



The staff of Hollis Ford were recently paid a visit by Ford Motor Company Vice President of Sales, Tim Witt. Mr. Witt came to personally congratulate Ryan Senior in achieving the number one winning position in their national Ford Focus Product Knowledge Competition held over the past few months. The competition included sales representatives from over 420 Ford dealerships from across Canada. In photo from left to right are Tim Witt and Ryan Senior.

FRONT PAGE BRIEFS

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Nova Scotians are invited to recognize outstanding volunteers in their communities by nominating them for a Provincial Volunteer Award. Each year, Provincial Volunteer Awards honour volunteers from across the province with an award for their selfless contributions. The award recipients are selected by a review committee. The premier, lieutenant-governor and minister of the Voluntary Sector will present the awards at a ceremony in April. The deadline for nominations is 4:30 p.m., February 19. Nomination forms are available at <http://novascotia.ca/NonProfitSector/celebrating-volunteers.asp>.

January 29th is the deadline for community groups to apply for mental health and addictions funding. After that, groups that qualify will be invited to submit a grant application. The grants are a key component of the province's Together We Can mental health and addictions strategy, released in May 2012. These grants support not-for-profit community organizations as they work to improve the lives of individuals and their families who are living with mental health and addiction issues. Groups can apply each year for grants of up to \$150,000. With the new process projects valued at more than \$30,000 will be evaluated by independent peer reviewers and an independent review board. Information on the grants can be found at <http://novascotia.ca/health>.

Government officially launched its two new business immigration streams January 1st. The streams will attract international entrepreneurs and retain international graduates of provincial post-secondary institutions. The Entrepreneur Stream aims to attract those who want to start or buy, and actively manage, a business in Nova Scotia. The International Graduate Entrepreneur Stream provides an immigration opportunity for students who have graduated from a Nova Scotia university or community college and have started their own business. Once the new streams are fully operational, Nova Scotia expects to nominate 40-50 applicants per year as permanent residents.

More apprentices will find work in Nova Scotia with the provincial government launching a procurement pilot to encourage businesses to hire apprentices in Nova Scotia. The pilot, developed in partnership with the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, requires contractors bidding on provincially funded construction projects to take part in the apprenticeship program. The pilot will focus on current school construction projects only and applies to contractors whose portion of the bid equals or exceeds \$100,000. Exceptions will be made for smaller companies and those whose work doesn't fall within a designated trade. Contractors must show proof of participation in the apprentice system to perform work on these projects. They can apply for such proof by visiting the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency website at www.nsapprenticeship.ca.

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OP-ED

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education

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invested an additional \$1.5 million in the Special Needs Support Grant. We will meet our commitment to reinvest a total of \$65 million into the classroom.

We have made a great deal of progress to date in large part thanks to the hundreds of teachers who have worked with us on committees and professional development sessions to bring change to the

classroom. We fully appreciate that there is more work to do.

Building a modern, successful public education system will require us to continue working with our teachers and partners. Together, we can help ensure today's students are better prepared to lead productive lives in our ever-changing world.

Nova Scotia's future success depends upon it.

News from our Federal Capital

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extended family and friends who could not come with them. I was born and raised in Amherst, and I don't think I'd be able to move 40 minutes away to Moncton without falling to pieces, let alone halfway around the world.

The influx of so many refugees so quickly is a challenge for Canada, too. But it isn't without precedent, and the federal government has achieved a lot already. This wave of new Canadians is a big opportunity, too. For ridings like Cumberland-Colchester, especially, the potential which so many relatively young and

ambitious people bring with them is a boon to our aging populations.

The work of many organizations throughout the riding to sponsor and welcome refugees deserves the recognition and appreciation of every citizen. From Project Hope in Brookfield-Middle Stewiacke area, to the Truro Alliance Church, to the Amherst Rotary Club, to Advocate for Refugees, and too many more to mention. It shows what a great and welcoming place our corner of Canada is, and I am happy to help in any way I can. When we work together, we can achieve great things.

Bill Casey is Member of Parliament for Cumberland Colchester.

News from our Provincial Capital

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and reliability standards for Nova Scotia Power. This means regular reporting requirements and the Board can order penalties of up to \$1 million each year if Nova Scotia Power fails to achieve the standards. Penalties will be paid for by shareholders, not ratepayers.

In addition, Nova Scotia Power will be required to submit a three-year fuel stability plan that reduces volatility and sets the amount customers pay to cover fuel costs each year. It will include Maritime Link costs. Nova Scotia Power publicly commit-

ted to bringing forward a Rate Stability Plan. This plan will cover 2017, 2018, and 2019 with the goal of no general rate increases during that time.

Customers, from families to large businesses, will have stable, predictable and affordable electricity pricing that they can depend on. As a government, we recognize the importance of families having notice of any changes to their electricity costs. We believe this gives all of us as consumers, the information we need to better understand our electricity rates now and in the future.

Karen Casey, MLA, Colchester North

News from our Municipal Council - District 10

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and recognise how we struggle to sustain our rural communities, I wonder how we could go wrong. The reason I have included this is that there is a local group headed by Mr. Tony Phillips who

are working to raise funding in an attempt to sponsor a refugee family locally and I am sure would be grateful should you wish to support.

Tom Taggart, Councilor District 10, Colchester County

News from our Municipal Council - District 9

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Council and staff will continue to try and find solutions to this ongoing issue. We all agree the most important element to this issue is education. Maybe we could have an offender of littering spend some time with an elementary school class for the day considering they certainly know better than to throw garbage along our road ways.

Recently Council unanimously voted to accept a recommendation from our Executive Committee to offer the position of CAO to Mr. Rob Simonds. Rob is a 30 year veteran of municipal work in his hometown of Saint John, N.B., and Hamilton, Ont. Rob's resume is impressive to say the least and I look forward to working with him in the future.

We are fortunate to attract such high caliber professionals like Rob to fill this and other extremely challenging positions. This speaks volumes to what a great place Colchester County is to work, play and live in. Rob will commence his appointment as CAO on April 4th, 2016.

I would also like to say thank you to Crawford MacPherson who has been filling in as interim CAO over the past few months. Crawford is our Director of Community Development in his full time position. Most residents will never know how fortunate they are to have directors such as Crawford who can step up when needed to fill such positions. Thank you once again Crawford for doing a fantastic job in a very challenging position.

Doug MacInnes, Councillor District 9, Colchester County

Winter Dangerous Time For Elderly

By *Christine Urquhart*

Winter is an especially dangerous time for elderly people living in areas that see a major change in temperature. While the obvious risks include things directly related to the drop in temperature, there are also many other occurrences that could lead to illness or injury to an older person.

The most direct risk is simply that of hypothermia and frostbite. Because many older individuals have poor circulation, especially in the extremities, it is important that hands and feet are always covered with loose, dry clothing, preferably in layers. Hypothermia occurs when the core temperature of the body drops and results in the obvious signs of shivering and pale skin and lips. But the more important signs that hypothermia is occurring is a decrease in pulse and breathing rates. The individual will also feel extremely tired and weak. It is important to always make sure the hands, neck and head of an elderly person are covered before they venture out into cold weather.

Another frequently overlooked risk for the elderly during winter is that of heating sources. There are two major risks with heating the home; they are the increased chance of fires, and the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning. Fireplaces, kerosene heaters, and even electric blankets all pose a risk of starting a fire if they are not in proper working order or they are used incorrectly. Make sure all fireplaces and furnaces are inspected or cleaned each year. Make sure kerosene or other space heaters are always positioned well away from any furniture, especially curtains and bed clothing, which are two items that cause many fires. Carbon monoxide is produced when fires burn without an adequate supply of oxygen. Make sure any heating equipment is

functioning properly and a carbon monoxide detector is located near any heating source that uses a fire, especially in small rooms or rooms with low ventilation.

A major risk for the elderly during winter is that of falls. The obvious culprit would be icy sidewalks. Make sure sidewalks are cleared and salted as needed. Another dangerous area is the flooring just inside the front door, which can become wet and slippery as snow is accidentally brought into the house and melts. Finally, it is important to remember that many falls happen because of poor vision and bad lighting. During wintertime, there are more nighttime hours, and even during daytime, the amount of light entering windows is reduced. Make sure all areas of the house have proper lighting when limited light is entering through windows.

Another risk for the elderly during winter is that of cardiac arrest from over exercise.

Activities such as shoveling snow, pushing a snow-blower or even carrying bags of salt can create unnecessary stress on the muscles of the heart. If another individual is not available to perform those tasks, make sure to take it easy and be aware of the risks. Dehydration is also a risk while working outside in the winter. Drinking plenty of fluids is important not only for avoiding dehydration, but also

for improving circulation, which can prevent frostbite and hypothermia.

Finally, winter also will bring colds and the flu. It is important for the elderly to have a flu vaccination before flu season begins each year. Normal good health practices also can help prevent or diminish the effects of the common cold. These include eating healthy, including lots of vitamin C and zinc, washing hands frequently and avoiding individuals who are already sick.

New Pharmacare Premiums starting April 1

Starting April 1, Seniors' Pharmacare members will start paying a 20 per cent co-payment for each prescription, down from 30 per cent, to a maximum co-pay of \$382 a year. The changes also mean seniors with lower incomes are no longer expected to pay the same premiums as those with higher incomes. Because of our government's changes, 12,000 seniors who previously paid a premium won't pay one this year and 29,000 seniors will pay a reduced premium. In the weeks ahead, Pharmacare members and Nova Scotians approaching age 65 will start to receive information packages about the program. Changes become effective April 1, 2016: Premiums for single seniors: Income below \$22,986 will not pay any premium; \$22,986 to \$35,000, less than \$40/month; \$35,000 to \$75,000, \$40 to \$100/month, based on income and earning more than \$75,000, \$100/month. Premiums for couples, based on combined income, are as follows: Combined income below \$26,817 will not pay any premium; \$26,817 to \$40,000, less than \$40/month each; \$40,000 to \$100,000, \$40 to \$100/month each, based on income and above \$100,000, \$100/month each.

Guardian

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