

REES' Pieces

Managing Expectations

Staff and elected official at the municipalities of Cumberland and Colchester now have several of the most difficult jobs facing them. To avoid disappointment and a hasty rush to the finish line, they must manage the expectations of taxpayers and business owners on the implementation of high speed broadband and UNESCO Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark. Both initiatives will put the two counties far ahead of other provincial and national areas.

First, let's look at the high speed broadband project as it is critical to all other things which will provide the opportunity for businesses to be more competitive; increase business relocation; ride the wave of increased interest in home-based business, and fulfill the dreams of those originally from the area who wish to return to their "roots" to continue, start a home-based, a stand alone business or retire.

Increases in population density will certainly be in the upward growth spiral as people wishing to get out of "larger urban areas" and "reclaim their sanity" by living in a rural area will discover broadband needs will be met with the final implementation of the \$60.1-Million initiative.

As far as I can determine Cumberland and Colchester counties made history by being the first two counties to join forces to jointly develop and implement a high speed broadband program, which is the largest or one of the largest broadband projects in Canada.

As word of the broadband program gets known, it will send a positive message, businesses should look at relocating and their professional staff will be eager to enjoy the "quality" of rural life, for many reasons, but particularly their personal needs for broadband will be met.

Maybe the economic development specialists within the county administrations should develop an "Ambassador Award" program to reward residents who assist in persuading relatives to "move back home" to retire or bring their business ideas with them.

Realtors have a very important role to play by marketing the area as having the "best rural broadband" service in all Canada. The caution is to manage expectations as completion of the \$60.1-Million program will require a 2+ year construction period to completion.

The second most important event, in this crisis year of CoVid-19 was the final approval by UNESCO of the Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark. As have been reported here during the application phase; last summer's visit by two UNESCO evaluators, admission to the global network of GeoParks would be a very positive move for sustainable economic and tourism development.

During the evaluation visit last summer, local municipal officials and committee volunteers were informed with the inclusion of the Fundy Discovery Site, the GeoPark has the opportunity to become the Global #1 GeoPark. They suggested the Bay of Fundy tides, the geological assets, and the rugged raw beauty of the area from Apple River, Joggins already a UNESCO site then along the shore to the outskirts of Truro could make it #1.

Some Geoparks attract millions of people per year. Even if Cliffs of Fundy attracts only 100,000 additional people per year in the early years that is an average of 2,000 per week, or approximately 50 tour busses. However, most Geopark enthusiasts don't use tour busses. They like to travel by car and set their own schedules.

The area has so much to offer, it is impossible to name all the assets and what will attract visitors from all corners of the globe.

Granted the shores do not have the capacity to "reap all the benefits" as things now stand. Over the next decade, infrastructure must be developed and must be done in a sustainable and ecological way. It will take community involvement, and lots of planning. Investment \$\$\$ will be high, but a geopark developed as intended protects assets for an eternity.

If everyone in the area observes the intent and methods of recommended development, within 10 years the Cliffs of Fundy stands a chance to be in the top three provincial icons, battling Cape Breton Highlands and Peggy's Cove to top spots.

Success in the final analysis depends on how "we manage its development".

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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August 20, 2020
Hon Mark Furey
Minister of Public Safety,
Province of Nova Scotia.

Dear Minister Furey

Thank you very much for your response to my concerns about the RCMP plan to impose a sub-standard 911 emergency communication system in Nova Scotia. Although we have a different perspective on this issue, I appreciate the reply.

Although the RCMP has stated to you that their plan is safe, I cannot imagine what other answer they could possibly give. Could they say it isn't safe?

No matter what the RCMP says, it is obvious that this proposal fails to meet published international standards for a safe emergency communications system. Considering these published standards, I believe that the provincial government has an obligation to do their own due diligence to ensure the safety of Nova Scotians, and not just take the RCMP word for it. One of them is wrong.

And, the RCMP does not always provide correct information to elected officials.

Senior officials of the RCMP twice assured three levels of elected representatives that "technology now allows us to 'flip a switch' and transfer all 911 and dispatch calls to New Brunswick".

The Hon Carl Urquhart, Minister of Public Safety in New Brunswick (also a former RCMP Officer) said that there had never been any such discussions between the RCMP and New Brunswick officials, and that their N.B. technology did not allow this transfer to happen. Furthermore, he added that the New Brunswick Department of Public Safety is very focused on their own province's emergency communication safety issues. The RCMP statement that they can "flip a switch" and transfer emergency calls to New Brunswick is wrong.

The RCMP also issued a statement saying that all of the risks to Nova Scotians specified in their own 2004 Expert Panel Report have now evaporated. However, when asked to produce a

document, research paper or anything to support this claim, they were unable to provide one shred of evidence to back-up their claim. It appears that they just made it up.

Meanwhile the Government of Nova Scotia, the Government of Canada, and HRM municipal council have all recently written reports warning of increased environmental risks to coastal communities and HRM in particular. These are the same "eco" risks detailed in the 2004 RCMP report that the RCMP say "no longer apply". The RCMP say the "risks" are all gone....three levels of governments say they are getting worse. Someone is wrong.

Since January, Nova Scotia has experienced the worst shooting massacre in Canadian history, a global pandemic, and Dartmouth has experienced earthquakes. In fact, the National Fire Protection Association says that risks are more frequent and severe than ever.

The RCMP statement that the "risks" to Nova Scotians detailed in the 2004 RCMP Expert Panel Report "no longer apply" is also simply wrong.

Regarding the "portable communication system" that you mention in your letter, the RCMP assured previous Public Safety Minister, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, and me, that they could have this portable system "assembled and operational within one hour of the beginning of a disaster". Imagine if you were still an RCMP officer dealing with an explosion or evacuation and you called in for backup only to get a recording saying, "Please call back in an hour as we are currently assembling our portable emergency communication system".

Having an emergency communications structure that includes a one-hour black-out at the beginning of a disaster is just inexplicable. Would lives be lost in the first hour? This "one-hour delay" plan does not meet any standard of emergency communications, nor does it make any common sense.

RCMP actions speak louder than words. At this very moment the RCMP does not need a back-up communications facility because the current system meets

international standards. The fact that the new RCMP plan will soon require a "back-up" plus a second portable "back-up to the back-up" is an admission that this plan does not meet minimum safety standards. Further, neither of these "back-ups" meet the published standards that require that the secondary facility be staffed and equipped to provide service equal to the primary facility.

This hodge-podge of substandard facilities and back-ups will surely fail in the heat of a chaotic disaster. In recent emergencies in Nova Scotia and Ottawa, it was emergency communications that failed and lives were lost both times. There should be no compromise in any new emergency communications system for our province.

My strong recommendation is that the province should arrange for their own due diligence on this proposal in order to confirm that this most important service is safe. It is not enough to take only the word of the proponent when it comes to safety...even if the proponent is the RCMP.

The RCMP admits in writing that they are "under considerable pressure" to fill empty space in their Dartmouth building. That is what is driving this plan...not the safety of Nova Scotians.

I respectfully urge the provincial government to arrange for an independent assessment of this RCMP proposal by a recognized independent organization. This organization should have no connection to the RCMP and the assessment should be done before the transition takes place.

On one hand, this RCMP proposal clearly fails to meet the essential standards for a safe communications system as described in the leading published guidelines and manuals for emergency communications. On the other hand, the RCMP says the plan is safe. One of them is wrong. It only makes sense to determine which one is right...before a disaster happens.

Thank you for your reply and for considering my recommendations. If you wish to discuss this further or examine the documentation referenced in this

email, I would be pleased to share it with you. It is very convincing.

Sincerely, Bill Casey
Former Member of Parliament
902 397 1305

PS: The following is a list of the leading authorities which have published emergency communications standards. The new RCMP plan does not meet the essential standards of any of these organizations, even the RCMP's own Expert Panel Report. The organizations include: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); National Emergency Number Association (NENA); National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and RCMP 2004 Expert Panel Report (RCMP)
CC Premier Stephen

The Shoreline Journal

Here's where to find us:

BASS RIVER:

Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:

C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
MacQuarries Pharmacy
Kennedy's Deli - Ryland Ave

DEBERT:

Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:

Masstown Market Five Islands

GLENHOLME:

Double "C" Truckstop

GREAT VILLAGE:

Wilson's Gas

MAITLAND:

Frieze & Roy General Store

MASSTOWN:

Masstown Market
MTM Retail Gas (Petro-Can)

MILLBROOK:

Super 8 Motel
Hampton Inn & Suites

NORTH RIVER:

Grant's Grocery

PARRSBORO:

CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave

TRURO:

Atlantic Superstore
Best Western Glengarry
Holiday Inn
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave (Esplanade)
Rath Eastlink Comm Centre
Colchester East Hants Health Centre - Coffee Shop

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Dear Editor,

As our economy starts to reopen, the health and safety of Canadians is our number one priority. That's why the Government of Canada is acting now to put the right tools in place before a potential second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hits.

We have negotiated a Safe Restart Agreement with the provinces and territories that

will invest \$19 billion to protect the health of Canadians and ensure they can safely return to work.

This Agreement bolsters the capacity of the provinces and territories to conduct contact tracing and testing, with a goal to have capacity for up to 200,000 tests a day across the country. This is vital to containing future outbreaks quickly before they spread.

To better protect seniors in long-term care homes, we are funding infection prevention measures and expanding eligibility for federal infrastructure funds so they can be used to modernize and renovate long-term care facilities.

We have set up a contingency reserve of personal protective equipment so front line and essential workers

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