

# PAGE BRIEFS

## May 2020

**A fatal collision** occurred on Hwy. 104 on April 16 when a pickup truck struck a pedestrian between Exits 13 and 14 in the eastbound lanes. The truck driver was not able to avoid the pedestrian. The pedestrian, a 40-year-old man from Moncton, died at the scene. The truck driver was not physically injured. Eastbound traffic on Hwy. 104 was closed between Exits 13 and 14 for several hours while RCMP officers, with the assistance of a Collision Analyst, were on scene. The investigation into the cause of the collision is ongoing.

**Covid-19 continues** to play havoc with a variety of conferences and meetings. Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) has cancelled its semi-annual meeting and trade show scheduled for Truro and FDIC Atlantic has decided to cancel the conference scheduled for this year in Wolfville.

**Scott Farmer** has been appointed the new deputy minister of Environment, replacing Frances Martin who retires on April 30. Mr. Farmer has served as associate deputy minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services since 2015. The appointment becomes effective on May 1, 2020.

**More than 400** Tim Hortons restaurants along Canadian highways are open to truck drivers to provide food and drink service at the counter. Clean washrooms - which are sanitized at least every 15 minutes - will be open.

**The Bay of Fundy Shore** got some much needed publicity on Easter weekend, when a film segment "Fundy Strippers on the Rocks" produced by Fish'n Canada with actual footage of out around the coastline, Brick Hills, Five islands etc aired on Global at 8:30 pm on April 11<sup>th</sup>. There was a short segment, which was shot at the former Cobequid Interpretive Centre, renamed to Cliffs of Fundy Geopark Welcome Centre. The program was also available on [www.fishncanada.com](http://www.fishncanada.com) and was aired a total of three times.

**Jacqueline Foster** has joined Nova Scotia Power as senior communications advisor and will be the Shoreline Journal's contact for media requests. Previously she was involved in the broadcast industry, but more recently she part of the communications team for health with Nova Scotia Government.

## Climate Plan Action Plan Soon

**Maurice Rees**

Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, advised that staff are currently working on the Climate Action Plan with the aim to get it before Council at the end of the month. Discussion was held regarding Debert activities including Debert Airport, archaeology and plans for residential development. Mr. Macpherson talked about past directives of Council focusing on updating infrastructure, development of commercial lands, the roundabout and the airport.

There has never been direction on a plan for residential

development. If Council would like to make a motion or give direction to that effect, staff would begin to investigate.

Councillor Taggart indicated that with the cancellation of the Annual Conference, FCM is still in the process of determining FCM Board Elections. Deadline for submissions for the Election is still May 18th. Council Committee passed a motion to select Councillor Taggart's name go forward as a nominee to the FCM board of directors.

Council assumes all costs associated with Councillor Taggart attending FCM's Board of Directors meetings."

## OP-ED

### Recognizing the Magnitude and Consequences of Decisions

*(Editors Note: In mid-March a submission from Tom Taggart did not get transmitted when he submitted a photo taken at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) March Board Meeting).*

*In addition to the submission printed below, he made the following interim comments:*

**By Tom Taggart**

*I have been very involved over the past three weeks with FCM rural Caucus and as well as writing letters to staff at FCM who are in regular contact with Federal ministers or staff at a very senior level advocating in support for two different very critical situations in Rural Colchester. I cannot elaborate at this time due to Confidentiality but hope to eventually get OK from those industry leaders to make comment.*

*I will say, I believe I am very fortunate to be in the position currently am in my role at FCM and believe the past three weeks have really proven the value of having someone in a position of tenure/ seniority at FCM which I will say quite frankly has the ear of very senior government officials during a time when the National Government is understandably struggling under the weight and scope of the Covid-19 crisis and often turn to Municipal leaders recognizing that they truly are closest to the people.*

*I will do my best to speak on FCM without breaching confidentiality next Month. Attached is what I thought I sent last month:*

Hello from Federation of Canadian Municipalities and my update from the March Board meeting in St Hythycyne, Quebec. I first want to briefly explain the role. FCM is a board of 65 elected Municipal leaders, elected at large, by their peers from across Canada who advocate Federally, on behalf of our Municipalities. The board discusses / debates and decides potential policies our staff will lobby/ advocate the Federal Government in support of greater good for all Municipal regions across Canada. As well as updates on current Government policy and funding programs and direction. Keep in mind what I speak of is not Government policy only what we are asking for.

Typically these are four days of meeting beginning at 8:30 am and ending anywhere from 4:30 to 7 pm. We all have assigned committees, I have Election readiness, Conference planning, Standing Committee for Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Foreign Affairs and Most importantly, Rural Forum which I am Vice Chair. Far too much to detail in total but I will try to provide the highlights from my point of view.

This report will be a tale of two timelines so to speak, pre Covid and post Covid. Cer-

tainly Covid and its impacts were part of the overall discussions, but nothing like it is today. When I look back at our meetings it seems long ago even though yesterday was my 14 day anniversary from returning home. Amazing how your view or priorities change in 14 days.

Imagine, 65 politicians, and probably 20 staff who work closely together, meeting for the first time in four months. Shaking hands steadily, group photo's, evening receptions you name it. Then, within 7 days we are all self isolating and warning people not to meet in groups.

So pre covid we debated and were given updates on upcoming Federal funding announcements almost all connected to climate change. Set direction on what Municipalities would advocate for in the next Federal Budget. Longer term begin to strategize the approach to Advocacy across all parties in the future, (anybody's guess) election. We were briefed on what was supposed to be a several hundred million dollar announcement on March 17 that was to be used for renewable energy upgrades to reduce GHG, both Municipally and well as for our communities. I will speculate that many of these worthy government investments, whether affordable housing, infrastructure or Climate change will, most likely be pushed to the back burner given the financial challenges the Federal Govern-

ment is facing at this time dealing with Covid-19.

Having said this the past few days have been a series of Conference calls and skype meetings in an effort to inform and influence from a rural point of view, funding policy to soften the financial challenges of rural residents and business. To attempt to understand what common challenges we will face whether it be 2 months, 6 months and 12 months out.

Clearly, they vary across Canada, however the most prominent concern is for those, often our more vulnerable, that will be impacted by required closure of many non-essential business in the service industry. How will this impact our communities! The need to ensure that the \$82-Billion in emergency support can be rolled out quickly and what role Municipalities might play. At the FCM board level there is recognition that rural communities and their residents often face different and unique challenges and may require unique solutions.

Overall, my personal belief is that National and Provincial governments have done a good job in managing the medical or community quarantining challenges. Without question, in hindsight, we will be able to critique some decisions and timing. However we must recognize the magnitude and consequences of the decisions they make. Think about being in their shoes right now.

**Tom Taggart is Colchester Municipal Councillor for District 10 and is one of four Nova Scotia Municipal Officials who sit on the FCM Board of Directors**

## Broadband Questions Answers

With the arrival of Covid-19 and the provincial "state of Emergency" announced by the provincial government, Develop Nova Scotia has provided answers to some frequency asked questions concerning implement of broadband service contracts announced in February, which included a \$60-Million project for Cumberland and Colchester. The data is presented below:

**Q. With many people working from home, the March 30 announcement of schools remaining closed until at least May 1 as well as school lessons transferring to online and through mailed at-**

**home learning packages, what are you doing to help speed up Internet access throughout the province?**

We understand the importance of reliable high-speed Internet access, especially as a support to the delivery of health care and education. We can assure you that this is a top priority to us and we're working diligently to move existing projects forward by inviting project partner ingenuity, advancing the next round of improved projects, and identifying opportunities to providing interim community-based access to high-speed Internet. We hope to be in a position to

share more in this regard very shortly.

**Q. A project was announced in my general area in February. How do I know if my home or business will be affected?**

Now that contracts are signed, projects are underway. Service providers are working on additional engineering required to refine their plans down to specific street- and address-level detail. More information on those details will be available from the service provider, as plans are finalized and we'll ensure that detail is shared with you. As work proceeds, impacted Nova Scotians will be notified by service providers as to when and how their homes and businesses can be connected. We thank

you for your patience during this time.

**Q. How do I know my house won't be left behind?**

The projects announced in February include approximately half of the unserved and underserved homes and businesses in Nova Scotia. We know where homes and businesses remain unserved and underserved across the province and all of these areas are included in the second RFP currently in market.

Our mandate is to cover more than 95% of Nova Scotia homes and businesses - and we're confident we can meet and exceed this goal, working to get as close to 100% as possible.

**Keep an eye out for pedestrians... DRIVE CAREFULLY**

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