

REES' Pieces

Congratulations Cumberland-Colchester for great collective effort

First things first.

Congratulations to Cumberland and Colchester Municipal governments for a high level of co-operation and a lot of planning and detailed work on to put together a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for a massive Rural Broadband and Connected Communities Collaboration.

The RFEI was issued on May 24th and interested applicants must reply by June 7th. Timelines are tight but Mark Austin, the project coordinator for the two counties is adamant he will have a strong proposal submitted by June 28th to align with Develop Nova Scotia's (DNS) deadline for applications.

The project has been in the works for just over a year, since senior representatives from each Municipality, along with selected provincial representatives, met at the Peg to explore working together and to learn about how such a massive undertaking could become reality.

If the application meets DNS approval and the economics are in line with expectations, Cumberland and Colchester Counties would become one of the most connected regions in Canada. They would be creating history by being the first two counties to throw their hat in the same ring, to get it done.

If the proposals come together as anticipated, and in line with a study done in the Annapolis Valley it might mean 85% of Cumberland and Colchester residents and business would have internet speeds equal to or greater than many urban areas.

Using the Annapolis Valley study as a base and I have no confirmation the Cumberland-Colchester would be similar or even close, the remaining 15% of connections could be based on satellite service. In the Valley, satellite was the only economical way to bring service to areas, which were very remote, or topography would not allow service to be developed from towers or buried fibre cable. The lack of population density was upping the cost per household to well over \$100,000. Although not as fast as fibre-related installations, today's satellite service delivers internet service much faster than currently available even in sub-divisions, which are close to an urban core.

By late June reviewers of the RFEI will know if it makes sense and economics are in order. What a feather in the cap of Cumberland and Colchester councils, especially to Mark Austin, if all this comes together. Nova Scotia is a global leader in recycling, what an honour to be at the forefront of Canadian municipalities and their respective communities to be held up as an example of how to do it, while doing it at a lower cost than anticipated.

Another area where Colchester and Cumberland are showing great strides of working together is ensuring a quality presentation has been prepared to obtain UNESCO designation for the Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark. The volunteer community workers, whom I have a relationship with and talk to often, can't say enough good things and are amazed how the two municipalities blend together to get something done.

The two counties might not have the votes or number of seats, which political parties look for when they want to get re-elected, but they are at the top of the list when it comes to resourcefulness of its citizens. When you want to look at impact, go back 150+ years and see how many Father's of Confederation hailed from these rural areas. HRM might have the population and today's financial strength, but how many of their forefathers were able to put it together to create Canada?

There are two additional things Halifax needs to remember, without the 20% of Canadians in rural area who would grow the food, or who has the resources – forest, water, minerals and many of the things needed for them to continue life?

The province certainly benefitted from Sable Gas and Deep Penuche, but HRM got a larger slice of the pie, but those projects are history.

Not that we are headed to fracking for natural gas, but Halifax needs to remember if we are short of energy and they decide on fracking, where will it come from? Never forget Cumberland Basin, Pictou and Hants County's Kennetcook River Valley will be able to save your bacon. However, it will be on "our terms".

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Commissioner Lucki:

I followed with great interest and concern the proposed transfer to Dartmouth and resulting closure of the Truro Operational Communications Centre (OCC). I have sent a copy of this letter of concern to the Honourable Ralph Goodale.

I am a Colonel retired from the Canadian Forces. I am seeking the nomination to replace Bill Casey in Cumberland-Colchester and I have discussed this issue with him. That has focused my attention on this important matter.

I have considerable knowledge in relation to and an appreciation of the critical importance of communication in emergency situations. In my experience the ability to communicate becomes even more vital in times of emergency.

There are a number of im-

portant reasons as to why the OCC that is in Truro should not be moved.

Firstly, the OCC in Truro is located in the centre of Nova Scotia, with a good geographic separation from the HRM OCC in Burnside. Redundancy in an emergency situation it is very preferable.

Secondly, placing all communications in a cluster makes very little operational sense considering their importance in an emergency. Simply put, placing all the eggs in one basket in one location creates an unnecessary vulnerability.

Thirdly, the Halifax/Dartmouth area has a number of particular disadvantages in relation to being the centre for emergency communications.

The CBC in February of 2017 detailed the risks associated with a fire in the Bedford Ammunitions Depot. It quoted a 2015 report by the Canadian

Military that concluded that there is a risk of fire in the Ammunition Depot in Bedford. While an explosion was considered unlikely, a fire is a possibility and that may necessitate an evacuation from an area which would include both of the OCC. That would disrupt emergency communications in Nova Scotia.

The Port of Halifax on occasion hosts nuclear powered vessels. While very unlikely, a radiation leak from one of these vessels could mandate an evacuation that in all likelihood would include Burnside.

Foreign actors intent on damaging Canada would see Halifax as a potential target and Halifax is the centre of Provincial government and many Federal government organizations. It is also the home of Canada's East Coast Navy.

Being on the Coast, Halifax

is vulnerable to violent storms such as that we experienced in September of 2003 with Hurricane Juan. Climate change increases that risk.

Beyond the risk of storms, Truro does not share these disadvantages or vulnerabilities. Those making decisions in relation to the safety of Nova Scotians have an obligation to protect Nova Scotians. Financial considerations, while important, should be secondary.

It is my opinion that the proposed move from Truro to Burnside is poorly considered. It is dangerous.

Respectfully,
J A Hardiman, Colonel
(Ret'd), CD, BSC

Dear Minister Goodale & Commissioner Brenda Lucki -

With regards to the proposed transfer of the RCMP operational communications centre from Truro to DARTMOUTH, NS, I respectfully request that the process be suspended immediately pending the results of the independent review which Minister Goodale has announced and which I support whole-heartedly. Thank you so much Minister.

I have now reviewed the

2017 "Report on Feasibility Study of RCMP H Division Operational Communication Center" which resulted in the recommendation to move the operations from Truro to Halifax and have observed that it has several substantial errors in the data which cause me great concern as the conclusion appears to be based on incorrect information.

If the correct data had been applied it is my belief that a completely different conclusion would have been

reached. This is becoming a very prominent issue in the province because it affects the safety of all Nova Scotians and as MLA for the region I think it is necessary that the process be suspended immediately pending results of the independent review.

Thank you in advance.

Yours respectfully
Lenore Zann, MLA
(Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River)

All Geared Up And No Place To Play

The folding of the Canadian Women's Hockey League on May 1st was a sad day for Canadian hockey.

In our Colchester community one of the fastest growth areas in sports is female hockey. I'm sure we are not the only community across Canada experiencing this phenomenon.

We live in a time when there are concerns about young people and too little exercise, too much technology or lack of a work ethic, people skills and self-responsibility.

Many female hockey graduates throughout their hockey careers learned valuable life skills and have become leaders, coaches and volunteers in their communities. There are so many reasons to grow the

game at every level and give Canadian female hockey the investment it needs.

The folding of the Canadian Women's Hockey League is the end of a chapter and not the story. To everyone involved in taking the program to twelve seasons, a very big thank you.

A new direction is required to sustain what has been accomplished but also to give every Canadian female hockey player the chance to dream BIG! A new business model perhaps with team ownership plus corporations lending their expertise in branding, development of markets and fan engagement could move a league in a quantum leap.

Leadership abilities and the Canadian hockey mosaic are synonymous. The change agents who can inspire a new

vision and work to its completion are out there. All Canadian hockey communities across the Nation should be saying, "what can we do to help in this situation?"

Thousands of girls take their first tentative steps on the ice during a Tim Horton's hockey scrimmage, the high fives, fist pumps and smiles of a female hockey team winning their first Provincial championship and the world medals worn by Canadians with so much pride after a challenging competition, embodies the desire and commitment to female hockey.

The Canadian Women's Hockey League needs our support. Please hurry, thousands await the next chapter.

Debbie Brown
Truro, NS

Deadline for the July issue of The Shoreline Journal is June 18.

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1650) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

MAILING ADDRESS: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, Nova Scotia, B0M 1B0.

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EDITOR PUBLISHER: Maurice Rees • ADVERTISING: Maurice Rees • CIRCULATION: Dorothy Rees

Canadian Publications Mail Products Agreement #40048924, ISSN #1209-9198

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: B0M / B2N / B6L - \$23.00, PLUS HST = \$26.45 • OTHER PARTS OF NS: \$28.00 plus HST = \$32.20
ALL OTHER AREAS OF CANADA: \$30.00, plus HST = \$34.50 • USA SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$45.00
HST: #890564404RT001. Printed by Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd, Pictou, Nova Scotia

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