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South Cumberland NEWS

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Cumberland-Colchester team up on Broadband Initiative

By Maurice Rees

Cumberland Municipal Council teamed up with Colchester Municipal Council to jointly develop a plan to source an internet provider, who would bring high speed internet to the two counties. The process began just over a

year ago, when representatives from both councils, economic development departments, federal and provincial government representatives met for an in-camera session in Masstown to explore high speed broadband.

During the 2018 meeting a

presentation was provided by an Internet Service Provider (ISP), who indicated they would be able to increase install the equipment to make businesses competitive with speeds equal to or greater than urban areas, plus the state-of-the-art equipment

would be G-5 ready.

At the Cumberland Council meeting on June 5th, 2019 council agreed to have a special meeting on Council on June 13th at 7:30 PM. The one agenda item will be the award of the Request for Information for Rural

Broadband and Smart Rural Community Partnerships for Colchester & Cumberland Counties, Nova Scotia.

During the year since the in-camera session in Masstown both councils have collectively worked on development of a strategy. An Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) was issue in late May. The RFEI closed on

Tuesday, June 11th, 2019. From June 11th until June 28 staff worked to provide a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their selected ISP provider.

A detailed proposal for the two counties must be submitted by June 28th to Develop Nova Scotia, the crown corporation mandated by the Province of Nova Scotia to administer a \$195-Internet Trust Fund. Both councils hope the plan will be accepted, and they can go forward with detailed planning and start construction in early 2020.



Tide's out and the fleet is in at Advocate Harbour, awaiting the next rising tide to go fishing. (Lawrence R. Nicoll Photo)

Changes made to the Parrsboro Sewer Rate

Municipal Council reviewed a report from staff regarding public concerns over the Parrsboro Sewer Rate at their regular meeting on June 19th. Council has decided to amend the sewer rate in the community of Parrsboro with the following course of action:

Base Parrsboro's per unit sewer charge calculation on previous year's budget, resulting in the deferral of approximately \$357,000;

Assess properties in the existing service area at the same unit value as the previous year;

Assess unit values to properties with buildings in expanded service area only if hooked-up at time of billing;

Revise Parrsboro 2019/20 per unit sewer charge from \$957 to \$575;

Continue to charge a flat rate of \$50 for vacant land and buildings not connected in the existing and new service areas;

Request financial assistance from Municipal Affairs re: debt

costs resulting from market value increase of construction over original budget;

Develop a capital funding policy to identify how future infrastructure projects are to be funded;

Develop a communications and public engagement strategy for future infrastructure projects; Develop one by-law for all county owned sewer systems;

Reassess all sewer system service areas based on revised by-law; and Advise property owners in writing of their sewer assessment, appeal process by December 31st, 2019.

"We recognize that our decision making in the budgeting process has caused concern in the community of Parrsboro. It is our sincere hope as a council that the changes and steps forward identified tonight will make for a more equitable solution, not just in Parrsboro, but as we move forward as a municipality," remarked Warden Al Gillis.



Almost equally popular is the bake table. Gardeners just can't avoid these tasty sweets. The Hall had another very successful Annual Plant / Book and Bake Sale on June 1st. More pictures on page 2. (Lawrence R. Nicoll Photo)

Geopark Takes Centre Stage UNESCO Delegation Visit

The Parrsboro Shore between Apple River and Debert may be dotted with small, tight-knit communities, but it has big things in store. The team behind the Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Global Geopark is hard at work preparing for an international team of evaluators from UNESCO. A successful evaluation means a UNESCO Global Geopark designation for the area next Spring, making it Nova Scotia's first Geopark.

The initiative has brought together many different stakeholders - a representative from Joggins Fossil Institute, from Energy and Mines, and community members, among others. Both the Cumberland and Colchester Municipalities are working together on the project, with Cumberland District 10 Councillor Don Fletcher serving as Chair of the Geopark Society, and Colchester County Mayor Christine Blair as Vice-Chair.

The UNESCO evaluators are expected in late July. From Greece and Spain, they will tour the area for three days, following an itinerary that best shows off the area's scenic geology and attrac-

tions. The evaluation is the final step to UNESCO designation, which will give the region's geological heritage a global platform and mark the shoreline as a destination for adventure tourists.

Anne Grabinsky, owner-operator of Nova Shores Kayaking Adventures in Advocate Harbour, has long supported the Geopark for its potential to highlight the area to international tourists: "This is our chance to bring people from all over the world to this great area. The Geopark will create so much opportunity for businesses and tour providers in the region." A dozen sites throughout Cumberland and Colchester will see developments to infrastructure, education programming, and will be promoted to visitors with plans to expand the number of sites each year. The project was further bolstered by MP Bill Casey's April announcement that Isle Haute, included in Cliffs of Fundy's list of geosites, is receiving a Federal Wilderness Preserve designation.

Cliffs of Fundy Society Chair, Councillor Don Fletcher, is proud of the work done to date and excited for the future: "The upcoming evaluation is our one chance to showcase our natural rugged coastline, prove our place on the world stage, and show off our ability to collaborate", adding, "We will succeed!"

For more information, visit fundygeopark.ca Contact: Marlee Leslie, Coordinator - coordinator@fundygeopark.ca, 1-902-216-1221

Cumberland raises Pride Flag in Recognition of Pride Week



The Municipality of Cumberland raised the Pride Flag at its three Service Centres. On hand to raise the flag were (L-R): Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, MLA for Cumberland North, Joe van Vulpen, Deputy Warden for the Municipality of Cumberland and Brent Noiles from Cumberland Pride. (Submitted)

By Maurice Rees

For the first time in history, the Municipality of Cumberland in partnership with Cumberland Pride held an official flag raising ceremony to celebrate Pride Week in the Cumberland region. 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada. Prior to this, homosexuality was considered a mental illness, and there were little to no protections for members of the LGBTQ2+ community against violence or discrimination.

"I am pleased to see the Municipality celebrating the diversity within

our communities," stated Warden Al Gillis. "I encourage all residents to participate in the many Pride Week events taking place throughout Cumberland County."

All three service centres in the Municipality of Cumberland flew the Pride flag from June 11 to June 17. Other events in the municipality included a SWAG making night for youth in River Hebert on June 12 and a Colour Splash in Springhill June 13.

Cumberland Pride is a volunteer organization which has organized Pride Week with increased success for the last three years.

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