

The Shoreline Tid-Bits Journal

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Rocks being thrown from overpass

Cumberland County District RCMP is asking for assistance from the public after rocks were thrown from an overpass on to passing vehicles from an overpass in Sutherland's Lake. Just after 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 26, Oxford RCMP received a 911 call in relation to rocks being thrown from the overpass on Hwy. 104 near Sutherland Lake.

No damage was reported as the rocks may have missed the passing vehicles. A group of 4 or 5 individuals were observed by motorists on the overpass at the time. Again, at approximately 11:20 p.m. on the same overpass, police were called after a vehicle was struck by rocks that were thrown from the overpass. Immediate response by police in both incidents did not result in locating any suspects.

Although no one was injured, the damage was significant and the outcome could have been much worse.

The investigation is continuing. Anyone who has information or may have witnessed these incidents is asked to call Oxford RCMP at 902-447-2525. Should you wish to remain anonymous, call Nova Scotia Crime Stoppers toll free at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), submit a secure web tip at www.crimestoppers.ns.ca, or use the P3 Tips App.

Women's & Children's Unit Closed

The inpatient women's and children's unit at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre in Amherst was temporarily closed for labour and deliveries, including any planned deliveries, between 7 p.m. on Dec. 28 to 7 a.m. on Dec. 29, and between 7 p.m. on Dec. 29 to 7 a.m. on Dec. 30. The closure is due to nursing unavailability. Pregnancy and delivery care were provided at Colchester East Hants Health Centre in Truro during the two overnight closures.

Women expecting to deliver in the next few days will be contacted directly by a member of the maternity team to discuss an alternate birth plan with them. In the event of an emergency or unplanned delivery, there will be an obstetrician and nursing staff available at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre to support pregnancy care. Prenatal care will continue to be provided by the hospital's team.

COZY COLCHESTER

How to Participate in Cozy Colchester

By Joanna Burris

The following is an outline of how Colchester residents can register to become part the Cozy Colchester program. The Cozy Colchester Energy Concierge team is available weekdays during the workday to take your calls and emails. If you cannot get through right away, leave a phone message or email and someone will get back to you soon to discuss your home and your ideas for cozy improvements. The program phone number is (902) 920-0615, a local Colchester number, and the email address is info@cozycolchester.ca

Only homes located in the Municipality of Colchester are eligible to participate in the program; therefore, properties in Truro, Cumberland, Stewiacke, and Millbrook First Nation are ineligible. Since loans are registered as liens against the property, the Municipality checks homeowners' tax payment history and the assessed value of the property to determine eligibility. There is no credit check required. The total project cost must not exceed 25% of the assessed property value, up

to a \$30,000 limit.

The Municipality is hosting some information sessions for homeowners to learn more about both Cozy Colchester and Solar Colchester and have questions answered. The next dates are February 15 and 21 from 6:30-7:30PM. You can register on the website below.

Let us help you make your home cozy. For more information, contact an Energy Concierge or visit www.cozycolchester.ca

Cozy Colchester is funded by the Municipality of Colchester and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Municipality of Colchester is pleased to work with PACE Atlantic Community Interest Corporation, who provides program administration and loan management services for the Cozy Colchester and Solar Colchester programs.

Joanna Burris is Municipality of Colchester Sustainability Planner and can be reached at jbarris@colchester.ca

Municipal Program Helping Homeowners Save Money

By Joanna Burris

Heating an older home can feel like trying to hold sand between your fingers. Heat escapes through cracks, poorly insulated walls and attics, and century-old windows, while your utility bills go through the roof. You pay an arm and a leg to fill your oil tank, but still feel a chill while you watch TV or cook dinner. Blankets and sweaters become your best friends. And yet, what can you do about it? You want to keep your family comfortable, but home upgrades are expensive and high energy bills make it impossible to save up for them.

This does not have to be the reality for homeowners in rural Nova Scotia. Local governments across Canada, including the Municipality of Colchester, are now recognizing the importance of providing access to good information, guidance, and most importantly funding to empower homeowners to improve their energy situations. The Municipality of Colchester's Cozy Colchester program gives homeowners the tools to keep their homes comfortable all year long, save money on energy bills, and tackle climate change by reducing carbon emissions, all at the same time.

The main benefit of Cozy Colchester is that the program aims to eliminate barriers to home upgrades: knowledge barriers, financial barriers, and administrative barriers. The program's homeowner advisors - whom the program calls Energy Concierges - are efficiency experts who are available by phone and email to answer any questions homeowners have about completing efficiency upgrades to their home (meaning upgrades that reduce a home's energy demand) and guide them through the process from start to finish. Homeowners often wonder things like: Where do I begin? How do I know what upgrades my house needs? Who should I

hire? Is this contractor's quote fair? What upgrades will give me the best bang for my buck? The program's team of Energy Concierges can address all these questions for homeowners and more.

As homeowners move through the Cozy Colchester program, they will also receive guidance about which federal and provincial rebates their project may be eligible for and how to apply for them. Rebates from Efficiency Nova Scotia and the Federal government can offer project savings of up to \$5,000, depending on the type and size of the upgrades. Homeowners are provided with a list of contractors to choose from, including several local options, or can find their own (contractors wishing to get involved with Cozy Colchester can reach out using the contact information below). Homeowners also receive a free Home Energy Assessment, during which a certified energy advisor will visit the home to measure its energy use and heat loss, evaluate its efficiency, and put together a customized list of recommended upgrades, in order of priority. The Energy Concierge can interpret Home Energy Assessment reports, decipher and provide advice on contractor quotes, and explain the contract that participants sign with the Municipality.

The financial barrier is often the biggest obstacle for homeowners - How will I pay for these upgrades? While efficiency upgrades are well-known to be good long-term investments, the upfront costs can be very high. To address this issue, Cozy Colchester offers financing (loans) at no upfront cost and which is designed to keep homeowners cashflow-positive. This means that homeowners can save money by taking part in the program; after the upgrades are complete, the monthly savings on energy bills will be higher than the monthly loan payments to the Municipality, putting extra

money back in homeowners' pockets every month. The program keeps monthly payments low by offering low interest rates (currently 0%), long loan terms, and a small one-time administration fee. Rebates also help to bring the total project cost down.


The Municipality of Colchester created this program so that homeowners do not have to choose between heating their homes or putting food on the table. The program provides additional assistance to low-income homeowners by helping them access the free provincial HomeWarming program. Cozy Colchester participants with household incomes beneath the low-income eligibility threshold, as described on the program website, can also have the administration fee waived.

Every family and every home is unique, so Cozy Colchester can finance almost any type of home upgrade that improves energy efficiency and reduces carbon emissions, including heat pumps, insulation, air-sealing & draft proofing, new building envelopes, exterior windows & doors, electric thermal storage, electric vehicle chargers, smart thermostats, geothermal energy systems, and more. Homeowners can also obtain financing for solar PV panels and solar electricity storage through Solar Colchester, Cozy Colchester's sister program that has been around since 2019.

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