

Bleacher War & RECC Update

In a statement to CBC News, the Department of Public Works said the bleachers belong to the province and will remain at the exhibition grounds when not in use elsewhere. A spokesperson added the bleachers were used at Halifax Music Week in June.

Staff at the municipally owned RECC previously managed the exhibition grounds until that agreement was terminated by the facility's board, which is made up of Truro and Colchester council members.

On Monday, Truro council approved the budget that was also passed by Colchester Council in June which includes the revenue from renting out the bleachers

the province claims to own.

Truro councillors Alison Graham and Jim Fleming as well as Colchester councillors Lisa Patton and Sherry Martell voted against the budget.

"To project a \$200,000 source of revenue from renting bleachers that we currently don't have in our possession... does not offer confidence for me," said Martell at the Colchester council meeting.

Colchester Coun. Tim Johnson, who chairs the RECC board, said municipal lawyers are working to find a solution with the province.

"The province does not own all the bleachers. They may say they own some of them. The rest of the money came with fed-

eral funds," he said in an interview in June.

On Monday, Truro chief administrative officer Michael Dolter said the RECC board purchased the bleachers using government funding.

"The province has unilaterally made this decision to do what they've done. And again, we're trying to work with them to find a common ground on it," Dolter told CBC News.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, which provided the federal funding, previously directed questions about ownership of the bleachers to the municipalities and the province.

The bleacher rentals are one part of a plan to generate revenue to pay for major repairs at the

RECC. A facility review is getting underway this week to finalize the cost of repairs, according to Dolter.

The capital budget estimates \$232,000 in repairs needed this year, which includes multiple pieces of equipment in the rink, roof and skylight repairs, as well as exterior signage.

Next year, the municipalities are planning an overhaul of the heating and cooling system estimated to cost \$4.3 million.

"We should have had these deficiencies fixed long ago, and now they're all in front of us and they need to be fixed now," said board chair Tim Johnson.

Johnson said that's why the board has cut back major event spending by about \$2 million.

Nova Scotia Signs Direct-to-Consumer Alcohol Sales Deal

Nova Scotia has reached another milestone in its efforts to remove internal trade barriers, signing a direct-to-consumer agreement on beverage alcohol with seven other provinces.

The agreement allows Nova Scotia producers to sell their wine, beer and spirits to consumers in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. It also means that Nova Scotians will be able to order beverage alcohol from producers in those provinces.

Premier Tim Houston and premiers from the participating provinces signed the agreement July 21, at the Council of the Federation meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. It follows an agreement Nova Scotia and Ontario signed in March that was the first direct-to-consumer agreement of its kind. Ontario is also a signatory to the broader deal.

Producers from other Canadian markets must be authorized by the Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. (NSLC) to sell directly to Nova Scotians; Nova Scotia producers must be authorized by regulators in the other provinces.

Consumers in Nova Scotia will be able to buy in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador;



British Columbia expects to have their system in place for all types of alcohol by February 2027. There are about 120 licensed beverage alcohol producers in Nova Scotia "We aren't just planning for the future; we are fighting back right now. The Trump administration has thrown global trade into chaos, and we refuse to let Nova Scotians pay the price for Washington's politics. That is why I have aggressively been pushing free trade, and this is a good step toward that," said Premier Tim Houston. "Nova Scotians have told me they want to have more choice and more access to buy and support Canadian-made products."

The agreement applies to all types of beverage alcohol. Quebec and the Yukon have indicated their support for the initiative and are anticipated to sign at a later date. Nova Scotia is one of Canada's leading winemaking regions and produces a variety of beer, coolers, cider and distilled products.

Province Modernizes Road Maintenance Program

The Province will be able to keep roads smoother and safer with the addition of dozens of pieces of specialized equipment to its maintenance fleet.

The new equipment - more than 80 pieces in total - includes a new way of handling asphalt that will result in better, longer-lasting pothole repairs. New front-end loaders will have brush cutters that can do a better job reaching under guardrails and across shoulders.

"We never stop trying to make our roads safer, and it's time to modernize our maintenance program

with new technology that can deliver better roads for Nova Scotians," said Public Works Minister Fred Tilley. "This investment builds on the significant progress we've made on improving the condition of our transportation system to help businesses move their goods and ensure people get where they need to go."

Other new equipment includes skid steers with asphalt planers, sweepers and compactor attachments for patching roads.

The new way of handling asphalt is with hot boxes, which are insu-

lated boxes that will allow crews to mix and transport the heated product to a job site for patching repairs. Previously, asphalt was loaded on a truck and would cool slightly on the way to the site. Keeping the temperature higher longer will make the asphalt repairs more effective.

Each area of the province will have a dedicated crew assigned using the pothole and cutting equipment. Summer students will also participate in trash collection along highways.

A full list of the new equipment is available at:

<https://novascotia.ca/tran/publications/maintenance-improvement-plan-equipment-list.pdf>
Quick Facts:

- the total cost of the new equipment is \$8 million
- the government has committed \$161 million for asphalt and resurfacing of highways and roads this year, including \$26 million for summer maintenance
- funding for staff to operate the equipment is included under the Rural Impact Mitigation program
- since 2022, the government has invested roughly \$2.5 billion in the Province's five-year highway plans.

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