



Shown above are many of the Portapique residents who attended the Community Spirit Award presentation on April 13th at the Peg. Left to right are: John Hudson, Bjorn Merzbachm holding the award, Sherry Turner, Erin MacKinnon, Bill MacKinnon, Angela Shannon, and Andrew MacDonald. (Contributed)



Lt Gov Arthur J LeBlanc and wife, Bella, are shown seated amongst many of the Portapique youth who attended the presentation of the Lt Gov's Community Spirit Award to the community of Portapique at a presentation ceremony held at the Peg, Masstown on April 13th. (Contributed)

Portapique Receives Community Spirit Award

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 showing what the community is all about. Taggart forecasted on the path they are now on, residents are showing what the community is all about and Portapique will become one of the leading communities along the shore. He added they will use the new playground and other almost unique things forming part of the "build-up" project as an iconic "go-to" community.

The event was emceed by local resident and hall trustee, Andrew MacDonald. "The award celebration gave the community something positive to focus on at a difficult time," said Hirtle. "It was a wonderful evening of friendship and camaraderie."

Up to four Nova Scotian communities are honoured each year. Recipients are chosen by a selection committee based on community applications that best fit the award's criteria. Communities selected for the award promote citizen engagement, civic pride and a positive outlook on the future.

After the events of April 2020, the residents of Portapique came together; a new sense of community

was formed, and a plan was created to move forward in a positive way. With the support and leadership of the Rotary Club of Truro, the Community Build Up + project was formed.

So far, \$433,000 in cash has been donated to the project, and \$86,000 of in-kind donations. A beautiful playground designed and constructed by Cobequid Consulting has been installed, and plans have been finalized for a new, larger community hall which should break ground in May. The total estimated cost of the project is \$822,000 which means \$300,000 of in kind and cash donations are still needed to complete this project.

"We're very excited to be starting Phase 2 of the Build Up + Project," said Hirtle. "The new Portapique Community Hall will offer programming for residents from multiple partners, including the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning, and Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre. It's going to be a resource for residents all along the shore to use."

Donations can be made through the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia

www.weriseagainfund.ca
 Donations larger than \$20 will qualify for a charitable tax receipt.



This large poster greeted attendees to the Community Spirit Award ceremonies at the Peg on April 13th. (Rees Photo)

Spring Legislative Session Ends

The spring session of the Nova Scotia Legislature wrapped up on April 22. The government passed a budget with investments in health-care and passed legislation to support Nova Scotians and help them start families, dismantle racism and hate and enshrine Mi'kmaq as Nova Scotia's first language. The government also tabled Action for Health, a strategic plan to address recent and longstanding issues in health-care.

Budget 2022-23: Solutions for Healthcare, Solutions for Nova Scotians includes a \$5.7 billion investment in health-care and solutions to improve the Province's workforce, economy, housing and roads.

As part of the budget, amendments to the Income Tax Act were passed that will help Nova Scotians start a family. The government will offer a refundable tax credit equal to 40 per cent of the cost of fertility treatments provided by a Nova Scotia-licensed medical practitioner or infertility treatment clinic and for surrogacy-related medical expenses. This measure makes Nova Scotia the first province in Canada to provide this kind of support for surrogacy, including for the 2SLGBTIQ+ community who previously had no option but to pay the full cost.

The session began with the Premier delivering a statement on the war in Ukraine and Volodymyr Zelensky's leadership during the crisis. Members of the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor)

Memorial Day Act, put forward by the Official Opposition, to create a memorial day each November to commemorate the millions of Ukrainians who died at the hands of a dictatorship-led famine ninety years ago.

The Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, developed by an all-party committee following extensive engagement with Nova Scotians, was also introduced this session and outlines the government's approach to addressing systemic racism, hate and inequity. It also commits to developing a provincial strategy and a health equity framework by July 2023.

"Last session the government passed 22 pieces of legislation. This session we passed another 31 important bills that will make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians," said Premier Houston. "We have an ambitious mandate to fix healthcare, increase housing, protect the environment and rebuild the economy and legislation passed this session will help us move forward."

Among other legislation passed:

Amendments to the Electricity Act to protect solar homeowners and small businesses in the solar industry;

Amendments to the Public Utilities Act that will push Nova Scotia Power to ensure that ratepayers have reliable, cleaner power and further hold the utility accountable for how it delivers electricity;

Amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Charter to help streamline, improve and shorten the approval process for residential housing developments;

Enable the government to create a wine authority to administer a quality standards program for Nova Scotia wines;

Amendments to the Liquor Control Act to permanently allow third-party delivery of alcohol with food orders;

Amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act will permit the safe operation of electric kick scooters (e-scooters) on municipal roadways

Highlights from Budget 2022-23 include:
 \$14.5 million more to make virtual care available to everyone on the Need a Family Practice Registry;
 \$3.2 million to add 200 new nursing seats, at Cape Breton University (28), Dalhousie University (26), St.

Francis Xavier University (26) and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) (120 practical nursing);

\$2.1 million to address surgery backlogs due to COVID-19 at IWK Health Centre and to fund more cataract surgeries in the province;

\$22.9 million to continue delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters to Nova Scotians;

\$3.4 million more to expand mental health virtual care, including hiring 22 clinicians over two years, for Community Mental Health and Addictions outpatient clinics and enhancing virtual care services at emergency departments;

\$1 million to open the province's first mental health acute day hospital at the QEII Health Sciences Centre;

\$66.3 million to provide continuing care assistants (CCAs) with the highest wages in Atlantic Canada;

introduction of the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades program, which, starting in the 2022 tax year, will return provincial personal income tax paid on the first \$50,000 of earnings for eligible people under the age of 30;

\$15 million more for affordable housing programs and \$2.7 million more for new rent supplements associated with quick start investments;

\$113.2 million investment in child care, including lower fees for families, creating more spaces and enhancing after-school care (fully recoverable from the federal government under the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement);

\$54.2 million increase for programs that support adults and children with disabilities;

\$12.5 million for the Nova Scotia Child Benefit to support reducing childhood poverty;

\$29.2 million from Municipal Affairs and Housing as the provincial share of green projects and transit projects under the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program—\$507.8 million for Nova Scotia's roads, highways and bridges, including a new \$30-million envelope for bridge repair and renewal and \$20 million more for gravel roads.

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