

REES' Pieces

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building where Nova Scotia procurement is located a couple of days before the Feb. 17 deadline, but the courier took Epic's package to the wrong office.

Epic was unaware of the mishandled delivery. The courier had confirmed the package was signed for upon delivery. When people in the office where Epic's package was mistakenly delivered realized the error, they tried to contact procurement. The ladies called (procurement) multiple times and left voice messages. Finally, those same people physically delivered Epic's package to procurement. But by then it was past the deadline.

I have several concerns about the various fiascos surrounding the EHR initiative. The initial late October story in Chronicle Herald makes assertions of potential bias, favoritism and definitely a lack of transparency.

Over and above the potential inappropriate actions by senior staff, the entire thing has a strong aroma of being "totally incompetent" with possible fraudulent activity. My main outrage is if government departments cannot move an envelope to the correct office, within the same building in two days, how can they expect the electorate to have confidence they are capable of implementing a \$500-Million Electronic Health Records program.

Who is interested enough to contact me with your views? Should legal action be taken to protect our hard earned tax dollars?

Maurice

PAGE BRIEFS

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Patterson Law is welcoming two top tier associates to its ranks. Kyle MacMullin will focus principally on tax work and Anna-Marie Manley will focus on commercial litigation. "Kyle is an experienced CPA and Anna-Marie previously worked at McCarthy Tétrault, one of Canada's top law firms. Patterson Law has offices in Halifax, Truro and New Glasgow.

Bill Casey celebrated a special anniversary on November 21st. It was the 30th anniversary of his first being elected as a Member of Parliament. He is one of 32 Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada, but has indicated he will not reoffer as MP for Cumberland-Colchester in the 2019 federal election expected October.

At 7:37 a.m. on November 2 a single vehicle collision occurred in the eastbound lanes of Hwy. 104 just West of the toll plaza. The truck was occupied by a lone male driver, who was in critical condition when he was found in the overturned truck by another motorist. The driver was transported to hospital by EHS. He died in hospital later in the afternoon.

With Bill Casey not reoffering in the 2019 election a Facebook posting indicates Joel Henderson, Casey's former Executive Assistant will seek the nomination. Scott Armstrong, who was MP in the Stephen Harper era, but lost to Casey when Liberal MP's swept Atlantic Canada in the election which swept Justin Trudeau in as Prime Minister has already received the nod to be the Conservative candidate for Cumberland-Colchester.

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The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

Shoreline Journal Tidbits

Mining regulations designed to save money

New mining regulations will save industry money, reduce red tape and encourage mineral exploration and responsible development in Nova Scotia. The regulations make it easier and less expensive for industry to manage exploration licenses saving business about \$175,000 a year.

Additional changes include: requiring written permission for exploration work; extending exploration licenses from one year to two years; removing royalty calculations from the act and placing them in the regulations; requiring an updated reclamation plan and security review every three years; providing conservation officers with enforcement authorities; requiring engagement plans for all stages of exploration and ending special licenses and leases. The new Mineral Resources Act passed in the legislature in April. The new regulations are available at <https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/reggs/2018-196.pdf>

News from our Federal Capital

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Aboriginal peoples.

When I was re-elected twenty seven years later in 2015, the first debate was Free Trade with the USA. The second one was on the plight of our Indigenous peoples. I even used the same points that I made in 1988. I remember Prime Minister Mulroney saying at the time "We could all go home this weekend and try to think of ways to harm our aboriginal people and we could not come up with anything worse than what we have already done". Since then I have had the privilege of working with several First Nations communities and I always come away thinking that we could all learn from their approach to life and nature.

Speaking of major changes. When I was first elected there were no washroom facilities for women Members of Parliament. I as-

sume that when the Parliament buildings were built, there were no women MPs and that didn't change a lot until more recently. Therefore ...no need for facilities. Well, in the late '90's, the "men's room" was divided down the middle and women MPs got their very own facilities. Today half of the cabinet members are women and more women are getting elected to all political positions.

I have had some wonderful experiences in politics and next month I will write about the most important moment of my time in public service. It is an interesting reflection on how well our parliamentary system works.

Bill Casey is Member of Parliament for Cumberland-Colchester.

News from our Provincial Capital

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heat:

Firewood Declaration Form if you harvest your own firewood to heat your home;

Wood Invoice Form if you use wood to heat your home but do not have a receipt;

Canada Child Benefit Form;

Citizenship application; and

GST/HST payment information form;

HARP is an initiative that takes financial burden off everyday people. Many Nova Scotians have applied for the rebate in previous years and they are always relieved that at least part of their heating expense will be covered by the rebate.

Applicants can check the status of their application using an online status checker. People can also register with Canada Revenue Agency for direct deposit into their bank accounts. The program closes March 31, 2019.

For those who do not wish to use the online process, paper application forms can be picked up from Access Nova Scotia Centres, Community Services offices, at more than 70 community groups across the province, or at my office in Masstown (10653 Hwy. 2 or phone Bonnie at 902-641-2200). For more information and to apply online, visit www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp.

Karen Casey, MLA represents Colchester North and is Deputy Premier

News from our Municipal Council - District 10

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group of residents, who came to council asking for assistance in installing solar panels on their homes. Council was interested in being helpful and received two different presentations. Nothing really became of it and quite frankly, even though I would have supported a project, without Municipal funding, I did not believe the math worked out very good. In reality the only folks this would benefit were those who were very deeply committed to reducing Green House Gases (GHG) and were willing to do so regardless of cost. Like many things, new and better technology comes along with more people becoming interested and engaged. This provides economy of scale and creates a better financial proposition.

First, I need to explain this is what is called "photovoltaic solar" where you actually produce electricity from units installed on your home. To do so requires what is called "net metering". Your units produce electricity, which is loaded onto the NS Power grid. The amount of electricity you consume is deducted. If you consume more than you produce, you have to pay the difference.

We are in the initial stages at this point but have received proposals and tentatively selected a company to work with. The intention is to essentially provide one stop shopping and build a program that will enable residents to take advantage of this green energy and lower their costs. There will be much more detailed info in the future.

The basic premise is a professional would determine, based on past usage the yearly electricity needs of your home and projects the average sunshine. A system would then be designed to produce that amount over a year period. The Municipality would pay the upfront cost of installation and be paid back with interest over 10 years and the yearly payment would be attached to your tax bill.

Please be aware that this could result in a lien on your property, so you would be taking a risk.

This is a ways off and will require much work. In the meantime, however I must say what I have seen to date has captured my attention and I am starting to believe this could work while accomplishing two things: Reduce GHG as a result of reduction in fossil fuel use to produce electricity and provide the potential to reduce the cost of your electric bill over the long term.

Many times I have spoken about my work with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I am currently in Ottawa, helping develop policy and lobbying elected officials of all parties on things such as funding for broadband; seeking new revenue sources similar to the gas tax to relieve the financial pressure on property taxes, as well as, trying to ensure Municipalities get a fair share of the excise taxes received from the sale of Cannabis.

The reason I bring this up now is over the past 6 months Municipal Elections have been held in British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island. Some long time FCM board members have been defeated in these elections and there is much talk about push back from residents who believe their Councillors should keep their focus on local issues and not get involved nationally.

If this is your opinion, I want to hear from you! I enjoy this very much and believe our Municipality and others across NS benefit from having a voice at the National Table.

However, your opinion is the one that Counts. My email is ttaggart@colchester.ca.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve as your councillor.

Tom

Tom Taggart is Colchester Councillor for District 10.

Province Launches School Bus Survey

Government wants to hear from parents and guardians as it prepares to make improvements to the public school bus system.

Starting November 14 parents and guardians will be able to fill out an online survey about their experiences with their regional school bus systems.

"Parents have a right to expect safe, reliable bus service for their children," said Zach Churchill, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. "I'm looking forward to receiving feedback, which will help us make adjustments to improve this important service."

The survey is one compo-

nent of a larger consultation that will include, School Advisory Councils, the Provincial Advisory Council on Education, principals, Minister's Advisory Council on Student Issues, CUPE, NSGEU, the Special Education Programs and Services Committee, and the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, a group comprised of teachers and education specialists, which is co-chaired by

the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union.

All comments and survey results will be compiled in a summary that will be shared with the public and used to determine a new policy on public school transportation for the province.

The survey is posted online at www.ednet.ns.ca/bussurvey. The deadline for feedback is Dec. 5.

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