The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

Continued from page 9

Additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine this spring

Nova Scotians who are eligible can get an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine this spring.The last day to get your additional dose is June 30th, and COVID-19 vaccines will be offered again in the fall.

The following groups are strongly encouraged to receive an additional dose this spring:Adults aged 80 and older;Adult residents of long-term care or other senior congregate living settings and Individuals aged 6 months and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised.

Anyone aged 65 and older can also get an additional dose this spring.A minimum of three months is required between doses of COVID-19 vaccine,or after a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Vaccine protection can decrease over time. Keeping up to date with COVID-19 vaccines is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your loved ones against serious illness, hospitalization, and death from the infection.

You can book appointments for the vaccines at your local pharmacy online at novascotia.ca/vaccination, or by calling 1-833-797-7772. You can also call to book with your physician, primary care provider, or attend a Public Heath Mobile Unit clinic (www.nshealth.ca/PHMU).

More information about COVID-19 vaccine at www.nshealth.ca/coronavirusvaccine. Additional information about where and how to get seasonal vaccines, including COVID-19 and influenza vaccines, can be found at **www.nshealth.ca/seasonalvaccines**.

Small business confidence loses momentum amid rising energy costs

The long-term small business confidence index lost 9.5 points, dropping to 55.8 points in March, finds the March Business Barometer® by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB). "Just when we saw a glimmer of hope, fuel prices and supply chains are causing hardships again.The 12-month index improved gradually over much of the past year, though with some fluctuations, but this month, it has dropped sharply to levels recorded last fall," said Andreea Bourgeois, CFIB director of economics.

Several cost concerns increased this month, with the share of businesses worried about fuel costs jumping from 36% in February to 50% in March. Input product and raw material costs were top of mind for 44% of small firms, compared to 32% in February.

Average wage increase plans were steady at 2.2%, while price plans saw a big jump to 2.7% from 2.2% in the previous month.

Over half (57%) of small businesses also reported challenges with insufficient demand, up from 50% in February.This indicator has been above its historical average (38%) for two and half years, and is at its highest ever this month, save for March 2025 (59%).

"Weak domestic and international demand has been a major pain point for small business owners for the past two years, and we're already hearing concerns that high prices at the pump will put even more pressure on both businesses and consumers," said Simon Gaudreault, CFIB chief economist and vice-president of research. "There's still a lot of uncertainty, and so far, governments are failing when it comes to small business policies. While we may not be able to control much in the short term, it's crucial that Canada move quickly on projects that increase our domestic energy supply and capacity so that we can better weather future instability."

FCC AgriSpirit Fund open for applications

Farm Credit Canada is accepting applications for the FCC AgriSpirit Fund, which supports capital projects that help enrich the lives of rural Canadians.Applications are open to registered charities and non-profit organizations in rural Canada that partner with municipal, territorial, or provincial governments, as well as those that partner with First Nations, Inuit, or Métis governments and communities.

The fund supports projects in communities with fewer than 50,000 people. Projects can receive between $10,000 and $25,000, from a total available fund of $1.5 million. The application deadline for the 2026 fund is May 15.

Applicants can view the eligibility requirements, past projects and apply online by visiting www.fccagrispiritfund.ca. FCC will announce the selected projects in the late fall. Examples of past projects include construction or improvements to community buildings, refrigeration and equipment to support food waste reduction and recovery, projects that improve accessibility and inclusion, greenhouses, and initiatives related to agriculture and food.

Since inception of the FCC AgriSpirit Fund in 2004, FCC has supported 1,778 capital projects in rural Canada totaling $24 million in donations.

ACORN "Air Out" Soaring Power Bills in Downtown Halifax

On Tuesday April 14th at 12PM, Nova Scotia ACORN members gathered outside the Halifax Central Library to publicly display soaring electricity costs, hanging up real power bills to show the impact of rising rates on tenants across the province.

Nova Scotians experience some of the highest energy costs in the country, while NS Power enjoys an annual 9% profit margin approved by the province. Despite this, Nova Scotia Power sought approval to raise rates by another 3.8% in 2026 and 4.1% in 2027. While the Nova Scotia Energy and Regulatory Boards Tribunal has adjusted this proposal, rates are still expected to go up.

At the action, ACORN members hang real power bills on a

OP-ED

Dalhousie Fracking Research Deal, or no Deal?

By Danny Cavanagh

Nova Scotians should be asking hard questions about the province's ($30) million deal with Dalhousie University to study onshore natural gas. On paper, the agreement sounds like a serious research project. The province says it wants evidence, public engagement, and sound science. But when you read the contract itself, a different picture appears. This is not independent academic research in the usual sense. It is a government-directed project designed to support a policy goal the province has already chosen. The clearest clue is right in the agreement's opening language. The program is meant "to attract prospective companies to search for natural gas in the Province."

That matters. It means the purpose is not simply to learn the facts and follow them where they lead. The purpose is to help bring industry in. That should worry anyone who believes public research should serve the public, not act as a marketing tool for resource development. The province has structured this deal very carefully. Dalhousie is classified as an "independent contractor," which helps shield the government from liability if something goes wrong.

But at the same time, the university must follow the provincial direction. The agreement says the work will be carried out under the direction of the province's representative, the Executive Director of Energy Resources. In plain language, the government gets control without full accountability. That is not real independence. It is managed independently. It gets worse. The contract allows the province to terminate the agreement without cause, at its sole discretion, with only (30) days' notice.

That is a powerful message to any institution receiving public money. If the research starts pointing in a direction the government does not like, the province holds the financial kill switch. Even if no one ever says a word out loud, that kind of power shapes behaviour. People know where the boundaries are. And when ($30) million is on the table, the pressure to stay inside those boundaries is obvious.

The agreement also gives the province sweeping control over the research itself. All material produced under the contract becomes the exclusive property of the province. The government can publish it, publish only part of it, or choose not to release it at all. In other words, Nova Scotians are paying for the research, but the government alone decides what the public sees. That turns the normal idea of public research upside down.

If taxpayers fund the work, the findings should belong to the public. That is the basic democratic standard. Instead, this deal treats research as proprietary material to be controlled, managed, and, if necessary, buried. Even the researchers' freedom is restricted. Under the agreement, Dalhousie researchers may need provincial permission to use the material for non-commercial teaching purposes. Think about that for a moment. Scientists working at a public university could be forced to ask the government for permission to use their own publicly funded findings in the classroom. That is not academic freedom. That is political control. The same control applies to public communication.

Any press release or public communication connected to the project must be approved by the province before release. So, if researchers uncover something important about groundwater risk, community opposition, or poor economic value, they cannot simply speak freely to the public. Their message must first pass through government hands. Supporters of the deal may say oversight is normal in large public contracts. Some oversight is normal. But this goes far beyond basic administration. When the government controls the direction, owns all the data, vets every public statement, and can cancel the project without cause, it is not funding independent research. It is commissioning a report under political management. Nova Scotia deserves better than a ($30) million public relations exercise dressed up as science. If the province truly wants to understand the risks and benefits of onshore gas, it should guarantee full public release of all data, protect researchers' right to publish freely, and remove political veto power over communication. Anything less is not transparency. It is managed transparency, which usually means the public is only allowed to see what the government wants them to see. Clearly, public research should serve the public, not the government's talking points.

This is a link to the agreement - https://novascotia.ca/onshore-natural-gas/docs/Subsurface-Energy-RD-Investment-Program-Agreement.pdf

Danny Cavanagh, Retired Nova Scotia taxpayer and land owner. 902-957-0822