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Bee Mortality Drops from 30% to 3%

By Maurice Rees

Blueberry farmers and those requiring bees for pollination might benefit from mortality dropping from 30% to approximately 3%. That's all thanks to Digby area's Manzer brothers, Owen and Brian, are hopeful their beehive business will soon be buzzing as the result of a Canadian patent for a new beehive design.

About three years ago they pair teamed up for the first time in business. Owen, a janitor with the Tri-County Regional School Board, also owned a small orchard, and Brian operates a construction company. Owen had been experimenting with keeping bees. He couldn't keep his bees alive in traditional hives throughout the winter. And those mistakes were proving to be costly - each package of bees was costing him \$300. One day Owen stumbled onto the answer to his bees' early deaths - improved ventilation in the hive.

He redesigned his hives to incorporate better ventilation and was rewarded with bees that survived the winter. His brother immediately knew he was on to something. The pair then created Manzer Apiary Inc., entered the hive design into an innovation competition two years ago, and came in second for the southwest region.

Since then their hive has been put through a year of field trials under the supervision of Acadia University and with the support of several farmers in the Annapolis Valley. "We had three per cent bee loss through that trial," Brian said. "The average is 30 per cent. So far, this design is proving to be very successful."

Their hive is a Modified Top Bar Beehive design, now known as the EZ Hive, and it's designed to keep bees as organically as possible. It's modified in several ways from the more traditional box hives - it's larger, includes a metal, hinged roof and a viewing window, and the interior of their hive mimics a hollow log with angled sides for maximum comb building.

The formal patent was received on Dec. 12, 2017. The pair now have more than 75 of their own hives in production - 35 in the field behind their main office on Industrial Drive in Digby, about 20 in Ashmore and another 20 in Port Maitland. And they keep Owen busy as the company's official beekeeper about four hours a day.

The brothers were able to receive some business start-up support from a contract economic development staff member at the Municipality of Digby, and they said that really helped them with the patent process.

Now, with their Canadian patent in place, they immediately applied for their U.S. patent, but said with the new issues around trade to the States, they're looking at the United Kingdom as a potential market alternative. They've also just reached out to the Ministry of Agriculture to see what funding options there might be for expansion of their hive production.

Right now, Brian is still building the hives one at a time, but they hope they will soon be in a position to build a manufacturing plant, and they'd like to see that built on the vacant land next to their current office.

Since the first design, they've come up with a starter size hive - the PolliPod - and early feedback from consumers and commercial producers has them slightly modifying their initial design and their price point. Eventually, their goal is to be the most affordable hive on the market - all the while offering stand-out results. "Our hives performed as well or better than traditional hives in all areas of the field study," Brian said.

Main Street, Parrsboro, to get New Businesses

By Maurice Rees

A vacant lot on Parrsboro's Main Street will soon be undergoing a new facelift, as construction is expected to be started soon for the Two Islands Brewing Co, bakery and lunch counter. The devel-

opment, expected to cost in excess of \$500,000, is being spearheaded by David Beattie and a core group of partners, who have recently expanded the group to include other investors bringing the total to eight.

A public meeting by Farmworks Investment Cooperative was held in Parrsboro on Sunday, January 27th to explain the project to local residents who might be interested in participating in the project.

Farmworks is a potential investor with Beattie's group as a major source of financing.

Beattie told South Cumberland News the project will include apartments will occupy the second storey, with a craft brewery, bakery and lunch counter at street level.

A development permit with the Municipality of County of Cumberland has passed first reading. Developers want to start construction as soon as possible and to open for business for Summer 2018.

Staffing levels have not been finalized, but it's anticipated to include at least three full time positions and several partimers.

A source to South Cumberland News when the project becomes profitable, a number of interested citizens have ideas for other community enhancements, as Parrsboro is looking at a brighter future with the success of several tourism initiatives including Parrsboro Creative, and the Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark proj-

ect going through several stages to gain UNESCO approval.

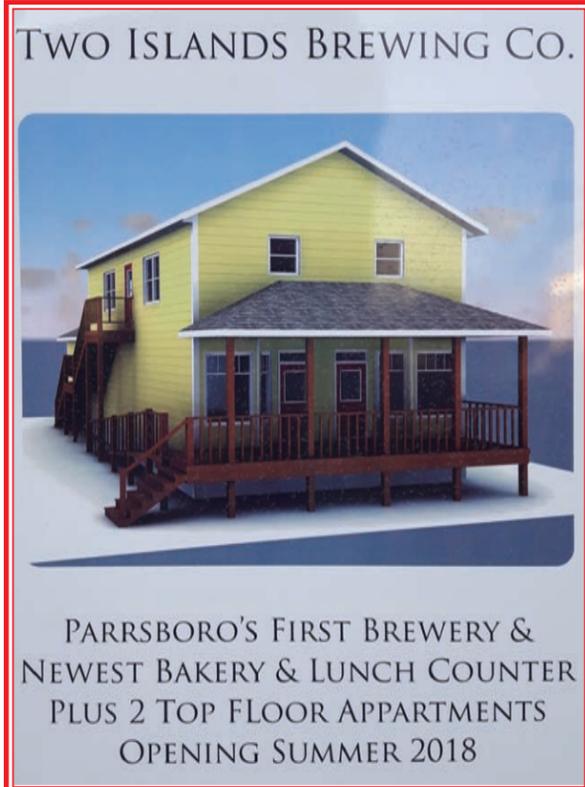
FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited, incorporated in 2011, operates as a Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) that enables Nova Scotians annually to purchase common shares in a diversified portfolio of businesses that yield meaningful financial returns on investments.

These investments provide loans to farms, food processors, and value-added food producers, helping to increase the viability and sustainability of agriculture and the security of a healthy food supply.

FarmWorks partners with investors, loan recipients, other lenders and other food-related organizations.

These partnerships contribute to the growth and success of food-related enterprises across the province. FarmWorks Directors and Advisors support enterprises that successfully and sustainably increase production and profitability.

In five years years Nova Scotians have invested \$1,784,600 in FarmWorks CEDIF. Loans have already been made to 70 businesses. Loan repayments are immediately available to lend to other businesses.



This sign on the vacant lot on Parrsboro's Main Street says it all. (Submitted)



This vacant lot on Main Street, Parrsboro is the future home of Two Islands Brewing Co and a bakery, which has not been named. The local developers hope to complete construction and open for Summer 2018. (Submitted)

Sexual Harassment Ousts Baillie

By Maurice Rees

A third party investigator's report concluding sexual harassment in the workplace by Jamie Baillie resulted in PC Party officials requesting and getting Baillie's immediate resignation as party leader on January 24th.

He also resigned as MLA for Cumberland South.

A party release stated: "After becoming aware of allegations of inappropriate behaviour by Mr. Baillie, the PC Party of Nova Scotia promptly arranged an independent, third-party investigator to conduct an investigation."

The investigation has concluded Mr. Baillie breached the Nova Scotia House of Assembly Policy on the

Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace.

The PC Party is committed to a healthy, safe and

supportive working environment where all Nova Scotians are treated with respect and dignity. The

PC Party does not, and will not, tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace".

Tara Miller, President, Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia and Karla MacFarlane, Caucus Chair, Progressive Conservative Caucus of Nova Scotia issued the joint statement. MacFarlane immediately became interim party leader.

Under Elections Nova Scotia legislation, a by election must be called within six months of a vacancy, then the election must be held within 30-46 days after the writ is dropped.

When contacted after the announcement, Premier McNeil's office was unable to indicate when the Premier would call a by-election.

Parrsboro Holds the Record

By Lawrence R. Nicoll

On Wed. Jan 17th Parrsboro had the highest snowfall in the Maritimes at 26cm. It came down steady without wind blanketing the trees and making mountains out of anything that stood still.

Today, I was treated to a

wonderland of snow covered trees (and everything else) and wasted no time in travelling the county to capture some of it.

The day ended with wonderful colour in the sky, some of which outlined the lighthouse at Parrsboro.

See my photos on page 3.

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