

The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

Legislature to resume

The first session of the 65th general assembly will resume Friday, February 14, at 9 a.m., when the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia will read the speech from the throne.

Ministerial Assistants Appointed

Twenty-one members of the legislative assembly will take on the role of ministerial assistants as the government continues to address areas important to Nova Scotians, including healthcare, housing and affordability.

"We have a lot of talent in this new government, and I'm pleased to have members of our team stepping up to tackle the issues that matter most to Nova Scotians," said Premier Houston. "We're lowering taxes, recruiting doctors and building across the province. I'm excited for all that's to come."

Ministerial assistants focus on priority files in their respective departments, supporting the minister and policy development. Ministerial assistants do not receive additional salary. Locally MLA's who are new ministerial assistants include John A. MacDonald, Growth and Development, MLA Hants East and Tom Taggart, Public Works, MLA Colchester North. MLA's Tory Rushton, Cumberland South and Dave Ritcey, Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River have cabinet positions.

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More Community Support for Healthcare Recruitment, Retention

Communities working on recruiting and retaining healthcare workers can now apply for up to \$100,000 to support their efforts. The Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) Community Fund, now in its third year, is open for applications for 2025. The fund supports projects that encourage healthcare professionals and their families to move to and stay in Nova Scotia, reduce social and cultural barriers and create a welcoming environment.

In the first two years, 58 applicants were successful, with initiatives including recruitment videos, career fairs, multicultural events, recognition events, transportation solutions and a mentorship program.

Non-profits, other community organizations and municipalities can apply for funding by February 21. Virtual information sessions will be held weekly for those interested. Fund guidelines, the application form and the information session schedule are available at

<https://novascotia.ca/ohpr-community-fund>

Priority will be given to projects that - address the social and cultural needs of internationally educated health professionals; are led by equity-deserving groups AN MD include settlement support (including help with finding a home, transportation, schooling, child care and long-term community connections).

Province Selects Marketing Agency to Help Promote Tourism

Halifax firm m5 Marketing Communications will remain the Province's tourism marketing agency of record to help promote Nova Scotia as a premier vacation destination.

"We are excited to continue our collaboration with the talented team at m5 Marketing Communications," said Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. "Tourism plays a vital role in driving economic growth. By leveraging our in-depth knowledge of the Nova Scotia tourism industry alongside m5's marketing expertise, we are confident in our abilities to deliver effective marketing campaigns that encourage tourism spending in our province."

The agency, which has been the Province's tourism marketing partner since 2019, was selected from seven vendors who submitted proposals. The agency of record works closely with Tourism Nova Scotia and provides highly specialized services in tourism marketing campaign creation, media buying and planning, website development, research and marketing strategy.

The new contract begins on April 1 and is valued up to \$13.3 million annually. It will have an initial five-year term with the option for two one-year extensions.

continued on page 8

Notes from our Federal Capital - Stephen Ellis, MP

Continued from page 5

plans to continue meeting with additional councils in the region, including Oxford, Stewiacke, Cumberland County, and Bible Hill. These conversations are focused on addressing local needs and building collaborative solutions.

One of the central issues I continue working on is the Blue Seal program, which aims to enhance our province's ability to recruit and retain physicians. As we face increasing pressure on our healthcare system, policies like this are critical to ensuring that we have the necessary resources to meet the needs of all Canadians. This is just one example of the policy work I am committed to, and I will continue pushing for meaningful changes that positively impact our community.

The Pause in Parliament: Understanding Prorogation

When Justin Trudeau resigned, he also prorogued Parliament, with the next session not scheduled to resume until March 24, 2025. So, what does this mean?

Prorogation is essentially when the government hits the "pause" button on Parliament, officially ending a session and wiping out most of the ongoing work. While this provides the government with an opportunity to reset, it also causes disruptions. Bills that were in progress before prorogation are effectively wiped out and must be reintroduced in the next session unless there is an agreement to carry them over. Committees also stop functioning, with memberships and leadership positions being reset.

While this process is not without precedent, it can slow down the legislative process and complicate ongoing work. For instance, government bills that were in the process of being passed will

now face delays, and parliamentary committees will need to be re-established in the new session. However, the prorogation does not affect private members' bills, which means that individual MPs' legislative work can continue uninterrupted.

The prorogation also temporarily halts the introduction of new government documents, including petitions and reports. However, requests for responses from the government are automatically carried over into the new session.

Moving Forward: Serving Canadians and Embracing Accountability

Despite the temporary pause in Parliament, my commitment to serving you as your federal representative remains unwavering. I take my responsibility seriously, and I am focused on continuing the work that will improve the lives of Canadians, from ensuring the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals to strengthening relationships with municipal governments.

As we move forward into this new year, I believe it's crucial for Canadians to have the opportunity to make their voices heard. If we want meaningful change, we must demand it—not just through leadership changes but through the policies that will impact our future. My Conservative colleagues and I stand ready to provide that change, ensuring that Canada, Nova Scotia, and Cumberland-Colchester move in a direction that reflects the values and needs of its citizens. Together, we can build a stronger, and freest nation of all.

Dr Stephen Ellis is MP for Cumberland Colchester. He can be reached at: 902-895-2863, or E-mail: stephen.ellis@parl.gc.ca

News from our Provincial Capital - Tom Taggart

Continued from page 5

responsibility to support our residents I have been appointed to Public Accounts Committee as well as Natural Resources Committee. Additionally, I have been appointed as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of Public Works where I will support the Minister as well as be given responsibility for special projects.

I am sure many have been following the progress of the new bridge in Bass River. Last week I met on site with staff from Public Works and was briefed on the path forward. There was some damage to the bridge on Dec 11. From what I was shown and advised any piece that was damaged will be replaced. It appears that most of the damage was to the metal hangers and shackles that type of material. However, there was some timber damaged which will need to be replaced. This will take some time as the timber has to be procured cut to speck and sent away to be treated before coming back to be installed. It is my understanding this will all be completed and the bridge will be ready for final paving as soon as the

roads are open and asphalt is available.

This bridge will need to be named. I have been searching to see exactly what that process is and have not found anything specific to naming bridges. I will get the official process directly from someone in Public Works. When searching I came across some guidelines for naming roads or trails. The guideline that stood out to me was that it should reflect the community and its history. As we wait for the official process, I am anxious to hear your suggestions. You can email me at Tom.taggartmla@gmail.com or call Andrea 902 641 2335. When submitting suggestions please include your connection to Bass River. In closing, I previously suggested a name, however I have been given several different suggestions. So far, my personal favorite came as a suggestion, "The Chairmakers Bridge". Look forward to hearing from lots of Folks.

Tom Taggart, MLA Colchester North can be reached at (0) - 902-641-2335, tom.taggartmla@gmail.com

Progress Update on Disability Support Transformation

The Province continues to make significant progress in its work to transform the disability support system under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Remedy, including a workforce strategy released January 15. The new workforce strategy outlines key actions to modernize and strengthen the disability support workforce in four focus areas: awareness and recruitment, learning and development, health and safety, and growth and stability.

These include increased access to disability-specific post-secondary programs, more professional development and workplace training opportunities, and new pathways to employment

for internationally trained professionals and under-represented groups.

Since November 2024, the government has: Ended all new admissions to adult residential centres, regional rehabilitation centres and residential facilities in Nova Scotia effective January 1, 2025; began to roll out a new collaborative case management system, which includes mechanisms to manage individualized funding; finalized facility closure agreements with operators, including specific timelines and expectations; created a facility closure guide for service providers with input from service providers and regional Disability Support



Program staff; held seven information sessions - six in person and one virtual - with families and support networks of people currently living in institutional settings and launched the Service Evolution Fund to support service providers as they adapt their services to be delivered in the community; the first round of successful applicants will be announced soon.

The Province will host the second Rebuilding HOPE conference on Saturday, March 29, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nova Scotians can attend for free at one of four in-person locations - Halifax, Sydney, Middleton and Pictou - or online. The event gives participants an opportunity to learn more about the remedy and engage in conversations that will shape the future of Nova Scotia's disability community. Registration opens later this month; details will be available at <https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/timeline>

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