

“Fiona”, Not To Be Forgotten

By Linda Harrington

The name Fiona is not going to be forgotten by this generation of Maritimers after she slammed into Nova Scotia, PEI and Newfoundland on Sept. 24th into Sept. 25th with Category 2 wind speeds and torrential rains.

Power outages crippled the area with over 400,000 NS Power customers without power at Fiona's peak. The restoration was complicated by the massive number of trees on top of power lines, downed power poles and electrical masts ripped right off houses. Crews were brought in from across Canada and the US to assist with restoration. Military personnel were called up to help with tree removal. Three weeks after the hurricane there were still close to 600 customers in NS and 160 in PEI without power.

Generators and gas became hot commodities with line ups for fuel lengthy and stations running out of supplies. People had to have trees removed just to get out of their driveways. Those without generators lost food in fridges and freezers within a couple days.

Many residents suffered roof damage from loss of shingles and downed trees. Rain poured into their homes leaving interior damage and potential for mould. The more serious damages required people to relocate for what could be months while the repairs are made. There were many posts online of people looking for temporary housing, made difficult by the already shortage of housing in the area.

Masstown Market was one of many businesses incurring losses from Fiona. The roof on the bakery building was completely blown off leaving the inside vulnerable to the torrential rains. The day after Fiona, Market owner Laurie Jennings, many family members

and staff were busy relocating valuable equipment and supplies over to the main Market. Within a few days the roof had been replaced and the inside was being restored.

Lowland Gardens in Great Village had severe damage as well, losing the coverings on 5 greenhouses with some structural damage and the loss of over 25 mature trees on the property.

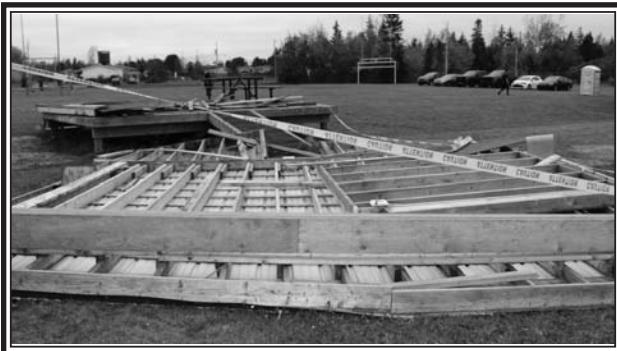
The former Saint James United Church in Great Village became quite an attraction with the winds of Fiona lifting the steeple to a 45-degree angle. A new diner had just opened the evening of Fiona and had to close until power was restored and the roof repaired. The steeple was eventually removed by a crane truck and set on the lawn, changing the historical look of this iconic church on the corner.

Communication was difficult following Fiona with most cell carriers having spotty service. Lines down everywhere meant no service from cable/phone and internet providers. Frustration grew when three weeks after Fiona, large number of customers were still without services and companies were not giving any idea of restoration time. MLA Tom Taggart spoke up in the NS Legislature on Friday, Oct. 14th on behalf of Colchester-North residents who had been emailing him with complaints addressing the lack of access to communications and concerns about medical emergencies. “One of the greatest challenges we faced in Colchester-North was the inability to communicate, to understand where we could go for help and to understand the depth of the destruction and how were our friends and neighbours,” said Taggart. He also complimented residents who had been helping their neighbours by sharing generators, food, helping with debris removal and providing warming shelters. The NS House of Assembly was debating the Emergency ‘911’ Act.

The weather cooperated in the days following Fiona and allowed the extensive clean-up to move forward and gave people time to secure their homes from further damage.

A few areas of concern became obvious. The province needs a more extensive plan in place to be ready for these disasters, individuals need to be prepared for what could be days if not weeks of power outages and regular maintenance on power/communication infrastructure needs to be a top priority.

More Fiona photos can be found on pages 10, 11, 18, 23, 24 and 26.



The Debert Days stage was completely demolished in Hurricane Fiona, after losing the canteen in a previous storm this year. Councilor Marie Irving-Benoit says she was in tears when she saw the destruction after the community worked so hard to get the buildings constructed. (Harrington Photo)



The Debert Days canteen building was destroyed in a storm back in January. (Harrington Photo)



Colchester's debris removal crew has been making great progress cleaning up roadside neighbourhood by utilizing a grapple loader truck to load large quantities of larger debris into large dump trucks. With a local shortage of grapple loaders, large dump trucks, flagging teams for traffic control, acquiring the infrastructure has been a mammoth problem. (Redden Photo)



Residents and volunteers have piled lots of debris roadside for removal crews employed by Municipality of Colchester. The removal teams have been concentrating on urban areas first. (Redden Photo)



Phil Redden, who Colchester contracted to head up the Fiona Clean-up team chose several grapple loader trucks to handle larger debris and to expedite the clean-up process with grapple trucks rather than removing debris by hand into compactor trucks. Loader operator can be seen checking to ensure he is not damaging curbs or edges of the lawn. (Redden Photo)



Colchester's waste hauler, Regroup have been using as many of their packer trucks as can be spared to handle smaller quantities of smaller debris that has been placed roadside. Debris removal is costing the municipality in excess of \$10,000 per day and is expected to take at least three weeks. (Redden Photo)

RCMP Charge a Man in Relation to Shots Fired at a Home

On October 10, 2022, Colchester County District RCMP has charged Zachary MacDonald, 30, in relation to shots fired at a home on McLeod Rd. in Manganese Mines. On October 9, 2022, at approximately 1 a.m., Colchester County District RCMP, Pictou County District RCMP, Millbrook RCMP and Truro Police Service responded to a complaint of shots fired at a house on McLeod Rd. in Manganese Mines.

Zachary MacDonald, 30, who have been remanded in custody appeared in Truro Provincial on October 11, 2022 has been charged with: Discharging a Firearm - Recklessness; Careless Use of a Firearm (two counts); Unsafe Storage of a Firearm;

Possession of a Weapon for a Dangerous Purpose; Unauthorized Possession of a Weapon; Unauthorized Possession of a Prohibited Weapon (two counts); Possession of a firearm knowing its possession is unauthorized and Possession of Prohibited Firearm with Ammunition.

RCMP officers learned that a number of gun shots were heard shortly before 1 a.m. and a loud vehicle was seen in the area minutes prior. There were no injuries sustained in the incident however the house incurred damage consistent with bullet holes. We do not believe this incident was random.

In the hours that followed, Colchester County District RCMP, assisted by an

RCMP police service dog team and the RCMP Emergency Response Team contained a home, on Willie Hoare Rd. in Manganese Mines, where a 30-year-old man, involved in the shooting, was located and arrested safely.

That same day, the man's vehicle was seized and a search warrant was executed at his house. During the search, RCMP officers located and seized two shotguns, a starter pistol, a switchblade and ammunition.

The investigation is ongoing and being assisted by the RCMP Forensic Identification Services.

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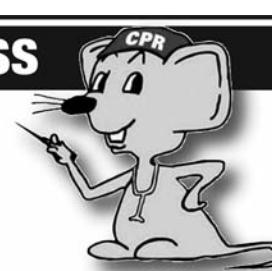
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