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# South Cumberland NEWS

PO BOX #41 BASS RIVER, NS B0M 1B0  
 VOL. 8 NO. 9

FEBRUARY 2026 \$1<sup>95</sup> + HST

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## Parrsboro Fire Department Gets New Rescue Truck



Parrsboro Fire Department Chief Allan Bennett accepts the keys to a 2026 F 550 12' walk around rescue truck from Municipality of Cumberland Manager of Fire Services Kendall Spence. The new rescue truck is equipped with slide out trays which can be operated from the driver's side and passenger side. It replaces a 1994 Freightliner rescue truck. (Darrell Cole Photo)

By Darrell Cole

The Parrsboro Fire Department has received a new 2026 F-550 walk-around rescue truck from the Municipality. The Municipality of Cumberland continues to invest in its fire departments to better protect local communities. The truck was built by Fort Garry Fire Trucks in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It includes slide-out trays on both sides, making it easier for firefighters to access equipment during emergencies.

The new truck replaces a 1994 Freightliner rescue vehicle.

"This new truck is very important to our department," said Fire Chief Allan Bennett. "It replaces an older vehicle that served us well. The new truck is smaller and easier to drive on narrow streets and in tight spaces." The Municipality ordered the truck last June. It is part of ongoing investments in local fire services.

Last fall, the Tidnish Bridge Volunteer Fire Department received a new 2024 Ford F-550 rescue vehicle. The four-door, four-wheel-drive truck has improved the department's ability to respond to emergencies along the Northumberland Strait.

District 8 Councillor Marchel Strong welcomed the new vehicle. "As a municipality, we are working hard to replace old equipment," she said. "We have purchased several new fire trucks, with more coming in the future. Six trucks have been bought in the last two

and a half years, and two more are on the way."

In addition to the trucks in Parrsboro and Tidnish Bridge, the Pugwash Fire Department is expected to receive a new pumper truck this summer. Springhill will receive a new pumper tanker truck in April 2027. The total cost of the Parrsboro truck and the two upcoming vehicles is just under \$2 million.

Mayor Rod Gilroy said the Municipality is committed to supporting its fire departments.

"We are very thankful for the volunteers in our 15 rural fire departments," said Gilroy. "They are often the first to respond to fires and medical emergencies. Their work is very important, and we are proud to support them."

Over the past year, the Municipality delivered a new fire truck to the Wallace Fire Department and opened a new fire station in Springhill. It also invested in breathing equipment, radios, hoses, protective gear, and other safety equipment.

Last month, municipal council began planning a new fire station in the River Hebert fire district. Council has asked staff to prepare plans for the design and construction of the building.

The Municipality of Cumberland operates 15 fire departments: Advocate, River Hebert, FPW, Parrsboro, Southampton, Springhill, Collingwood, Truemanville, Tidnish, Shinimicas, Leicester, Pugwash, Wallace, Wentworth, and Westchester.

## 47 Affordable Units for Cumberland

People in Cumberland County will soon have more options for affordable housing, including a new path to affordable home ownership. The Groves at Hillsdale, a modular home community in Amherst, will have 47 homes when complete. Twenty-eight of them will be sold under a shared ownership model between the buyer and United Way Maritimes, while the other 19 will have affordable monthly rent.

"The Groves at Hillsdale is another way we are helping more Nova Scotians make their dream of home ownership a reality," said Housing Minister John White. "This partnership between our multiple levels of

government and members of our non-profit sector is helping Nova Scotians in the Amherst area secure affordable safe housing both today and for generations to come."

All levels of government are supporting the project, which the United Way is leading. The Province of Nova Scotia is investing \$4,045,815, the Government of Canada is contributing \$2,350,000, and the Town of Amherst has provided \$639,950 in infrastructure costs to the project. The River Philip Foundation has also provided about \$1.7 million to help make The Groves at Hillsdale possible.

Alana Hirtle, Member of Parliament for Cumberland-Colch-

ester, on behalf of Gregor Robertson, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure said,

"It's exciting to see this project come together, knowing what a positive, real-world impact it's going to have on the community. It's the blossoming efforts of a lot of hard work and collaboration, and our government is proud to be working together with partners to make it happen."

The home ownership model is a first for the province. Buyers will not require a down payment, and United Way Maritimes will retain about 30 per cent ownership of the homes. Buyers will enter an agreement with United Way that establishes resale condi-

tions that will ensure these homes remain affordable.

Home purchase costs will range from \$127,000 for a one-bedroom home to \$182,000 for two bedrooms. Monthly mortgage payments are expected to range from \$740 to \$1,100.

At the announcement Rob Small, Mayor, Town of Amherst said, "Housing affordability is one of the most pressing challenges facing our community, and this project represents a meaningful step forward for Amherst. By bringing together all levels of government and trusted community partners, we're creating real housing options for local families - homes that are secure, attainable and designed to remain affordable over time. This kind of collaboration is how we build a stronger, more inclusive future for Amherst."

To be eligible to purchase a home in The Groves at Hillsdale, interested buyers must: Have gross annual household income between \$50,000 and \$80,000; stable income from employment, Employment Insurance or retirement funds- be a resident of or work in Cumberland County and be approved for a mortgage of between \$127,000 and \$187,500 (based on a 4.95 per cent interest rate) through the Mosaik Credit Union.

Qualified buyers will also require home insurance to be eligible for ownership of a unit.

Rental units at The Groves at Hillsdale are for people with household incomes between \$25,800 and \$45,000. Rent ranges from \$550 to \$708 per month for a one-bedroom and is \$884 per month for a two-bedroom. Utilities are not included in the rent. The units are 37 square metres (395 square feet) to 55 square metres (592 square feet). Twelve units are complete and will be occupied by February 1.

Property taxes will range from about \$175 to \$250 a month. *continued on page 2*



Fresh snow fell on January 19. Cumberland County got their share of the white stuff... Heck, might as well enjoy it, leading to horse-play on the Spirit Reins Range. Lawrence R Nicoll photo.

## Nappan Experimental Farm to Close

Cumberland County Mayor Rod Gilroy, on behalf of Municipal Council, is expressing deep concern following reports that employees at the Nappan Experimental Farm have been notified of its impending closure and their resulting layoffs. Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada confirmed earlier this week that significant layoffs were pending, and affected employees living in the area advised the facility

will be closed.

"These are well-paying, skilled federal government jobs that support families and contribute directly to the economic stability of our region," said Mayor Gilroy. "The loss of employment of this nature hits significantly harder in a rural area like Cumberland County than it does in larger urban centres, where alternative opportunities may be more readily available."

Mayor Gilroy noted that beyond the immediate impact on employees and their families, the closure would have broader ripple effects on the local economy, including reduced spending and increased pressure on municipal and social services.

On behalf of Municipal Council, Mayor Gilroy is urging federal Agriculture Minister Heath MacDonald to reconsider any decision to

close the Nappan Experimental Farm and to engage with employees, the municipality, and the community before taking irreversible steps.

"We are asking the federal government to fully consider the human and regional economic impacts of this decision," Mayor Gilroy said.

"Cumberland County stands with the affected employees and calls for a reconsideration that reflects the importance of these jobs and this facility to our rural community."

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