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PO BOX #41 BASS RIVER, NS B0M 1B0
Publications Mail™
#40048924 - VOL. 25 NO. 1

JANUARY 2021 **\$1.95 + HST**

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Asymptomatic Testing Continues

By Maurice Rees

The rules around asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 has changed again. The original deadline of December 18th to book for an asymptomatic test has been extended into January. Asymptomatic testing helps detect positive cases in people who do not have symptoms and limit the potential spread of the virus.

As new information is obtained, or a surge erupts, Premier McNeil and Dr Strang have constantly revised their advisories or brought in new restrictions and in some cases relented on previous ones. There are also new recommendations on testing for ro-

tational workers and post-secondary students from outside Atlantic Canada coming back to Nova Scotia after the holidays.

Rotational workers are now asked to get two tests during their modified self-isolation. Since December 4, they have been asked to get a test on day 6, 7 or 8. There is now a recommendation to be tested on day 1 or 2. Workers must still complete the full 14 days of modified self-isolation, even if they have negative test results.

Starting January 4, post-secondary students from outside Atlantic Canada who return after the holidays and don't

have symptoms should get one COVID-19 test on day 6, 7 or 8 of their self-isolation. They must complete the full 14 days of self-isolation, even if they have a negative test result.

"While asymptomatic testing is voluntary, it is strongly recommended as an added layer of protection for rotational workers and students, their families and households, and their communities," said Dr. Robert Strang, chief medical officer of health. "By getting tested, you're helping us detect the virus early enough to isolate household contacts before they can unknowingly spread the virus to others."

General asymptomatic test-

ing is available for people who: do not have symptoms; have not travelled outside the Atlantic provinces within the past 14 days; have not visited a potential exposure location and have not been in contact with someone who has tested positive

Appointments can be booked up to three days in advance through the COVID-19 self-assessment:

<https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>

Pop-up testing sites will also continue into the new year for general asymptomatic testing. Because they use rapid tests, the age limit is 16 and

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Season's Greetings & Farewell to 2020

This holiday season is surely different. We adjusted our plans and traditions in response to the pandemic, and many of us took time to both reflect and heal from the past year.

It was a difficult one for Colchester County and I know many were eager to put it behind them. As we bid farewell to 2020 and turn our minds to the fresh start that a new year brings, I would like to point to a few of the past year's good-news stories here at the Municipality.

Colchester's Municipal tax rates continued to be among the lowest in the province as Council approved no increase for 2020. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 our Municipality continues to fare well financially with reserves in place if needed.

Council approved a pedestrian bridge design; final pieces of one of the largest natural playgrounds in the province were installed; an Interpretive and Feasibility Study was completed; and many other site enhancements were added to the Fundy Discovery Site - all of which will continue to contribute to becoming an iconic attraction for our region.

Significant headway was made in bringing broadband internet to rural parts of Colchester as we signed a partnership with the Municipality of Cumberland, Develop Nova Scotia, and Xplornet for a \$62.1 million project that will result in one of the largest optic fibre-based high speed internet networks in rural Canada.

On July 10, Cliffs of



Mayor Christine Blair

Fundy Geopark received international recognition by achieving UNESCO Global Geopark status. The designation will put the region on the world stage and will greatly contribute to future tourism development, and educational, scientific, and recreational opportunities in the area.

We continued to roll out our new brand and logo for Colchester that better reflects the vibrancy of our communities; launched our fresh new website (Colchester.ca); continued to engage residents through our growing social media presence on both Facebook and Twitter; and made Council meetings accessible to the public online via ZOOM.

Not-for-profit groups contribute greatly to the quality of life of residents in Colchester County through their many programs and facilities. Council granted \$547,209 to support our community organizations in 2020!

Significant steps were taken to reduce our environmental footprint this year. Our Solar Colchester Program continued to assist residents in financing renewable energy for their homes; a Community Energy and Emissions Plan is

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Many houses put up more lights earlier in the season than other years to brighten what has been a year of struggles. (Harrington Photo)

Four Groups Receive \$118,500 ECSF Funding

By Maurice Rees

Four community groups have received \$118,500 funding through the Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF). None of the funding found its way into rural Colchester County areas, except Creamery Square in Tatamagouche, which received \$39,000.

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia Delivers Round 2 of the Emergency Community Support Fund partnered with Community Foundations of Canada and the Government of Canada to deliver the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF) in areas of rural Nova Scotia impacted by COVID-19.

Round 1 of ECSF was distributed over the summer and Round 2 launched on October 5, 2020. With Round 2, they invested an additional \$235,700.00 through the ECSF towards local charities and other qualified donees supporting populations experiencing heightened vulnerability during this crisis.

In Nova Scotia the ECSF has supported projects totaling \$561,280, including the following four projects in Colch-

ester and Cumberland Counties: Northern Healthy Connections Society, Truro - Northern Region, \$63,500.00; Creamery Square Association, Tatamagouche, \$39,000.00; Book Clubs for Inmates, Truro, \$10,000.00 and Cumberland Regional Library Board, Cumberland County, \$6,000.00.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared over nine months ago, community-based charities and nonprofit organ-

izations have been working tirelessly to provide emergency support, in particular to individuals and communities experiencing heightened vulnerability.

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia (RCFofNS) has been making small grants to rural community organizations since 2004, in an accountable and transparent way. Its grant programs have supported local groups whose

work is focused on youth, environment, leadership, seniors, and rural innovation in the province, including Mi'kmaq communities.

For more information, contact: Jean Ward, Chair, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia (RCFofNS) info@rcfofns.com. ECSF is a collaboration between Canada's community foundations and the Community Foundations of Canada, which is funded by the Government of Canada.

Coldstream Distillery to Add Equipment

By Maurice Rees

Colchester's Coldstream Clear Distillery Ltd., Stewiacke, is installing new manufacturing equipment at its Truro facility to meet growing demand for its products. The new equipment will allow Coldstream Clear Distillery Ltd to build on success of ready-to-drink products, as small and medium-sized businesses that scale-up their operations help to create jobs and grow the local economy.

Coldstream is Nova Scotia's first producer of vodka-soda beverages. On December 8th, Lenore Zann, Member of Parliament for Cumberland-

Colchester, on behalf of the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, announced a repayable contribution of \$850,000 to Coldstream Clear Distillery Ltd to support the project.

The funding will enable the company to buy advanced manufacturing equipment so it can develop new products and more than triple its current production capacity. The increased production will allow Coldstream to grow its skilled workforce and meet demand for its ready-to-drink beverages outside of Atlantic Canada.

Many executives and government officials feel small and medium-sized enterprises are critical to Canada's economic recovery. ACOA's announcement helps demonstrate the Government

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