

News from our Provincial Council - Dave Ritcey

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letes and coaches.

Congratulations to the 2024 inductees - Ron Meech, Taunya Pynn-Crowe, Mark Burley, John Richard, Joanne (Evans) McPhee, and the 1992 Track and Field Team.

Province to Cover Full Tuition for New Accelerated Nursing Program

People in Nova Scotia who want to pursue a career as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in continuing care can get free tuition through a new pilot program. The Province will cover the full cost of tuition and books for 30 future LPNs who agree to work in continuing care in Nova Scotia for two years after graduating. Students will be enrolled in an accelerated 18-month practical nursing program at Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) Ivany campus in Dartmouth.

The pilot program will use the same course curriculum used in other practical nursing programs. Classes will run from January 2025 to June 2026 in the afternoons and evenings, allowing students to complete a two-year diploma program six months faster. Students will work one to two shifts a month in continuing care

News from our Municipal Council - District 9

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the gateway to Debert. Council has approved costs for a new roundabout on MacElmon Road with construction to begin summer of 2025, this will open up approximately 30 acres of highway commercial land along Hwy 104 at Exit 13.

The roundabout has been discussed for a number of years and is part of a broader vision to attract businesses and amenities such as fuel station, convenience stores, service retail and food services that will support the Debert Industrial Park and surrounding com-

while they study.

More information on the program, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found at: <https://www.nssc.ca/programs-and-courses/programs/plandesr.aspx?prg=PNURA&pln=PRACNU-RACC>

Province Recognized as a Top Travel Destination

Nova Scotia has been named one of Travel + Leisure magazine's 50 Best Places to Travel in 2025.

We are thrilled to be acknowledged in the prestigious list of the 50 Best Places to Travel in 2025. Nova Scotia's unique charm and scenic coastlines draw visitors from around the world. It's great to see our province and tourism industry receiving recognition as a world-class vacation destination.

Nova Scotia is featured under the category For Moments on the Water. It highlights Nova Scotia's increasingly accessible air travel, appealing accommodations and iconic coastal activities and attractions. The province is one of only two Canadian regions on the list.

Dave Ritcey is MLA, Truro-Millbrook-Bible Hill-Salmon River. He can be reached by telephone at 902-897-0884 or by e-mail at mlaritcey@bellaliant.com.

munities as well as those travelling along 104. It's a notable step forward enhancing services for the areas and driving local economic growth.

Before I sign off, stay tuned for events coming up in different communities as Fundy Shore Winter Carnival is happening February 13th-17th.

Feel free to reach out anytime for a conversation, I can be reached by phone, email or facebook on District 9 page.

Marie Benoit is District 9 Municipal Councillor and can be reached at mboenit@colchester.ca or (902) 324-9011

Colchester Website Accessed 24,777 Times on October 19

The following is the Information Systems Department section of Scott Fraser, Director Corporate Services, report circulated to Council Committee at its meeting on January 16, 2025

Information Systems Department:

General Statistics (9 August 2024 - 8 January 2025)

Help Desk. Opened work orders: 346. Closed work orders: 336. With the addition of new employees and changes in departments we have seen the trend of increasing work orders continue through the last reporting period with an increase of 15% over the previous year. Service levels haven't been affected at this time but it has put some pressure on staff time for project work.

Email Spam Statistics (Previous 30 days)

Threat Origins - While the source of most attacks against Municipal infrastructure has not changed, there has been a marked decrease in attacks from the Uttar Pradesh area of India thanks to an increase in their cyber crime policing in the area, but we are now seeing a jump in attacks originating from Mauritius. This is the result of intense state sponsored attacks against their financial sector earlier this year, the compromised systems are not being used to launch global attacks.

Inbound Email Statistics

Blocked emails for the last

30 days have increased by just over a thousand emails, some of these are normal for the time of year and some are fall out from the previous email attack we had. Allowed messages are about the same numbers we have seen for the last few years. There was a decrease in ATP and quarantined emails thanks to some adjustments to the software filters that were sending a high % of emails that should have been blocked to the quarantine.

Blocked Mail Details

You can see in the blocked mail details that we had an increase in exploit attempts leading up to Christmas then a dip back to the trending average.

Web Traffic and social media (9 August 2024 - 8 January 2025) Web page traffic statistics - Colchester.ca

Public's use of the Colchester.ca website has been increasing this year, we are seeing an average of 900 users on weekdays, up from about 550 last year. We also have a

spike in traffic based around the election with the website being accessed 24,777 times on October 19th

Colchester.ca most visited pages

The most popular page visited by the public is still the Collection Schedule, but elections has taken over from most of the top 10 pages we normally see this time of year.

PROJECT UPDATES Municipal Elections

ISD staff played a major role in the configuration and support of the electronic hardware used during the election, as well as setting up several polling locations. The hardware worked well with only 3 calls for support on the 19th.

Server Hardware Replacement

A new server was configured and installed to replace an older unit that had reached the end of its life cycle. The new hardware has an expected life of 6 years and is used to host various virtual machines used by staff.

ISD Policy Review



Staff has been working on an update to our aged IT policy, this is in the process of review now and hopefully will be ready to submit to council in the Spring for their approval.

Budget Preparation

The ISD is preparing our budget for 2025 and making project plans for the next year. Some of the items we are looking into now are a review of our backup and restoration system.

Network infrastructure upgrades, council chambers projector replacement, and an Information Security audit.

Respectfully submitted, Scott Fraser, CPA Director of Corporate Services

Child and Family Poverty Has Risen By 16%

The Nova Scotia Action Coalition for Community Well-being (NSACCW) is calling on the provincial government to take immediate action to combat the alarming increase in child and family poverty, which has risen by 16%. This sharp rise highlights a systemic failure of current social and economic policies to ensure the well-being of Nova Scotians, especially the most vulnerable.

"This is a wake-up call," said Alec Stratford, Chair of NSACCW. "A 16% increase in child and family poverty is unacceptable. It shows that our social and economic policies are not meeting the needs of children and families in Nova Scotia. Poverty ed now."

The coalition is urging the Nova Scotia government to implement the recommendations put forward by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Colleen Cameron, member of the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty., underscored the broad impacts of poverty on

community well-being. "We cannot separate the issues of poverty from health outcomes and educational opportunities," Cameron said. "People living in poverty are more likely to face chronic illnesses due to poor nutrition, limited health-care access, and constant stress."

Children in poverty often lack the resources and support they need to succeed in school, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage for generations. A failure to act leaves communities struggling."

The connection between poverty and productivity is also evident. Workers burdened by financial stress are less able to perform at their best. "Poverty drags down workforce productivity by creating barriers like absenteeism and underemployment," states Suzanne MacNeil, a member of Justice for Workers Nova Scotia. "Affordable childcare, fair wages, and housing stability are not wish-list items—they are necessities if we want a strong, competitive economy."

Nova Scotia Stampede Supports Economic Growth, Tourism

The 2024 Nova Scotia Stampede made a significant economic impact on the province. According to a recent economic impact assessment by Sport Tourism Canada, the total net economic activity generated by the event - held last September in Truro and Bible Hill - was \$2.2 million, and the economic benefits extended beyond the area.

"The Nova Scotia Stampede is a powerful driver of economic growth, showcasing the

strength of our event and tourism sectors," said Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. "Events like this support our communities, attract visitors, and reinforce Nova Scotia as a premier destination for tourism and investment."

The inaugural Nova Scotia Stampede combined professional rodeo, live entertainment and local vendors, offering visitors a unique taste of Nova Scotia's vibrant culture and hospitality.

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