

The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

Programs to Enhance Affordable Housing

The Province is investing \$21.9 million in a suite of new and expanded sustainable development and energy efficiency programs that will support net-zero construction and the affordable housing sector. In collaboration with EfficiencyOne and other key partners, the Province is introducing two major programs - and strengthening two others - to help build affordable, green housing. The new programs are: The Affordable Rental Construction pilot (ARC), which will provide financial incentives to private and non-profit developers to build new net-zero or net-zero ready affordable housing. It aims to improve the financial viability of net-zero ready housing projects, reduce the operation and maintenance costs, and increase building quality and resilience. The New Home Research Project, to be launched by EfficiencyOne. It will offer energy efficiency evaluations, at no charge, for new homes built outside of Halifax Regional Municipality. The program will work with builders to collect data on building energy efficient homes, and builders will receive education to help them improve their work. The Province is also: Topping up EfficiencyOne's existing Affordable Multifamily Housing Program, which funds affordable housing providers' energy efficiency improvements, including windows, insulation and heating. As part of the program, housing providers must commit to long-term affordable rent. Funding the Building to Zero Exchange initiative to deliver training on the 2020 National Building Code of Canada. This training will empower the building sector to retrofit and construct net-zero buildings, supporting the Province's goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Continuing Care Assistants Practical Nursing Expanded

More continuing care assistants (CCAs) will be supported to become licensed practical nurses with the expansion of a pilot training program. The pilot CCA-Practical Nursing Bridging Program launched in January 2024 at the Truro campus of Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), helping 26 certified CCAs working in home care and long-term care to become licensed practical nurses. The Province is expanding the program to provide opportunities for another 25 certified CCAs at NSCC's Cumberland campus (Amherst Learning Centre) starting in January 2025. Continuing care assistants participating in the diploma program receive free tuition and books as long as they commit to work in continuing care in the province for at least two years after graduation. CCAs can work part-time while attending classes. Most classes are delivered online, with in-person labs taking place on campus about once a month. Investing in education and training opportunities to ensure the health needs of communities are met has been identified as a solution in Action for Health, the government's plan to improve healthcare in Nova Scotia.

Additional Support For Wine Industry

The Province has proposed new support for Nova Scotia's wine industry, which will increase funding available to wineries. The new program includes direct funding for farm wineries and commercial wineries, with the Province covering costs for a new wine authority and the development of a broader long-term wine sector growth plan. The proposed program enhancements are the result of months of consultation with the industry and aligns with the advice of an independent third-party report by Donna Sears and Terrance Weatherbee. Ms. Sears name was put forward by the farm wine working group, which was created to provide input on new wine programming. The farm wine sector has indicated that these supports, worth \$6.6 million, do not meet their asks, which total nearly \$14 million. As part of the proposed program enhancements, farm wineries would receive direct payments at a rate of 65 per cent, up from 50 per cent, for eligible products sold at Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation (NSLC) outlets. This represents an increase of \$1.6 million above existing supports of \$5 million for a total investment of \$6.6 million. Commercial wine bottlers would receive direct payments at a 35 per cent rate, with funding capped at \$1 million per fiscal year for each producer. The departments of Finance and Treasury Board and Agriculture and the NSLC will continue to work with the sector.

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One of the most urgent matters we are tackling in the Health Committee is the opioid epidemic and the toxic drug crisis that continues to plague our communities. We have heard harrowing testimonies from parents who have lost their children to opioid overdose, some as young as 13 years old. It is completely unacceptable that this crisis persists, and we must take immediate and effective action to address it.

In addition to our work on the opioid crisis, we are reviewing Bill C-277 and Bill C-368. Bill C-277 aims to establish a national framework for brain injuries, a measure that has garnered strong support from all committee members. Meanwhile, Bill C-368 focuses on protecting the natural health product industry from unnecessary bureaucratic red tape, ensuring that entrepreneurs can thrive without being hindered

by excessive regulations.

Furthermore, our office is preparing to review applications for the King Charles III Coronation Medal. We are excited to honor the recipients in an upcoming event, details of which will be announced soon. This recognition serves to celebrate those who have made significant contributions to our communities and exemplified the spirit of service.

As we move forward, let us continue to work together to support our communities, address critical issues, and celebrate the achievements of our dedicated citizens. I will continue to be your strong advocate at home and in Ottawa on issues that are important to the Cumberland and Colchester counties.

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about equalization payments. However, there did not appear to be a lot of affordability challenges. There certainly did not appear to be any lack of opportunity. For me, it is clear that they, their communities and their children have benefited tremendously from the oil and gas industry for years. They also joked that 1/3 of their work force was from N.S.

This is where I have been headed in this whole article. This is not new for me, I have written about it before. I personally believe that we in Nova Scotia have that very same opportunity before us. The difference is that our opportunity is in the new green economy, Wind Solar and Green Hydrogen. While I do not disagree with my Alberta friends that there will always be a need for petroleum, green energy is the future! Green Energy is going to make Nova Scotia prosper just as the oil industry has made Alberta prosper. There has been much debate within our communities about our wind energy being used to produce Green Hydrogen. I do really understand both sides of that debate. For me it really comes down to the discussion about how are we going to store that wind and solar energy. Will it be batteries, will it be Hydrogen or will it be some yet to come new technology.

I personally believe it will be Hydrogen. Additionally, it seems that the world investment community feels the same. There are

currently tens of billions of investment dollars being readied to be invested in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Not just Everwind Energy which is preparing to invest 1 billion dollars in Colchester North alone and another 6 billion in Canso. Other private equity investors are involved in what is called the Bearhead Wind project in Pictou County and I believe similar investment in and around the strait of Canso.

Again, I do understand the concern of those who feel that the wind turbines themselves or a perceived impact that the construction phase may have on them. However, I believe, I have a responsibility to look at the overall benefit to our communities. Again, I believe this hydrogen industry is growing and will become the leading source of green energy around the world. We in Nova Scotia have an opportunity to be leaders in this field. Think about the potential for our young people. Look at what the oil industry has done for the people of Alberta. We can have that same opportunity only in a clean, green carbon-free source of energy. Nothing in life comes easy and without risk or controversy. Undoubtedly there will be some challenges or bumps along the road. For me this is too great an opportunity to pass up!!

Tom

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one-time grants of up to \$50,000 to the organizations. Grief, bereavement and mental health supports will be available for all ages and could include: training in supportive grief and loss; development of digital and online information resources; individual and group programs; creation of indoor or outdoor designated spaces and outdoor activities designed to improve emotional health.

Recipients in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River were:

Canadian Mental Health Association, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants divisions (\$6,654,42) - they have collaborated with artist and author Holly Carr and the Portapique Community Build Up on the Holly Carr Story Trails Project, which connects art, nature and mental wellness through an interactive experience that generates safe discussion around the topics of fear, anxiety and hope

Colchester East Hants Community Hospice Society (\$39,167) - working through its Hug Centre (Hope and Understanding for the Grieving), the society's project will support children experiencing grief and bereavement

Millbrook First Nation/Millbrook Mental Health (\$46,350) - will provide a confidential and secure area where kids can process their emotions, build resilience and develop coping skills after experiencing trauma

STEPs on Arthur (\$4,801) - the STEPs into Music program aims to establish a music therapy program for people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues, serving 83 participants aged 20-70

Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce (\$17,600) - will provide wellness resources for businesses designed to support entrepreneurs and their employees; plans include events to

discuss mental health challenges entrepreneurs face, a social media campaign to promote mental health resources for entrepreneurs, a survey to understand members' needs, and discussions with business owners to create opportunities for meaningful connections

New Centre to Support More International Medical Graduates - Nova Scotia is opening an international medical graduate assessment centre in Halifax to help more internationally trained physicians become licensed to practise in the province.

The initiative will begin with four international medical graduates providing primary care for about 2,500 patients. Two Nova Scotia physicians will supervise the graduates and assess them for independent licensure.

Over time, the centre will expand to include five physician-led teams of up to three international medical graduates each. As the number of teams expands, so will the clinic's capacity, to about 6,400 patients. Graduates, who complete the 12-week assessment program and receive licensure, will be required to sign a three-year return-of-service agreement.

The centre takes over from Dalhousie University's Practice Ready Assessment Program, which did similar work, and since 2019, issued 39 licences. The timeline was about 18 months from the date of application to licensure.

It is anticipated that in one year, this new program will issue more licences than have been issued over the last five years. The duration of the new program is 12 continuous weeks, if the candidate meets all requirements.

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