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HOLLIS Ford

Mi'kmawey Project Receives \$20-Million

By Linda Harrington

NOTE 1: Linda Harrington and recently deceased founding publisher, Ken Kennedy have been following and reporting on the Debert based, Mi'kmawey Project, in The Shoreline Journal for nearly 30 years.

NOTE 2: The collage of articles, appended to this story

show cover age of the project from May 26, 1999 and January 30, 2002.

NOTE 3: Pictures of speakers at the late October have been inserted atop the 1999 and 2002 stories.

Tim Bernard, Executive Director of the Mi'kmawey Debert Culture Centre introduced Dr. Don Julien,

who he said has been a visionary on the Mi'kmawey Project and is now the elder in residence at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, who have been leading this project for the last thirty years.

Dr. Julien opened the meeting with a blessing followed by an Honour Song presented by Geordy Marshall.

Sharing a brief history of

the early years, Dr. Julien noted how this project was initiated back in 1989 after a storm uprooted trees at the Tree Breeding Centre revealing artifacts. Dr. Steven Davies, from Saint Mary's University visited the site and felt the artifacts were similar to what Dr. George MacDonald found back in 1963-65, indicating this area was very important to the Mi'kmaw culture. Test pits revealed many more artifacts.

The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq found out the land was going to be sold to the County and decided to purchase the land to protect the artifacts. Carbon dating on these artifacts put them back 10,500 years or 13,500 in calendar years.

Dr. Julien and Tim Bernard were concerned about preserving this area and took their concerns to the Chiefs. They also met with rate payers in Debert to explain what had been found in the area. "People were very interested. It was just an idea at the time of what I would like to see happen," he says, adding he also met with the Historical Society in Masstown and people were very interested.

The Mi'kmawey Debert Culture Centre will offer community and public educational programming including workshops, language and storytelling sessions and land-based learning experiences that share Mi'kmaw knowledge and worldviews, and provide healing spaces for survivors and descendants in the area where the Mi'kmaq have lived for more than 11,000 years. The centre, which will be located across from the Mi'kmawey Debert Interpretive Trail, will be built to a net zero carbon standard. Climate resilient aspects of the building include building placement for solar orientation, prevailing wind orientation, site drainage and natural shading in summer and winter. The over 3000 sq. metre centre is expected to attract more than 67,000 visitors annually.

Dr. Julien says the announcement of an investment of \$20 million from the federal government and the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre represents partnerships, respect and shared commitment to building a future where Mi'kmaq are acknowledged and ways and beings are reflected and honoured.

Tim Bernard has been working with Don Julien the

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Water Refill Moving to Fundy Discovery Centre

The water fill station in Lower Truro on Hwy 236 will be relocated to the Fundy Discovery Centre after the council reached an agreement with Town of Truro. The Town had no issue with the proposal and agreed that increased turnover in that line would help with overall water quality.

At their meeting of February 2025, based on the recommendation from staff, Council voted not to renew the 2 leases at the Lower Truro Spring/fill station, and to decommission the site. At the March 2025 Council meeting, during second reading for the new County Wide Plan, a number of residents explained their reliance on the fill station and expressed their frustration with the closure of the site.

Staff are working to pre-

pare engineering drawings for the construction of the new fill station at the Fundy Discovery site and are aiming to have earthwork started as soon as possible. It is anticipated that a pre-fabricated barn will meet the needs for the site and staff are reaching out to possible vendors. The owners of the well have agreed to extend their lease until the end of December to allow time to get the new site up and running. Once plans become more finalized, staff will work with the well owners to plan for decommissioning.

Council's recently approved capital budget also includes \$150,000 in fiscal 2026/27 for construction of the fill station, however staff are hoping to spend the funds and prepare the site in the current fiscal.

Building Permits up \$13-Million

Colchester issued 53 building permits for month of September totalling \$12,361,043, up significantly from 52 in 2024 totalling

\$7,186,385. For 2025 579 permits of \$121,515,630 is slightly behind 2024's 564 permits which had value of \$125,619,025.

Meanwhile in this years fiscal (April to September) 418 permits have \$13-Million more value of \$82,046,916 versus 435 permits in 2024 valued at \$69,391,356.

The report was circulated at Colchester's October 30th monthly meeting.

Remembrance Day Service will be held at Veterans Memorial Park, Bass River on November 11 commencing at 10:45am. Reception will follow at Victoria Hall.

RECC Deficit \$91,000; Debt \$1.3-Million

By Maurice Rees

It's chaos and turmoil deep in the halls of the Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC) following the Municipality of Colchester giving notice on October 29th to the Town of Truro and management of the Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society (board which operates the facility) to end the existing Operating Agreement for the Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC).

The October 29th decision was preceded by revelations on October 16th council, committee meeting there were major concerns the facility was under insured.

The October 29th Colchester decision will result in governance structure changes to improve future operations and building conditions at the RECC and is not expected to impact immediate day-to-day service at the facility.

The list of problems and concerns have continued to grow in 2025. Matt Moore, manager RECC, recently said the society's eligibility for COVID-19 relief funding is still under evaluation. In February, the two municipalities loaned the operator more than \$1.6 million to repay the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and accumulated interest.

The \$1.6-Million loan to

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