

# PAGE BRIEFS

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will improve the quality of life in rural communities.” The chamber represents more than 400 member businesses and has been advocating on their behalf of more than 128 years.

**Nova Scotia has launched** The Mineral Resources Development Fund supports grassroots prospecting to more advanced mineral exploration. The fund replaces the \$400,000 Mineral Incentive Program, which was created in 2012. This year \$700,000 is available for mineral exploration programs, professional development, innovation, university research and training opportunities for young people. The Mineral Resources Development Fund has seven funding streams that focus on: early-stage prospecting and exploration; shared funding for more advanced exploration projects; marketing; research; education, outreach and engagement; innovation and major projects that may include regional exploration surveys, remote sensing, equipment purchases and more. Applications are now being accepted. More information about the fund and applications are available at <https://novascotia.ca/natr/meb/mrdp.asp>

**Amendments to the Maintenance Enforcement Act** and regulations will improve collection of court-ordered child and spousal support payments were passed by the House of Assembly in 2016. The changes increase the program’s administrative authority to enforce orders, locate payors and share information. The newly proclaimed amendments will: allow program staff to revoke, suspend or prohibit renewal of drivers licences and vehicle permits for payors in default without notice; improve the flow of information between the courts and the program; simplify the process for dealing with payments that have gone unclaimed and transfer cases where administrative fees are owed to Service Nova Scotia for collection. The Maintenance Enforcement Program collects and pays out about \$232,000 a day to families. It supports 14,200 Nova Scotia families. About 15,000 children rely on support payments made through this program. Nearly 96 per cent of all recipients in the program are women. For more on the Maintenance Enforcement Program, visit <https://mep.novascotia.ca/en/resources>

**Tourism Nova Scotia** has partnered with SinoMedia, one of China’s leading media corporations, to deliver a sales and marketing strategy that will inspire Chinese travellers to purchase more Nova Scotia holidays. The value of Tourism Nova Scotia’s contract with SinoMedia is \$150,000.

**The TV series, Forgive Me**, produced by Three Times Penitent Pictures Inc., has been approved for a Nova Scotia Film and Television Production Incentive Fund commitment of \$107,258 based on an eligible Nova Scotia expenditure of \$369,856.

**The feature film, Spinster**, produced by Sea Green Pictures Inc., has been approved for a Nova Scotia Film and Television Production Incentive Fund commitment of \$188,381 based on an eligible Nova Scotia expenditure of \$649,590. More details about productions approved for incentives through the Nova Scotia Film and Television Production Incentive Fund are available on the NSBI website at: <http://www.nsb.ca/filmfunding>

## May 13th Last Day of Sunday School

*By Chris Urquhart*

May 13th is Mother’s Day and also the last day of Sunday School until the fall. Try to be in Church that Sunday as there are often special events happening! I personally wish to thank Megan Donkin and those others who have helped her teach Sunday school this past year. Megan does a remarkable job.

The Masstown United Church would like to thank Wayne Elliot and Friends for the lovely Gospel Concert they put on on Sunday April 15th at the Debert United Church. Thanks also to the Masstown UCW ladies for the lovely lunch, and a special thanks to all of you who came out and enjoyed this concert! The funds raised will go towards expenses.



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### News from our Federal Capital

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eral reasons. Health is the most obvious reason: Canadians who have good coverage and can afford their medicines are healthier than those who don’t and can’t. Second is cost: the down-stream acute care costs of emergency room visits and intensive care stays vastly outweigh the cost of most drug therapies. The productivity and quality of life of all Canadians would be enhanced by universal drug coverage.

Third is savings: returning to that 26th place in the OECD, Canadians pay—through their taxes, their insurance premiums, out of

pocket—billions more per capita than they need to be paying for drug coverage. Every year it is like setting about \$4.2 billion dollars on fire. We get no better health outcomes for that money. National pharmacare would realize those savings, possibly even more.

Implementing national pharmacare will take federal and provincial co-operation, but the economics, health and ethics arguments all point in favour, and I am sure all governments in Canada will take notice, and take action.

**Bill Casey is MP for Cumberland-Colchester and was chair of the committee which just presented the 128 page report.**

### News from our Provincial Capital

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the capacity it gives us to invest in programs and services for Nova Scotians. Our success with improving the fiscal health of the province has allowed us to make increased investments in health care and education. We will continue to work with doctors across the province to support them as they deliver quality care to Nova Scotians.

The Mental Health and Opioid Addiction needs of Nova Scotians, including our youth continue to require increased funding. A total of \$300 M is included in this budget to increase and expand services and supports to those in need. This expansion includes rural Nova Scotia. In addition \$266 M toward Home Care and Continuing Care will allow seniors to stay in their homes longer, and the Care Giver allowance has been extended to provide financial support for family members who are caring for their loved ones at home.

The Pre-Primary program provides an option for parents of 4-year olds. It is a free, full day play-based program delivered in our schools. Teachers have told us the benefits of such a program better prepare students as they enter Grade Primary. This is an option for all 4-year olds and their parents, regardless of socio economic

conditions. For some families, childcare is not financially possible. The Pre-Primary program is free.

The population of our province is the highest it has ever been. For the first time, more young people are staying in Nova Scotia than leaving. The province has made it possible for young graduates to get a job here by providing incentives for businesses to hire them. The Graduate to Opportunity and Innovate to Opportunity programs are designed for that purpose. Over 500 young graduates have been hired through those programs. In addition to getting a job, graduates are often faced with student debt.

The province provides assistance to students upon graduation. All Nova Scotia student loans will be forgiven (don’t have to be paid back). This amount is up to \$6 800 per year for 5 years, so for those eligible for the full amount, it is \$34 000. That is the amount of debt the student would be no longer required to pay.

These are some of the highlights of the 2018-19 budget. For information on these programs or others, please contact my office at 902-641-2200.

**Karen Casey, MLA, Colchester North is also Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance of Finance**

### News from our Municipal Council - District 10

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have been for some time engaged in budget deliberations. This has always been a long and engaging debate, as well it should be. This year has been no exception, in fact it is more drawn out and quite frankly it is quite, shall I say testy. (That is a polite understatement). However, in my mind that is an OK thing as it just shows the engagement all councillors have in ensuring residents of their district and in our Municipality are treated fairly and in a financially re-

sponsible way.

I will not go on and on about all the financial pressures, only comment we will have set the tax rate by next month. I will attempt, at that time, to explain the rational.

Enjoy. Tom.

**Tom Taggart is Colchester Municipal Councillor for District 10.**

## Cannabis Conferences Update

*By Maurice Rees*

At council’s committee meeting on April 12th, Councillor Parker asked for an update on staff investigations in various cannabis conferences he had brought to council at the February council committee meeting. Economic Development officer, Mark Austin, reported he intends on attending conferences in Toronto and Saint John, NB, as a delegate, but not have a display booth.

Austin’s update indicated he had not made contact with representatives of companies, who might be interested in locating in Colchester, but would attend the conference to consult with exhibitors and delegates. Austin’s observation is there is a lot of rationalization going on in the industry with larger players forging partnerships or acquiring small companies, but there does not seem to be much movement in companies seeking to establish new facilities in other geographical areas.

Austin will allocate more time to contact major companies to see if he can set up meetings. He concluded his update he will report back to council to see if strategy meetings are established and if a representative from council should accompany him to attend the conferences.

Staff investigated the conferences as mentioned by Councillor Parker along with other conferences on the topic of cannabis as a business. The conference in Victoria, BC is a smaller, more regionalized one that will not likely have any national or multi-national companies in attendance. The conference being held in Saint John, NB, is affiliated with major players within the industry. A conference in Toronto in the Spring is part of the same circuit. Research

carried out by staff thus far show that it would be best to attend relevant conferences to explore opportunities, gather information and marketing materials, and make contacts and secure meetings beforehand rather than setting up booth space at these conferences. With approval from the CAO, the Economic Development Officer plans to attend the Saint John and Toronto conferences pending securing appointments in advance. Moved by Councillor Cooper Seconded by Councillor Gibbs “That Council defers its decision pending staff securing confirmation of opportunities and specific appointments.”

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