

Rees' Pieces

Provincial economy in rough shape

It's difficult to say, and I don't want to be negative, but Nova Scotia's economy, outside of HRM, is in rough shape. There are plenty of reasons to be concerned for rural Nova Scotia, with a few appearing for Halifax.

The first cloud appeared recently, when it was announced the province's last oil refinery is closing, just as it appears pipelines might be reversed shipping Alberta crude or bitumen east to the Maritimes, within the next few years. Sure Halifax has the shipyards, but it's my bet, the long term contract will not be as much of an economic stimulator as originally believed.

Halifax has been developing a reputation as the desired location for many call centres in the financial and insurance market. The jobs are providing employment, but they are not bricks and mortar. If global economic changes rained down upon us, it would be easy for these same firms to pick up and move elsewhere.

Provincially, too much money has been given to too few companies. On several occasions, I've voiced my opinion in this column, instead of providing a lot to a few, the provincial government should have been focused on providing the appropriate climate for rural and small town regions to prosper.

Recently, the real discouraging news concerns the tourism industry. The weather has not been conducive to travel, whether local or from afar. We can't control the weather, but we can ensure infrastructure is open to serve the tourists when they do arrive and that's not happening.

CBC radio carried a story about a yacht crew wanting to tie up at the moorings in St Peter's prior to entering the Bras d'Or lakes. It was impossible. The facility was only open certain days. The sailing party would have to wait a few days.

Secondly, I was informed the centre in Grande Pre is not open every day. The facility has been closed on Sundays and Mondays. How ironic. Sunday is one of the most family travelled days of the weekend.

With all the cuts to Parks Canada, travel and visiting privileges have certainly been curtailed. For instance, Kejimkujik National Park, is closed from Oct 16 to May 15. I thought we were trying to increase tourism as a year round adventure in Canada's Ocean Playground? Years ago, I remember camping in Keji in April. Do the people who make closure or funding decisions not realize there are thousands of people, who enjoy the outdoors and like year round adventure?

The two previous examples reflect how the federal government has impacted our viability, not to mention other cuts to military, economic development and Employment Insurance eligibility. Provincially, the situation is even worse.

When did you last hear about a major program announcement which would have a positive impact on rural and small town areas. The RDA's are being disbanded in favour of trying to organize half the number of organizations with less money serving much larger geographical areas.

When is the last time you hear about a small town or rural business being permitted into the circle of firms, who are able to get payroll debates? Funding to volunteer tourism organizations has been reduced to the point they are only able to open a few hours week. Volunteers now have to do more fund raising to hire summer staff, in addition to the dollars they need for building and property maintenance.

Why hasn't the provincial government taken some of the mega-millions they gave to a handful of companies and implemented a funding enriched program to work with local community groups to save the lighthouses in the province now being abandoned by Ottawa? A program of that nature would create a global tourism destination and preserve or create many more jobs than the handful of companies receiving around \$600-million would ever generate.

Closing smaller rural schools, neglecting to provide high speed communications systems or province wide cellular reception and lack of good highway surfaces are not helping rural areas.

About the only message rural Nova Scotia is receiving from the bureaucracy in Halifax is, come live in Halifax, or Go West. Will we ever get a provincial government which will focus on preserving and re-developing rural Nova Scotia?

Maurice

Lower Onslow Community Centre Notes

By Ann Fiddes

Activities at the Lower Onslow Community Centre have slowed down for the summer months, giving us all the opportunity to enjoy our summer weather.

One exception to this is Yoga. Yoga will continue for the summer months on Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. under the leadership of Denise Burgess.

An interesting event planned for the Centre on Saturday, August 17th at 10 a.m. is a Public Auction. Among the articles for sale at this time will be windows removed from the Centre this past year and many chairs that we no longer have a use for.

Attendance at the closing open mic for the season was an all time record, with music happening until just after 11:30 p.m. Hoping that these crowds will continue at Hidden Hilltop Campgrounds during the summer.

The Board of the Community Centre wish to express their thanks to former residents of the community, Dwight and Carolyn Giddens, for their donation to the centre in memory of Dwight's mother, Faye Giddens. Faye was a strong supporter of the Centre, enjoying both the Card Parties and Open Mic nights.

Enjoy your summer folks, and if you have interest in booking the Centre, contact Grace at 662-2822.

Important Information for Seniors

By Christ Urquhart

Here is some very important information for seniors. Have you heard of 211? 211 is here to help you find the community and social service you may need. They have interpretation Services in over 100 languages. TTY Available: 1-888-692-1382. There is information at 211 on: Financial and social assistance; Housing

and utility help; Food assistance and meal programs; Seniors' services and home care; Parenting and family programs; Government program assistance; Disability support services; Volunteer organizations; Newcomer services; Mental health support; and much more....

If you are interested in helping seniors, or are a sen-

ior interested in helping others this information is for you! Funding: New Horizons for Seniors. Policies and Standards: Organizations that want to help seniors make a difference in the lives of others, and in their communities, are eligible to receive federal grants and contributions funding.

Projects must be led or inspired by seniors and address one or more of the following five program objectives: - promoting volunteerism among seniors and other generations; - engaging seniors in the community through the mentoring of others; - expanding awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse; - supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors; and - providing capital assistance for new and existing community projects and/or programs for seniors. For more information go to Positive Aging Directory at seniors.gc.ca

Parrsboro Band Day - July 28

By Patricia Burke

The Parrsboro Band Assoc. is pleased to announce plans are finalized for Band Day, Sun. July 28, 2013., at Hill Memorial Bandstand in Parrsboro, NS. Bar-b-que Sausage and hot dogs, strawberry shortcake and cold drinks will be available at 12 noon. Music will be started at 1 pm and continue all afternoon. Parrsboro's own Citizens Band, Brass Impact from Halifax, The Elastic Big Band from Parrsboro, Pictou Brass & Reed and Parrsboro Citizen's Choir will delight you with great music all afternoon.

The Band Hat will be passed around during the afternoon for anyone who would like to donate to the Parrsboro Citizens' Band. New to Band Day will be Art in the Park featuring local artisans presenting what they make.

Memberships will be sold that afternoon, or you can renew too.

There will be tickets on 25 lbs. Lobster sold which will be drawn for at the end of the afternoon, and a print donated by Arlene Collins, "Days Gone By", which will be drawn for at the Bernie Burke Memorial Golf Tournament on August 23, 2013. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held at "The Hall" at 44 King Street, just a short walk from the Bandstand.



Dividend Investing Will Continue to Attract Investors

By Kim Inglis

Dividend stocks have been on a roll for a few years now and the trend is unlikely to abate anytime soon. As economic uncertainty continues, investors are expected to stick with the dividend theme to hedge portfolios against market volatility. According to Canaccord Genuity analysts, there are several reasons why dividend investing will continue to attract investors.

From a tax perspective, dividend investing makes sense. On an after-tax basis, dividends are generally worth 1.31 to 1.45 times more than the earnings on interest



income. In other words, a 3% dividend yield provides approximately the same after-tax income as a 4% bond yield.

The risk/reward trade-off is more advantageous with dividend investing. The financials,

utilities, and telecom sectors, as well as exhibiting lower volatility, have all generated higher total returns versus the S&P/TSX Composite Index over the last 10 years. This phenomenon is not restricted to Canada. According to data compiled by J.P. Morgan Asset Management, 42% of the total annualized returns earned in the S&P 500 Index can be attributed to dividends, making income as important as capital gains.

Changing demographics will be influential. The proportion of baby boomers in the Canadian population will increase from 21% today to

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