

REES' Pieces

Welcome Back, Recognizing Businesses

Time might be changing. During the past year there has not been much opportunity for businesses to celebrate and to congratulate one another while we were embroiled in some sort of CoVid-19 shut-down. Last week the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce was able to hold its Small Business Week festivities to congratulate a number of local businesses.

Having had to cancel events in 2020 the pent up demand to gather meet and celebrate was most evident in last week's ceremony. Business executives are getting used to wearing masks at such events. Eight local businesses were recognized for success in a variety of categories. (Photos and citations about the businesses are included elsewhere in this issue).

The chamber used the easing of CoVid restrictions to announce the launch of Live for Local Rally which will dole out \$15,000 in prizes to promote "shop local". During the CoVid crisis there has been a significant increase in online shopping mostly to businesses who take the money but do not contribute to the local economy.

Studies have shown that 70% of each dollar spent at a local business is returned to the local economy in wages, taxes, support of other business and various forms of participation with charities. To win prizes a customer is encouraged to upload a copy of a receipt of purchase made at any business in Colchester to be eligible for up to \$15,000 in prizes.

The Rally was launched at a Fall Celebration event at the RECC when Jackie Putnam provided background music while 150 chamber members and guests enjoyed an evening with Kilted Chef, Alain Bosse who has spend considerable time sourcing local ingredients for a variety of tasting samples how local products can be turned into a culinary delight.

Now that Small Business Week recognitions are back on track the return of congratulations and the celebration of local business is welcomed, but must not stop there. The Town of Truro is to be congratulated on being the first area / municipality in Nova Scotia to have 10 commercial building lots included in a certification program approved by the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporation. The program assures the length of time to go from property purchase to shovels in the ground is fast tracked as all the necessities have been included. According to media reports four of the ten lots in the Business Park on Young Street have already been sold.

The certification program is welcomed by Site Selectors and puts the Town of Truro as another option in the highly competitive global marketplace. It will be interesting to see how long it will take for Colchester to have properties in the Debert Business Park included in the program.

With an extensive inventory of available large and small lots available, the certification program could help propel Colchester nearer to the front of the provincial pact as a location to relocate or establish a new business. Debert's added attraction is that in addition to access to major highways, rail and sewer it also offers an additional service - the airport - which most other municipalities are not able to offer.

Yes, the airport needs major investment for upgrading, runways expanded and new infrastructure. That's a matter of a appropriate business plan, decision making and dollars. The gem in the back pocket is the basics are there, the room for expansion is not questionable and Debert has world wide recognition from its many years as a military base.

In addition to its geographical location of delivering within a 100 Km radius the largest population and business base of any area east of Montreal. One problem many areas face is traffic congestion and lack of housing. Debert excels in both areas, because within a stone's throw there are 100's of acres of raw land owned by the municipality, which could be developed for residential purposes for thousands of employees for potential business relocations.

The futuristic insight into the airport and availability of lands for residential development was not lost of former 20 year veteran councillor, Bill Masters, who passed away on October 18th. Master had advocated both needed prioritization by the municipality.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

MAIL TO: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, NS, B0M 1B0
(902) 647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Email: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com



Get your Flu Shot

Dear editor,

Family doctors are asking Nova Scotians to roll up their sleeves to receive a flu shot. This year, it's even more important to be vaccinated against the influenza virus and its complications.

That's because we worry about Nova Scotians getting sick with flu as our province continues to see cases of the highly contagious COVID-19 Delta variant. We all must stay well so hospital beds, emergency departments and testing centres are reserved for people who really need care, particularly as we enter the fourth wave of the pandemic.

Receiving your flu shot is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu. The flu shot is safe and free for all Nova Scotians six months of age and older.

We encourage everyone to get vaccinated, including people at high risk for complications from the flu, such as adults 65 years of age and older, children six months to five years of age, pregnant women, people with conditions like heart disease, asthma and diabetes, and Indigenous peoples (due to the high risk of complications and hospitalizations).

People at high risk of

COVID-19-related illness and people who could give the flu to them should also receive the influenza vaccine this fall.

Watch for information about flu shot clinics, if you don't have a family doctor, check out your local walk-in clinic or pharmacy. Clinics are being planned across the province and will follow public health measures to protect patients from COVID-19. You must be screened for COVID-19, wear a mask, clean your hands, social distance and follow any other instructions your doctor provides.

We expect demand for a flu shot to be high again this year. If you haven't already done so,

please book an appointment for your flu shot.

Remember: the flu shot will only protect you from the flu. We must all do our part to help prevent others from getting sick from COVID-19, particularly being fully vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine. It's also important to continue washing our hands, wearing a mask and keeping social distance. If you do get sick with symptoms that feel like the flu or COVID-19, it's important to get tested for COVID-19.

Dr. Heather Johnson is President, Doctors Nova Scotia

OP-ED

How a National Disability Income Benefit can improve my life – and so many others

By Sandy Carrier

The federal election is over. During the campaign, three political parties promised to help people with disabilities get out of poverty. The Liberal Party was one of them. They promised a national income benefit for people with disabilities. Now people like me are depending on them to follow through on that promise.

I'm one of the more than six million Canadians with a disability. More than 40 per cent of people who live below the poverty line in Canada have a disability.

Poverty makes my life challenging. COVID-19 has made it worse. A national disability income benefit would improve my life so in many ways. It would impact my social connections, my housing and my search for work.

COVID-19 has been an isolating experience for me. These days, people rely on technology and the Internet for education, socialization and work. After paying for rent and food, I don't have enough money to pay for home Internet. Canada has some of the highest Internet costs in the world.

Without Internet during the pandemic, I was lonely and limited in what I could do. Lockdown meant I couldn't go see my friends. Without Internet access, I couldn't even contact them easily. When events were offered online, I couldn't participate. I haven't been able to see some of my friends for close to a year.

Social connections are important for mental and physical health. Being connected to other people helps many of us get through tough times. These connections also help keep people safe in the community.

A national disability benefit could also help me find a better place to live. My choices are limited by my income. Subsidized housing in my province has long wait lists.

I have thought about moving many times. The shared laundry room, restrictions on pets and living near other people (espe-

cially during a global pandemic) are just a few of the reasons.

As much as I would like to move, with my income, I know it would be difficult. The moving costs and damage deposit are just too much.

People with a disability need a national income benefit that will raise us out of poverty and allow us to live with dignity.

Employment is complicated too. For lots of people with disabilities, we can't rely on it as steady income.

Although many companies talk about how important diversity is in the workplace, in my experience that diversity often ends with a disability. Even if you do get hired, provincial income support programs have strict rules about how much money people with a disability can earn. Going over the limit could mean losing access to health benefits - something that is terrifying for many people with disabilities!

I've tried to work many times in the past. So far, I haven't been able to find a job that supports me to be successful long-term.

A national disability benefit would help people like me improve our living conditions and be less isolated. It would have a positive impact on our health and wellness. We could afford more nutritious food. We could be part of recreation and social opportunities. It would give us time to find the right employer who values our strengths.

The promises made in this federal election are important. They are important to me. They are important to your friends, family members and neighbours who face the same barriers I do. You can help make sure our new government honours their promise to people with disabilities. Call, email or write to your local MP. Tell them why a national disability income benefit matters to you.

Sandy Carrier is an artist, self-advocate and advocate for people living with disabilities. She lives in Bathurst, NB. She was a member of the Income Security Advisory Committee for Inclusion Canada.

The Shoreline Journal

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PHONE: 902-647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Toll Free 1-800-406-1426; Cell: 902-890-9850 • E-MAIL: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

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