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Call for Nominations for the Order of Nova Scotia will be accepted until March 18th. Nova Scotians are encouraged to nominate exceptional members of their community for the Order of Nova Scotia. The order is the province's highest honour and recognizes outstanding citizens for making significant and lasting contributions to their communities. Past recipients have included a Nobel Prize laureate, academics, athletes, volunteers, advocates and artists. Nominations will be accepted by mail, fax or email until March 18. Nomination forms are available at Access Nova Scotia centres, Province House in Halifax, MLA and MP offices, municipal offices and online. To re-nominate someone, people can submit a new nomination form and include any new information about the candidate's contributions.

All volunteer firefighters who responded to at least 20 per cent of emergency calls in 2021 will be eligible for a \$500 refundable tax credit. The government is amending regulations to the Volunteer Firefighters and Ground Search and Rescue Tax Credit to waive the requirement for volunteer firefighters to attend 20 per cent of meetings and training sessions in person. "The pandemic has made it challenging to maintain regular schedules but that has not altered the ongoing commitment of volunteer firefighters and search and rescue teams to keep Nova Scotians safe," said Allan MacMaster, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board in the February 25th announcement. The requirement did not apply to ground search and rescue workers, who will continue to be eligible for the credit as usual. The change now applies for the 2020 and 2021 tax years.

With Pandemic mandates expected to be rescinded on March 21st, if current trends continue, it is important to recognize the many volunteers who helped. On February 8, the Province passed a milestone in the assembly of COVID-19 rapid test kits - more than one million have now been prepared for students and others since last summer.

The government is investing another \$3.5 million to install state-of-the-art equipment in more ambulances in Nova Scotia, making them safer for patients and paramedics. The purchase of 78 power stretchers and 65 power loaders means that by the end of the year all Emergency Health Services (EHS) ambulances and patient transfer units will be outfitted with this modern technology. Power stretchers and power loaders allow patients to be lifted into ambulances with the push of a button. The equipment will be delivered over the next six weeks from the manufacturer, Stryker Canada, and the stretchers will be added to vehicles immediately. To ensure there is no disruption to patient care, loaders will be installed during planned vehicle maintenance between now and the end of the year.

Eligible post-secondary students will receive a one-time COVID-19 grant of \$875 to help them pay their bills. About 11,000 students who receive Nova Scotia Student Assistance qualify. The grant, which will not have to be repaid, represents a \$9.8-million investment in post-secondary students. To be eligible for the one-time grant, post-secondary students must be a Nova Scotia resident and qualify for and receive Nova Scotia Student Assistance. Students do not have to apply. The grant money will be automatically deposited into eligible students' bank accounts in March.

Adoption records will become open in Nova Scotia on May 1 when the Province's Disclosure Program will begin accepting applications under the Adoption Records Act. This legislation allows adopted people, once they turn 19, and birth parents to access their information if they want to. A disclosure veto is a document stating an adopted person or a birth parent does not wish to share information that can identify them. With a contact notice, people share identifying information and state how they want to be contacted or that they don't want to be contacted. As of May 1, these privacy tools will continue to be available if the adoption information has not already been shared. Under the new legislation, people who have previously indicated they want to keep their information private are still required to fill out a privacy tool. As of February 15, the Disclosure Program had received a total of 192 privacy filings (disclosure vetoes and contact notices).

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office and we will assist in the best means necessary.

As the provincial restrictions begin to ease, I look forward to getting out to more local events in our community. Please contact

our office with any upcoming events or activities you would like me to attend.

Dr Stephen Ellis is MP for Cumberland-Colchester and can be reached at 902-895-2683, or E-mail: stephen.ellis@parl.gc.ca

News from our Provincial Council

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introduced to ensure new infrastructure is Climate Change compliant, so to speak, there will be some very dramatic changes at that location. Today's standards require the new bridge be 9 feet higher and the channel be twice as wide. It will be a large bridge and there will be challenges with its design and placement.

There were / are three options under consideration:

Option 1: Is exactly where the existing bridge is and the store would have to go.

Option 2: To locate on the Birch Hill side requiring the loss of the old warehouse, the Elliott Home and a part of the store.

If you are wondering why it would impact the store with it down as far as the Elliott house, it is because the change or the radius of the turn coming off the bridge requires Maple Ave would have to be shifted to the west to legally intersect Trunk 2. Thus impacting the store.

Option 3: The third option is on the Maple Ave side which will require cutting in across the west end of the Veterans Memorial Park and taking a piece of the parking lot and entrance. This would

mean replacing the entrance and enlarging the existing parking lot.

However, the Loggers Park would need to be relocated as it would cross right over the existing mill to a stop sign at a reconfigured Maple Ave. As you can see, none of these are ideal. However, leaving that old bridge there is not an option. The Department of Public Works has tentatively chosen Option 3.

I will be arranging a meeting with both the Heritage Association (Loggers Park) and the Veterans Park Committee, Dominion Chair ownership and staff with Public Works in the very near future. Once we have met and worked our way through challenges I will have a public meeting to address concerns of local residents.

That's about it for now. Next month, I will be much more positive, the sun will have much more strength and possibly there may be a flower bulb trying to peak up through.

Tom Taggart is MLA Colchester North and can be reached at tom.taggartmla@gmail.com or 902-641-2335.

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online cognitive behaviour therapy modules address anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress. The two-year pilot program is a partnership between Department of Justice's Public Safety Division, the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment, and Medavie. The program includes a combination of secure email and phone calls, and runs eight to 16 weeks depending on need of the individual.

New License Allows Paramedic Graduates to Work Sooner - A new temporary license will mean graduating paramedics can start working in their field sooner, thanks to a new policy approved by the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia. Graduates of Medavie HealthEd's Primary Care Paramedic Program within Nova Scotia and equivalent accredited programs elsewhere in Canada are now eligible for a restricted temporary license.

It allows them to work under the supervision of a paramedic with at least two years of practical experience while they wait to write the Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators exam and gain full licensure. The Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators exam is offered four times each year. Depending on the availability of spaces and graduation timing, some graduates waited months to write the exam and get their license.

The temporary license means graduates can start working up to six months sooner. Other professional colleges in Nova Scotia, including those for nurses, physiotherapists and midwives, also use restricted temporary licenses to give graduates an opportunity to get on-the-job experience without delays.

Province Innovating to Train Healthcare Workers Faster - The Departments of Advanced Education and Health and Wellness, along with Nova Scotia Health, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Toronto-based Michener Institute of Education at University Health Network. The Michener Institute specializes in applied health sciences education and provides training opportunities for critical positions within the healthcare system.

The MOU establishes a relationship with the institute to explore innovative opportunities to increase training capacity for positions that are in demand in the Nova Scotia healthcare system. With the MOU in place, work will begin immediately to identify priority program areas, training delivery and funding.

I remain deeply appreciative of the opportunity to be your MLA. If you know of anyone who would be interested in receiving my newsletter, please have them call the office.

Dave Ritcey is MLA, Truro - Bible Hill - Millbrook - Salmon River and can be reached at mlaritcey@bellaliant.com or 902-897-0884. e-mail at mlaritcey@bellaliant.com

News from our Municipal Council - District 9

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proved the Community Energy & Emissions plan as presented by Joanna Burris. She presented a very organized and effective plan to transition Colchester to renewable energy and reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions between now and 2050.

I would like to take a moment and possibly each time I write an article to highlight one of our wonderful businesses found here in District 9.

This Month I would like to provide a shout-out to Dave's Service Center. The owner is Dave Rushton and his wife Shawn. Dave and Shawn have owned the garage since 1997. Although the pumps are now gone, they are an asset to the community by providing a place for you to bring your vehicle to be serviced both professionally and promptly. Always very friendly and a huge supporter of our community by offering gift cards for a local fundraiser. They are always of the first ones to be involved in Debert Days with their community spirit and well-decorated floats in the parade. They keep the Debert Community Center plowed in the winter at no charge to our community. They also took it upon themselves to plow the Mi'kma'wey Debert Interpretive Trail so winter enthusiasts who love the trail no matter the season, can have easy access to it. Thank you for all you do!

Before I sign off, I wanted to say thank you to all the businesses and community members far and wide that have supported and sent donations to date, toward the creation of Heart's Haven Memorial Park. Craig and Hilary at the Municipality have also put a lot of time into the design of the park with the help of Cobequid Consulting Ltd based out of Economy, NS.

We still have a bit to go to reach our goal of \$250,000 for the park, but things are coming along nicely, and I have full expectations that we will reach that goal. We are hoping to have most funds raised by the first of March in hopes to break ground this Spring. If you would like to help, you can reach out to me to discuss this as I am consulting and working with the families and municipal recreation staff on this park as a community member.

Donations can be made to The Municipality of Colchester as they are holding the funds in trust and can offer tax receipts. There is also a go fund me page under Heart's Haven Memorial Park. Stay up to date with the Facebook page Darcy O'Brien has created where she has fundraisers happening there in the park's name.

Take care, stay safe and be kind to one another. Here's hoping the start of this phase 3 plan is here to stay and we can all continue to move forward and enjoy life with fewer restrictions!!

Marie Benoit is Colchester Councillor for District 9 and can be reached at 902-324-9011 or mboenoit@colchester.ca

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