photo: Metro Creative Graphics

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, support those affected by breast cancer and encourage the importance of early detection.

Listen and be there

When someone is first diagnosed with breast cancer, they may experience many different emotions, such as fear, sadness, anger, and uncertainty. They may also have many appointments, tests and decisions to deal with.

One of the most important things we can do is simply be there for them. Let them know they do not have to go through everything alone. They may want to talk about their diagnosis, or they may just want to have a normal conversation and take their mind off cancer. You do not always need to have the perfect thing to say. Sometimes, listening without trying to give advice is the best way to show support.

Offer practical help

Cancer treatment can be tiring, and everyday responsibilities can become harder to manage. Offering help can take some pressure off the person. Preparing a meal, picking up groceries, driving them to an appointment, running errands, looking after their children or helping with household chores can make their day a little easier.

Instead of saying, "Let me know if you need anything," it can be more helpful to offer something specific. For example, you could ask, "Can I bring you dinner on Thursday?" This makes it easier for the person to accept your help.

Keep checking in

Support should not stop after the first few weeks. Breast cancer treatment can last a long time, and there may still be difficult days even when someone seems like they are doing well.

Simple things can show that you are still thinking about them. Send a text message, give them a phone call, visit if they are comfortable with it or invite them for coffee. Continue asking how they are doing and including them in plans.

Respect their needs

Everyone experiences breast cancer differently. Some people may want to talk openly about their treatment, while others may prefer to keep things private. Some may enjoy having visitors, while others may need time alone.

It is important to respect what the person wants and needs. Let them decide how much they want to talk about and how often they want to see people. Supporting someone also means giving them space when they need it.

Help them feel normal

A cancer diagnosis can make life feel very different. Sometimes, doing normal and enjoyable things can help someone feel more like themselves.

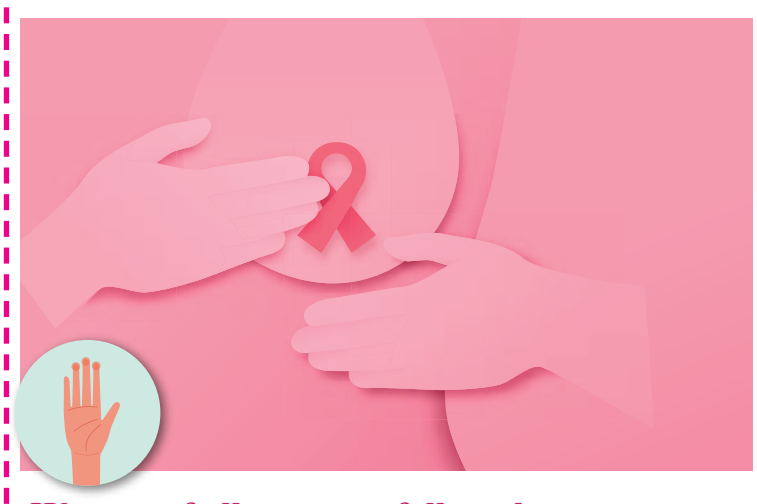
Watch their favourite movie together, share a meal, tell jokes or have a laugh. Go for a short walk, sit together and talk about everyday things or do an activity they enjoy. These small moments can give someone a break from thinking about cancer all the time.

Continue to show you care

Breast cancer can affect more than just the person who receives the diagnosis. It can also affect their family, friends, and community. Having people around who care can make a difficult experience feel less lonely.

Supporting someone does not always require a big gesture. Sometimes, it is as simple as checking in, helping with something, listening, or spending time with them.

The most important thing is to remind them that they are not alone and that there are people who care about them.



Women of all ages can follow these steps outlined by the Cleveland Clinic to perform a monthly self-examination of the breasts:

Begin with a visual inspection of your breasts, standing with your arms at your sides.

Look for any swelling, changes in breast shape or position of the nipples, or dimpling or changes on the skin.

Next, place both hands on your hips and flex your chest muscles, repeating your visual inspection of both breasts. Breast tissue extends to the armpit, collarbone and top of the abdomen, so include all of these areas in your exam.

While standing, examine each breast with the pads of your three middle fingers. Use your right hand to examine your left breast, then vice versa.

Press on every part of the breast, beginning with light pressure and increasing to firm. Feel for any lumps, thick spots or other changes, being sure to check the areas by your armpit and under your areola.

Squeeze the nipple to check for any discharge.

Lie down to complete the breast self-exam. Begin by placing a pillow under your right shoulder and placing your right arm behind your head. Using your left hand, follow the same technique described while standing, then change the pillow to the other shoulder to check the other breast and armpit.





New hunting rules for Zone 1 hunters

HOLLY **SMITH**

NEW CARLISLE – With the first part of moose season over and the firearms season just around the corner, Zone 1 hunters are heading into the 2026 season under new rules.

Quebec's 2026–2028 hunting regulations include changes affecting moose permits, transportation coupons, hunting equipment and scents.

One of the biggest changes involves female and calf moose. In previous years, regulations alternated between years when females and calves could be harvested and years when they could not.

That system has been replaced by a random draw for special moose-without-antlers permits.

A "moose without antlers" includes females and calves, as well as any moose with antlers measuring less than 10 centimetres.

Hunters still need their regular moose hunting licence. The special permit gives the holder, or someone authorized to share it, the right to harvest a moose without antlers. Hunters without one are limited to harvesting a moose with antlers.

Special permit can be shared

Hunters who did not win a permit may still have an opportunity to harvest a female or calf.

A hunter who receives a moose-without-antlers permit can share it with hunters taking part in the same moose hunting expedition.

The permit holder must provide authorization identifying the hunters, their moose licence numbers, the hunting territory and the period for which it is valid.

Once a moose without antlers is harvested, the special permit expires.

The hunter who kills the moose must place their transportation coupon number on the animal and notify the special permit holder, who must also place their transportation coupon number on the moose.

Firearms season begins October 17

The Zone 1 bow and crossbow moose season ran from September 26 to October 4.

The firearms, bow and crossbow season runs from October 17 to 25. Hunters without access to a moose-without-antlers permit can harvest only a moose with antlers.

Different dates and conditions may apply in wildlife reserves and other controlled territories.

Transportation coupons have changed

Quebec's move toward online hunting licences has changed how transportation coupons can be used.

The important requirement is now the unique transportation coupon number, which must be placed on the harvested animal so it remains legible.

Hunters with digital licences can print the coupon, write the number directly on the animal or attach it using another suitable material. Hunters purchasing paper licences from authorized vendors can continue using the attached coupon.

All required transportation coupon numbers must be placed on a harvested moose on the day it is killed.

Natural moose urine prohibited

The sale of natural moose urine is now prohibited in Quebec as part of measures aimed at reducing the risk of diseases spreading among cervids. Artificial and synthetic products remain permitted.

Quebec has also eliminated the separate Zone 1 hunting period previously reserved for muzzle-loaders. However, muzzle-loaders remain permitted during the regular firearms moose season.

Deer and small game seasons

The white-tailed deer bow and crossbow season in Zone 1 North and South runs from October 3 to 16. Hunters are limited to deer with antlers measuring at least seven centimetres.

The firearms season runs November 7 to 15, with bows and crossbows also permitted. A special hunting initiation weekend will be held October 31 and November 1 for eligible new hunters.

Ruffed and spruce grouse season opened September 19 and continues until January 15, 2027. Coyote and wolf hunting runs from October 25 to March 31, 2027.

Hunters using birds of prey for small game no longer require a separate licence. A regular small-game hunting licence is sufficient.



