

2020 Arthur Brown

Now that Highspeed broadband will be installed over the next three years in Cumberland and Colchester Counties in a \$60.1-Million project with XplorNet what additional infrastructure should Cumberland provide, within the program, to improve the local economy?



Arthur Brown

This massive investment includes \$3,327,600 from Cumberland taxpayers. That's enough. Instead, to improve the local economy, the County should focus on services a municipal government provides: emergency services, water, waste, building oversight, parks, recreation. That's the infrastructure that attracts new residents to reverse the declining population and rebuild the economy and the tax base.

What do you believe is the most important issue(s) for your District?

Our biggest problem is declining population. This shrinks the tax base and economic opportunities of the people remaining. We must reverse this decline. I've observed a trickle of people moving here from Ontario, drawn by the peace, beauty and incredible property values. We must turn that trickle into a flow. I'd find cost-effective ways to promote Cumberland's lifestyle and property values to people who live in more expensive parts of Canada.

Part of attracting and maintaining a stable population is having medical professionals. The province recently announced an initiative to fast-track nursing hires for covid. I'd advocate for incentives for those nurses to settle in Cumberland once covid abates.

Since tourism is a major part of District 8 economy what type of investments should the municipality make to assist the tourism sector?

Cumberland's strengths are physical beauty and friendly people. These should provide more tourism than currently. We've seen with the pandemic and loss of tourism how much we need it.

Thousands of people pass through Cumberland every day but never leave the Trans-Canada. I'd work on getting traffic to detour down Route 302 and take the Joggins-Advocate scenic loop or straight down to Parrsboro. They'd continue along the shore to get to Truro or Halifax, stopping along the way to enjoy the attractions, dine in restaurants, stop into shops.

I'd achieve this with much more signage at the exits, highlighting all there is to see from Joggins to Advocate to Parrsboro to Five Islands. I'd work with citizens to develop incentives to detour through Cumberland.

Chignecto Park is a major asset for the area. What should the municipality do to ensure continued improvement of the park so it becomes an even larger contributor to the local economy?

Chignecto Park is a provincial responsibility. The municipality should lobby the Province for continued improvement.

With real estate costs in urban centres and other provinces soaring to new heights, should Cumberland encourage former residents to "return" to their roots, become full time residents either in retirement or to purchase or start a business?

As stated above, attracting people from other provinces is key to reversing the population decline, rebuilding the economy, and expanding the tax base. Efforts shouldn't be limited to former residents of Cumberland. That's not a big enough audience.

Over the next three years the entire municipality will have broadband service equal to or better than what is available elsewhere in Canada. Home-based businesses or working from home continues to grow at a rapid pace. What opportunities do you visualize for Parrsboro or rural Cumberland?

I work from home and understand this. There are two target audiences: people with a home-based business, e.g., consulting, IT, financial services; and people for whom covid work-at-home (i.e., telecommuting) has become the new normal. In both cases, many are from the big cities. They hesitate to come here with the slow internet available in much of the County. Upgraded internet removes that barrier.

Also, current residents considering leaving the County to work in more prosperous parts of Canada won't all need to. Many will be able to telecommute to jobs in bigger centres.

Cumberland has many world renown attractions, including Fundy Geological Museum, Joggins Fossil Centre and how is headquarters for the Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark, which is expected to be an economic engine for tourism and sustainability growth over the next decade and far beyond. What leading role do you suggest Cumberland should play to maximize benefits from the UNSECO designation for the GeoPark?

Although the Geopark isn't a municipal responsibility, it's an attraction we should use to get travelers to divert from the Trans-Canada and travel down Route 302 and the Joggins-Advocate loop. I'd work with merchants and citizen groups to create incentives to bring tourists and other travelers through the Geopark.

What approach to municipal governance will you take to obtain the important things in your district?

Each district's Councillor trying only to get their "share of the pie" will lead to further decay in the County's finances. Instead, I'd find financial savings that failed to materialize from Parrsboro and Springhill joining the County. The County government continued to grow, along with spending, pushing up our property taxes twice. There are probably more increases coming. I want to freeze property taxes, conduct a line-by-line review of spending, find those savings, and then roll back property taxes to make life easier for current residents and to attract new residents. Regarding governance, the Parrsboro sewer upgrade was handled poorly, resulting in massive tax increases for Parrsboro residents. I'd put in place measures to prevent anything similar happening again.

What is most needed in District 8?

Reductions in property taxes, funded by increased tourism, economic growth, reductions in municipal spending, and a growing population.

What professional or personal experience do you bring to the council table?

Before raising alpacas, I had 30 years of financial and administrative experience, including a decade in government, mostly as a senior internal auditor. I've been Chair of the Audit Committee for a large public sector union and served on the municipality's Audit Committee. I know how to do a line-by-line review of the County's books and cut the duplication and overlap created by absorbing Springhill and Parrsboro.

As an agro-tourism business owner, I've an interest in increasing tourism in Cumberland and ideas to achieve that.

2020 Marchel Strong

1. Now that Highspeed broadband will be installed over the next three years in Cumberland and Colchester Counties in a \$60.1-Million project with XplorNet what additional infrastructure should Cumberland provide, within the program, to improve the local economy?



Marchel Strong

Ensure that the residents of District 8 have access to this technology by partnering with local community groups and make sure that it is affordable for everyone. Providing access to everyone will ensure fair employment opportunities to all. Faster, more reliable internet will prove attractive to those travelling to and staying in the area.

2. What do you believe is the most important issue(s) for your District?

I believe a major issue in our district is a lack of permanent employment. Creating more permanent jobs that pay a living wage, as opposed to seasonal employment, would promote greater opportunities for youth retention. Permanent jobs that provide our young people the opportunity to remain in their community and raise a family comfortably would ensure prosperity. In addition to providing ample opportunities to our young families, we also need to focus on the quality of life for our elderly citizens.

3. Since tourism is a major part of District 8 economy what type of investments should the municipality make to assist the tourism sector?

The municipality needs to streamline and simplify the grant application process. This will make it easier for small businesses to gain access to grant funds. The municipality could also assist the tourism sector by providing tax incentives to new and expanding small business.

4. Chignecto Park is a major asset for the area. What should the municipality do to ensure continued improvement of the park so it becomes an even larger contributor to the local economy?

The Department of Natural Resources maintains Chignecto Provincial Park. The promotion of events at the park leads to a great boost to surrounding businesses. With more tourists and hikers in the area, stores, restaurants and businesses providing accommodations benefit. The park and its assets should be promoted to attract people to the area. In addition, providing easier access points to the park for those with accessibility issues would ensure the park would be enjoyed by all.

5. With real estate costs in urban centres and other provinces soaring to new heights, should Cumberland encourage former residents to "return" to their roots, become full time residents either in retirement or to purchase or start a business?

Many changes have been brought about by Covid-19. With the low cost of homes in the area, our district could certainly attract young professionals to purchase homes and live a safe and happy life in District 8. With increased population in our district come more opportunities for new small business as well as expanding existing small business.

Deadline for the November issue of South Cumberland NEWS is Oct 20

6. Over the next three years the entire municipality will have broadband service equal to or better than what is available elsewhere in Canada. Home-based businesses or working from home continues to grow at a rapid pace. What opportunities do you visualize for Parrsboro or rural Cumberland?

A very large percentage of the population is now working from home and will continue to do so. With our new high speed broadband Internet; anyone can work successfully from our district. We will be able to promote access to employment and education via better Internet access. High speed will also be attractive to the growing businesses that will mainly operate virtually. In addition, arts, music, cultural events and educational opportunities will be accessible to everyone in District 8.

7. Cumberland has many world renown attractions, including Fundy Geological Museum, Joggins Fossil Centre and how is headquarters for the Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark, which is expected to be an economic engine for tourism and sustainability growth over the next decade and far beyond. What leading role do you suggest Cumberland should play to maximize benefits from the UNSECO designation for the GeoPark?

The municipality can help to promote these attractions through advertising and ensuring funding exists for this purpose. The municipality can also work to ensure these attractions are accessible to all, maximizing turnout.

8. What approach to municipal governance will you take to obtain the important things in your district?

My approach to municipal governance would be to ensure every constituent in District 8 had an avenue to voice his or her concerns. I will work diligently to ensure that the concerns of our residents were taken seriously and major issues were addressed.

9. What is most needed in District 8?

I believe good representation is most needed in District 8. District 8 needs a leader that will represent everyone.

10. What professional or personal experience do you bring to the council table?

I have been very involved in the communities of District 8 both personally and professionally for many years. I have been a volunteer in many capacities in my home community. I am a volunteer firefighter with over 20 years of service. I am also the past president of the Advocate district Development Association; I have just finished my 2-year term. In addition, I am a certified instructor for St. John Ambulance. Another role I have held in the community is lobbying the government for reform for improved senior and health care services.

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