



# Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater REPORT

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## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

**Andrew Garnett**  
MPWWA Chairperson

Well the start of the year means that the annual conference will be happening just around the corner. This year's event will be happening at the Westin Hotel in Halifax from April 17-20th. Soon you will be receiving information in the mail for what should be a great conference. This year we are going to reflect about our past and talk about the future. Part of your information kit will include a draft copy of our new by-laws. The revamped by-laws were done for two reasons; first being some of them were quite outdated and more importantly they were done because we are now a step closer to being incorporated. This will be talked about in depth at our breakfast meeting during the conference so please review them and be prepared to discuss. If you are not able to attend please forward your concerns or questions to us.

Another event that happens at our annual conference is the election of our executive. If you or somebody you know is interested, please forward your name between now and the conference. In my time on the executive I have enjoyed it very much and found it very rewarding. This being my last year as chairperson I want to thank the executive for all their hard work and commitments. I look forward to watching the MPWWA grow in the future.

The last topic I want to cover in this message is the silent auction that is being prepared again for this year at the conference. Last year was a great success and went to a great cause and we are hoping for the same success again this year. Please visit the silent auction when you're at the conference, as it is not only a great fundraiser; but a fun event. Thanks to those who help assist putting it on and donate items for the cause.

Take care and hope to see you all soon in Halifax!!

*Andrew Garnett*  
Chairperson for the MPWWA



Engineer Steve McCormick of Soleno and Mark Bishop of Genivar stand next to an underground storm water management system that was installed at the site of the new high school on Forest Street in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. (See story on page 5) (Photo: Tina Comeau/The Vanguard)

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# High water closes roads, wrecks bridges

■ BY STAFF ~ THE CAPE BRETON POST

[Sydney, NS]—Record rainfall amounts and storm surges wreaked havoc on roads and washed out bridges across Cape Breton for a second week in a row.

However, by Wednesday afternoon (Dec. 22) some of the water had receded leaving transportation officials and crews to assess damage.

“The number of closed roads isn’t that big but there are a lot of roads experiencing flooding,” said Cathy MacIsaac, spokesperson for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

“They may be passable with caution but people should be aware they may encounter water.”

Throughout Wednesday morning, flood conditions were reported on the Northside from Gouthro Road to Barrachois Road. High water levels also closed Long Island Road west of Georges River Bridge, while a major culvert on Villa Drive was washed out creating about a 20-foot gap in the road.

On Wednesday crews were busy building an access road so residents living on the lower end of Villa Drive would be able to get out.

“Our immediate concern was to bring in material to protect the waterline, which is the main water transmission line for Bras d’Or, Florence and surrounding communities,” said Bernie Moore with Cape Breton Regional Municipality public works in north division.

“This will have to be done before the culvert is installed and the road repaired.”

Department of Transportation Cape Breton County area manager Roy MacDonald said Villa



Work began Dec 22 to replace the sewer line on Villa Drive on the Northside of Cape Breton to shore up the water main, replace the culvert and repair a 20-foot gap in the road caused by the week’s heavy rains. (Photo: Julie Collins/ Cape Breton Post)

Drive repairs will take a few days.

“We are working with CBRM water utility to do whatever we can to protect the water main and fix the road,” MacDonald said. “That water main is a big concern.”

The access road was passable for emergency vehicles at noon on Wednesday.

In Victoria County, New Campbellton Road was also washed out stranding some residents, includ-

ing Albert Bona.

“I’ve been after them for years and it has been temporary fixes and a bit of gravel here and there,” said Bona when reached by phone. “It is just a waste of money because it all gets washed away.”

Bona feared for senior citizens who live at the end of the road.

“Sooner or later there is going to be someone who is going to need medical attention on this road and there is going to be an issue.”

Storm surges shredded gear and breached a breakwater near the Victoria Co-op Fisheries in New Haven.

“Everything is into the parking area and outdoors,” said Osborne Burke, the assistant manager. “Any lobster traps stored there some of them seem to be gone.”

At the height of the storm Tuesday evening (Dec. 21) water surged high enough to put the wharf under water and was strong enough to tear exterior stairs off the building.

“The seas were just overwhelming over the top of the massive (New Haven) breakwater. It was probably the worst storm people have seen here in many

years.”

The Cape Breton Regional Police also reported numerous roads and highways washed out or covered in water.

Homes were not exempt from the damage, including that of CBRM Coun. Dave LeBlanc who was fielding phone calls about flood damage while dealing with water issues of his own.

“When you are talking 100s of millimetres of rain, the weeping tile can only take so much,” the District 11 councillor said.

Environment Canada reported disturbing amounts of precipitation over a 24-hour period from 8 a.m. Tuesday (Dec. 21) to 8 a.m. Wednesday (Dec. 22).

In Sydney, 35.6 millimetres of rain fell, while Ingonish Beach received 86.6 millimetres of rain during the same period.

For the month of December, the 317 millimetres of rain received to date eclipsed the average amount of 107.6 millimetres.

A further 10-20 millimetres of rain is expected today (Dec. 22) and more wind and rain predicted for Friday and Saturday (Dec. 24-25)...

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## Halifax water rates up

Water rates in Halifax soared Jan. 1. Residential customers now pay an additional 27 per cent, around \$590 a year, up from \$470.

A Dec. 17 ruling by the Nova Scotia Utilities & Review Board also increased non-residential rates to between 2 and 19%.

It was Halifax Water’s first rate increase in three years. The company said the revenue would be used to upgrade pipes—some of them are a

century old.

The NSURB criticized Halifax Water’s pipe maintenance program.

It also rebuked the utility for the 20-40% pay raises its top managers received in a two-year period and its debt policy. The NSURB plans to monitor future salary hikes and has ordered a financing study that would ensure an efficient and fair funding mechanism for ratepayers.

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CBCL Limited received the 2010 ACEC Canadian Consulting Engineering Award of Excellence in Water Resources and Energy Production category for its design of the Nova Scotia rural water treatment plant in Tatamagouche. In the photo with the award are from left: CBCL Limited Process Engineer Michael Chaulk, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., Vice President Infrastructure Services Andrew Gates, P.Eng., and President and CEO Michael MacDonald, M.Sc., P.Eng.

## North Shore water treatment plant receives national honour

BY SHERRY MARTELL

### TRURO DAILY NEWS

[Tatamagouche, NS]—Embracing innovative technology recently earned the municipally owned Tatamagouche Water Treatment Plant national recognition.

CBCL Limited received the 2010 ACEC Canadian Consulting Engineering Award of Excellence in Water Resources and Energy Production category for its design of the (Nova Scotia) rural water treatment plant.

"I am very proud of the accomplishments of our firm and its employees," said Michael R. MacDonald, CBCL Limited president and CEO, who accepted the award at the annual ACEC awards ceremony at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa. "Receiving this award from ACEC is recognition of the high level of technical ability and experience that we have achieved in recent years," he added.

The Canadian Consulting Engineering Awards are given to projects that demonstrate a high quality of engineering, imagination and innovation.

Ramesh Ummat, director of public works for the county, said he was pleased the municipal system received such high accolades.

He said the plant was constructed two years ago

using cutting edge technology and was the first treatment system in Atlantic Canada using this process, as well as the first municipal plant of its kind in Canada.

"In the very initial stages when we were considering various options to determine what type of system to put in we took the best choice," he said. "The best quality water with minimum use of chemicals.

"These two qualities were very high on the list."

The treatment plant uses an innovative treatment process to produce extremely high quality potable water from the French River without the use of chemical coagulants, a quality Ummat is very proud of.

Of the record 73 engineering projects entered this year, two special awards and 10 awards of excellence were given.

**Editor's Note:** According to the award citation, "The water treatment process uses two stages of membrane filtration in series; ultra-filtration followed by nano-filtration. The process capitalizes on the benefits of each technology separately, and combines them for an optimal water treatment process that assures complete removal of turbidity and organic matter. The process uses no coagulation or chemical pre-treatment and the residuals are returned to the source water."

## Municipalities seek funding to help meet wastewater standards

BY ANDY WALKER

Many municipalities across the region are going to need significant financial help from the federal and provincial governments to meet new national wastewater regulations.

"Everybody agrees the days of flushing sewage into rivers, lakes and streams are over," said Summerside Mayor Basil Stewart. "That being said, it is going to mean major dollars for some municipalities, both large and small to bring their systems up to requirement."

Stewart is the dean of Prince Edward Island mayors, past president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and vice-chair of the Atlantic Mayor's Caucus. He had several discussions with federal and the provincial officials on the issue during his term as head of the national federation and said he is happy there will be a phase-in period of up to 30 years for the requirements.

"There is no way municipalities can afford this on their own and there needs to be a funding mechanism in place, whether its 33 cent-dollars or something else that allows municipalities to make the required upgrades without imposing a significant tax burden on our residents."

The Atlantic Mayors Conference estimates it would cost Newfoundland and Labrador municipalities collectively \$763 million to meet the requirements. The bill would be \$715 million in Nova Scotia, \$362 million in New Brunswick and \$44 million in P.E.I.

Stewart said many municipalities have

taken advantage of infrastructure dollars over the last few years to upgrade equipment. He cited his home community, which cost-shared a \$19 million expansion to its wastewater treatment plant.

The deleterious substances specified under the proposed regulations include biochemical oxygen demanding (BOD) matter, suspended solids (SS), total residual chlorine and un-ionized ammonia. The proposed effluent quality standards for these substances are as follows: average carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand (CBOD) due to the quantity of BOD matter in the effluent of less than or equal to 25 mg/L; average concentration of SS in the effluent of less than or equal to 25 mg/L; average concentration of total residual chlorine in the effluent of less than or equal to 0.02 mg/L; and maximum concentration of un-ionized ammonia in the effluent of less than 1.25 mg/L, expressed as nitrogen (N), at 15°C ± 1°C.

The regulations also require municipalities to separate storm drains from sanitary sewer systems and the mayor said his city is already doing that. Stewart said Halifax will be particularly hard hit by the regulations since amalgamation has brought many areas into the region's largest city that have little in the way of wastewater services.

"I remain optimistic we can reach a deal with Ottawa and the provinces," the vice-chair said. "We have an excellent working relationship with the other levels of government and I think we are all on the same page about moving forward."

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## MPWWA PROFILE: Greg Zwicker

Every issue, the MPWWR shines a spotlight on an MPWWA member making a difference in the industry. Greg Zwicker is the focus of our January issue.

### Home Boy

BY STEPHEN PATRICK CLARE

Greg Zwicker makes no bones about his hometown roots.

"I've spent all of my life in the area," boasts the 38 year-old Water Treatment Operator for the Town of Windsor, Nova Scotia.

"I went to school here, and worked for the Minas Pulp and Power Company in Hantsport for ten years."

And while he wasn't unhappy with his position there, the now-married father of one admits that he needed a change of scenery. "It was time for me to move on to new opportunities."

Zwicker got his wish four years ago when he joined the Town of Windsor. He now handles a variety of daily duties for the municipality, including water and wastewater treatment, distribution and collection.

It is a position, he explains, that has its fair share of challenges.

"Aside from the weather, which is always unpredictable, staying on top of all of the changes in the industry is essential. It's a little like owning a computer – by the time you get used to the new technology it has become outdated."

"We're constantly upgrading our skills and certifications."

Keeping area residents informed is also vital.

"Sometimes all it takes is that extra 5-10 minutes with someone to explain the process. Call it taking preventative measures, but it can often make all the difference in the world."

Interestingly, he knows many of his clients by first name. "We are like a big family up here," he says of Windsor and the surrounding area. "Everyone knows everyone and everything about everyone. It's a very comfortable place to live, work and raise kids."

That familiarity can have its drawbacks at times too.

"Well, in a smaller town, your name and reputation are everything," he points out.

When he isn't on the job, Zwicker likes to travel and experience the great outdoors.

"I love camping and hiking," he shares. "There's something special about getting away from it all and getting in touch with nature. It renews and recharges the batteries."

Recently, he and his wife spent some time south of the border, touring Nevada, Utah and Arizona.

"We hit Las Vegas, before heading down to the Grand Canyon and Zion National Park. It was absolutely gorgeous – God's country."

Though his wanderlust hasn't waned over time, Zwicker concedes that he is happiest at home.

"I'm Nova Scotia born and raised," he smiles. "I love it here and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."



Greg Zwicker

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# New technology incorporated into high school site design

■ BY TINA COMEAU  
THE VANGUARD

New technology has been incorporated into the construction of a new high school on Forest Street in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia that should save the town of Yarmouth a lot of worries until at least the year that the Class of 2110 graduates.

A storm water management system has been installed that comes with an expected lifespan of at least 100 years.

The goal of this system – which has been buried underground close to where the soccer field will eventually be located – is to ensure that the high school development does not cause increased runoff of storm water in the future that could cause flooding problems for nearby homes and businesses.

That's because where once an empty field stood, there will now be a large school and asphalt parking lots. Typically in a development the more roofs you put up and the more asphalt you lay down, the less water goes back into the ground.

"In the pre-development hydrology, this was a farm field, so all of the water that hit the ground went into the ground. Flooding was of no concern to the people down the hill from here, or the town," says Steve McCormick, an engineer with the Dartmouth firm Soleno, a manufacturer of the StormChamber – the system that's been installed at the high school site. "With what we are doing we are mimicking the pre-development hydrology so you have no more storm water coming out of this lot once it's developed, than you had before it was developed."

In a normal rainfall there will be no storm water emission from the site. In a large storm event, like a hurricane perhaps, any storm water runoff will be at a controlled rate.

"Now the town knows for the next 100 years exactly how much water will come off of this site and they can plan for that when it comes to future development," McCormick says.

The system has 290 cubic metres of available storage space for water and its open-

chamber bottom allows for the infiltration of storm water.

"When the water flows through this the longer we can keep it in there the better," he says. "All of the groundwater we're collecting will go back into the water table where it belongs, not into houses where it's going to flood."

Although the system is in place, it has not been connected to the storm water stream yet. This is being done to avoid having the system fill with construction waste and sediments existing on the site. If this system were to fill with debris and sediment from the site, it would require a thorough flush before the building is commissioned and that would result in further costs for the builder.

According to McCormick, this is the first time in Atlantic Canada this new technology has been incorporated into a large development. He expects in future years it will be the expected norm in commercial developments.

"What drives this whole thing is a sustainable development push," he says, noting developers can receive federal tax credits through the LEED program (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for making a building more environmentally friendly.

But it goes beyond this. While it does cost extra to incorporate this into the design – the component cost alone is around \$50,000 – McCormick says it shouldn't be the responsibility of a town and taxpayers to, in the future, have to deal with problems left behind by a developer.

"A school is for children and you want to have a town children can live in," says McCormick. "You don't want them living in a town that has to go bankrupt every year because the town is having to put in larger pipes all the time to handle storm water."

On site, the installation of the storm water system has been a joint effort of Soleno; Maxim 2000 Inc., the general contractor of the high school project; Hurlburt Construction, the sub contractor of the project and the design consultants Genivar, another Dartmouth-based company.

# Moncton's proposed wastewater strategy gets 'positive reception'

■ BY KATHY JOHNSON

The Greater Moncton Sewer Commission is hoping by spring for completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on a proposed \$126 million expansion project to the area's sewage system.

"We're hoping by next spring the process will be completed," Ronald LeBlanc said following a series of open houses in October where a 10-year strategy for sustainable wastewater and treatment strategy for Dieppe, Moncton and Riverview, New Brunswick was presented.

"The public meetings went very well," said the chairman of the Greater Moncton Sewer Commission. "We had a very positive reception", although some people would "like us to do it quicker than we can."

The open houses were part of the EIA review, which is registered with the Department of Environment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations Clean Environment Act.

"We have done the public participation part. Now have to finalize the government review part," LeBlanc explained.

The \$126 million expansion project includes the construction of a new biological treatment facility that will exceed new federal regulations.

A new sewage line that will run through a tunnel under the Petitcodiac River connecting to a new pumping station in Dieppe is also part of the

plan.

New pumping stations, an outfall and screening facilities, and upgrades to existing lines to provide greater separation for sewage and storm run off are also on the books.

LeBlanc is hoping the project will dovetail with new federal government regulations governing wastewater that are on the way in.

"The new federal environmental regulations governing wastewater that are coming in are going to affect every municipality in Atlantic Canada," said LeBlanc. "This is not just a Moncton issue this is a Canadian issue, a wastewater regulation issue."

The proposed Wastewater System Effluent Regulations are earmarked to be finalized in the spring of 2011, said Mark Johnson, media advisor for the federal environment department.

While the Greater Moncton Sewer Commission was "going ahead anyway" with the sewage system expansion project, "with the new regulations it will expedite the process," LeBlanc predicted. "So those that are not planning better soon start."

He is also "anticipating the availability of funding" when the new wastewater regulations are enacted. Usually large municipal infrastructure projects are cost-shared by the three levels of government.



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# Water and sewer fees go up, but city stays put on mill rate

■ BY CORY HURLEY  
THE WESTERN STAR

[Corner Brook, NL]—Facing rising costs with little increase in revenues, council in Corner Brook (Newfoundland & Labrador) has introduced additional fees for residential and commercial services.

Coun. Linda Chaisson, chair of the corporate services policy committee, brought down the city's 2011 budget Monday (Dec. 20).

While council honoured its commitment to maintain the residential property mill rate of 9.25 mills and commercial property rate of 13.5 mills, it did raise the sewer levy by \$10 each per unit and the water levy by \$20 each per unit. The sewer levy is now \$70 per unit and the water levy is \$80 per unit. It was \$10 each per unit when it was introduced in 2004.

The residential and commercial basic unit charge for access to water and sewer also increased by \$25. The residential unit charge is now \$275 and the commercial unit charge increased to \$355.

"It will add up to about \$55 per household," she said. "If we had to increase our mill rate, it would have been a lot more per household."

Chaisson said the increases are necessary to help offset the substantial increase in capital costs associated with the water treatment plant, which is anticipated to be at least another two years away from construction.

"During our deliberations we struggled to deal with rising costs with little increase in revenues," she said. "This budget reflects many hours of debate and discussion which cumulated with a budget that we feel achieves an effective balance; encouraging growth, while practising fiscal prudence."

dence."

The city is also maintaining its business tax mill rates for 2011. In the coming year, an economic strategy outlining a framework within which economic activities can take place in the city will be brought forth.

With the water treatment plant project on hold since it came in severely over budget — its cost escalating from \$36 million in 2007 to more than \$65 million in 2010 — the city is also looking to recoup funds from the Town of Massey Drive and the Town of Mount Moriah, other towns which

would use the facility...

...With the acknowledged struggles to deal with increasing operational costs and the implementation of additional fees, Mayor Neville Greeley said the city can't be run by putting all its expenditures into a project such as water treatment.

"We have to be fiscally responsible and plan and prepare for that, however, we have a city to operate and run as well," he said. "People have been demanding other services — including recreational facilities, including sidewalks and parks, and those kinds of things. We would be fool hearty if we were

to concentrate solely on water treatment."

The mayor said it is the way council and staff positioned itself last year — front loading a lot of expenditures and paying down on its debt — that has enabled them to increase spending in some areas this year without increasing the mill rate to taxpayers. He also said it will not necessarily mean it will eventually come to a point where the mill rate has to be raised.

The city's budget is balanced at \$28,152,400.

## Budget increase impacts extend to other towns

■ BY CORY HURLEY  
THE WESTERN STAR

[Corner Brook, NL]—It appears the two neighbouring municipalities which rely on services offered by Corner Brook (Newfoundland & Labrador) the most are prepared for escalating fees.

Mount Moriah and Massey Drive avail of Corner Brook's water and waste management facilities — two areas which the city's 2011 budget outlined increased operational costs.

Coun. Linda Chaisson said (Dec. 20) the city intends to recoup funds from the two towns to offset the substantial increase in capital costs related to the water treatment plant project. She also said 13 municipalities — including Massey Drive and Mount Moriah — have been notified of significant increases in their 2011 tippage fees.

Massey Drive Mayor Gord Davis said his town has received a bill of \$1.1 million for the water

treatment work already completed.

"So far, a nice chunk has been paid on it," he said. "It is paid as work is done as per our agreement."

While unsure what the future costs will be to the town based on the construction of the water treatment plant, Davis said the town — which pays for its water usage through a metered rate — is prepared for that increase as well...

...Meanwhile, Mount Moriah is already under agreement to receive water from the city's supply through until 2014.

Mike Dolter, the city's chief administrative officer, said that town is exempt from any capital increases through the duration of that agreement.

However, as will Massey Drive, he said the residents of Mount Moriah will have to pay a fee once the plant becomes operational.

Mount Moriah Mayor Jim Gillam said the town hasn't heard from the city what the impact of the

new water treatment facility will be.

"I guess that is something they will spring on us pretty soon," he said, adding his level of concern will depend on the additional costs.

"Mount Moriah is a town that has nothing here to sustain it only the people," he said. "There is no industry or business, nothing."

"I guess what will happen is, sometime along the line, you will see Mount Moriah (amalgamate) with Corner Brook." ...

...The mayor said the future of waste management will cost towns and their residents more, so they have been preparing for such increases.

Corner Brook Mayor Neville Greeley said the measures are necessary to not overburden the city based on the rising costs of infrastructure and operational services.

"We will take the lion's share of it, being the biggest user, but the rest of the communities will have to pay their fair shares as well." ...

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The water system in Badger will receive significant improvements thanks to new government funding. (Photo: Advertiser)

## Water upgrades for Badger

■ BY SUE HICKEY  
ADVERTISER

The Town of Badger (Newfoundland & Labrador) is getting a much-needed upgrade to its water system. "It's a fairly substantial piece of work that we're working on," said Grand Falls-Windsor-Buchans MHA Susan Sullivan, also the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

The Department of Municipal Affairs has allocated money to the Badger project, which will also allow for floodproofing.

Government has also moved forward with environmental approval, allowing for consultants to move forward with the final stages of the project.

Minister Sullivan did not specify the cost of the project, as it has not gone to tender yet (Nov. 18). However, she said government is looking for a considerable upgrade.

"They've experienced problems with low water pressures in Badger during the winter, so this will ensure the supply to the system will be greater," she said. "There have been a number of issues with the

water."

Badger Mayor Mike Patey said the government funding will go a long way towards the water project.

"We have an artesian well system," he explained. "We used to have a lot of wells at one time. Now we're down to one well, but it's a good well so far.

"We have drilled now and found some more, but they're not hooked up yet, and that's what we're in the process of doing."

The work involves getting the new wells connected, a new pumphouse and a chlorine system.

In the past, other wells have performed, but the town had an issue with contamination.

"Our tank is going to be refurbished and two new wells will be added," said Mayor Patey.

"That one well is producing quite well, but the new wells have to be hooked up. That will be done before Christmas.

"It takes time to fix the infrastructure of the town."

The tenders are expected to be called within the next three weeks (mid-December).

## Anomaly in Yarmouth water system

"An anomaly of some kind" was the verdict rendered after water pressure plummeted in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia last October.

There was no logical explanation as to why the town had struggled to maintain pressure for almost two weeks, water utility chairman Ken Langille told *The Vanguard* Oct. 15.

He explained that the problem stemmed from replacement work being conducted on a 100+-year-old 12-inch line on Pleasant Street. Water was diverted through lateral pipes as a new 16-inch line was installed. But rather than proceed to the water tower it trekked to Yarmouth's main fish plants that daily utilize around 1.3 million litres of water.

The town had urged businesses and residents to conserve water. Despite it being the height of herring production, by Oct. 13 Scotia Garden Seafood had cut its use by 40 per cent and IMO Foods Ltd. by 25%.

Still, on Oct. 14 the water tower that usually stores 10 metres held only 3 and even with a lull in demand it had recharged overnight but was nearly empty by noon.

Town crews used acoustic detection gear looking for a leak but could not find one.

Some homes and businesses—including the Mariners Centre—had no water at all

The Zamboni requires about 180 gallons of water an hour, manager Gil Dares told the newspaper.

The arena installed a 500-gallon water tank, brought in portable toilets and hand sanitizers but still had to cancel games. It also had staff on hand at night because the sprinkler system wasn't reliable.

Fire was the town's major concern. On Oct. 14 the pressure in hydrants was only 13 pounds per square inch. The fire department continually monitored the situation and building owners were advised to check their properties and their water pressure on an hourly basis.

On Oct. 15 the level in the water reservoir tower stabilized and the psi in fire hydrants rose to 37.

Langille told *The Vanguard* the water utility "had ruled out every possibility" to ensure the drop in water pressure did not reoccur. But he made no promises.

"There may be something we've overlooked but we've looked at everything and we've had some good people on it to try and figure out the problem."

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# Hantsport seeking sensible solution for water woes

■ BY ASHLEY THOMPSON

## THE HANTS JOURNAL

During a Nov. 2 town council meeting, Hantsport (Nova Scotia) councillors agreed to invest about \$9,000 in a coagulation pilot project they hope will lead to a solution for their recent drinking water dilemma.

Council is looking for ways to effectively reduce the levels of trihalomethanes (THMs) in the town's drinking water in order to continually meet Department of Environment's regulations governing the amount of THMs permitted in public water supplies.

Nova Scotia Environment's website states that

some experts in Canada link high levels of THMs in drinking water with the development of cancer.

Hantsport's CAO Jeff Lawrence presented council members with two treatment options he felt were tangible options during a meeting last month (October). The first, coagulation, involves adding chemicals to the water to solidify to harmful organics, making them easier to remove through filtration. The second, nanofiltration, is an advanced filtration method that can target specific undesirable particles and remove them from the water supply.

Council voted in favour of testing the coagu-

lation method to ensure it would work, but the majority of the town's councillors felt additional research and water studies must be conducted before any conclusions can be reached regarding costly upgrades to the \$2.4-million water treatment plant.

Lawrence said equipping the existing plant with the tools necessary for coagulation would cost about \$280,000 and, potentially, an additional \$100,000 if a building is needed to house the unit. Lawrence said the annual operational cost of coagulation is about \$29,432.

Mayor Wayne Folker expressed concern about adding more chemicals to the existing water sup-

ply.

"I'm terribly nervous that if we're adding more chemicals 20 (or) 30 years from now we'll hear about more side effects," said Folker.

He advised council not to rule out nanofiltration, with an operational cost of \$50,024 per year and a capital cost of more than \$900,000 simply because it is the more expensive solution.

"Let's not eliminate anything yet," said Folker.

The deadline for the coagulation pilot project to be completed is tentatively set for March 31, 2011. The town will be seeking financial assistance through government grants to help with the costs of upgrading the water treatment plant.

## Digby approves five-year capital budget

■ BY LEANNE DELONG

### THE DIGBY COURIER

Digby (Nova Scotia) is taking a different approach to its capital budget this year and has planned for five years down the road.

The five-year capital investment plan for 2010 to 2015 was approved at the Dec. 6 council meeting. The capital budget is used for equipment purchases, improvements, and streets, water and sewer projects.

"The town wanted to start doing some

long-term planning and it is also a requirement as part of the gas tax rebates the town gets," said Mayor Ben Cleveland. "Besides approving a one-year budget we've also looked at five years and prioritized our projects."

He said it is always wise to look ahead and this has been done without increasing the tax rate.

The total capital budget is \$2.3 million, with the wastewater plant project accounting for almost half—\$1.1 million—of that.

The town purchased land in Smiths Cove for the wastewater upgrades and budgeted \$200,000 for the purchase.

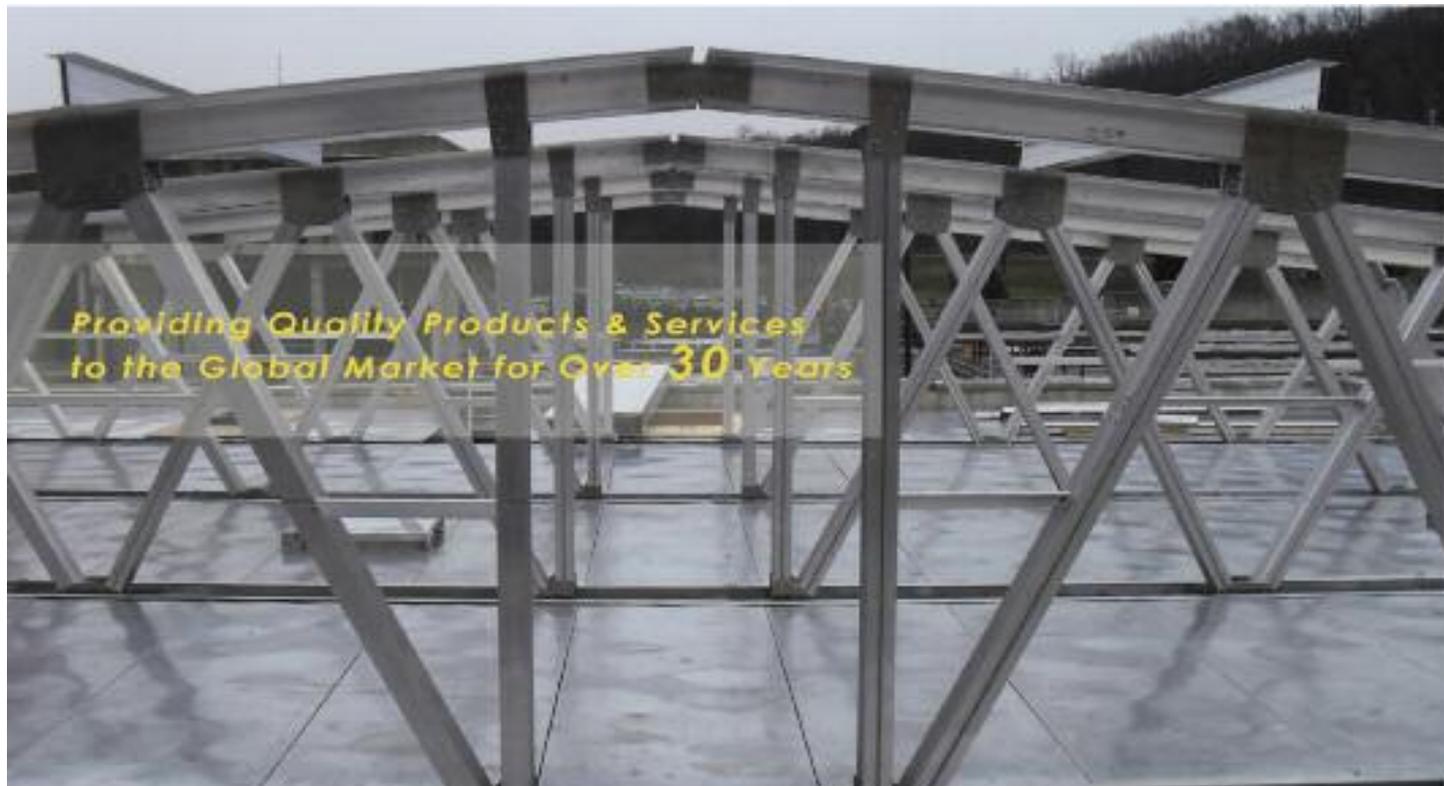
In year one of the budget, \$30,000 is earmarked for upgrades to the Emergency Measures Organization, which is located in Digby's public works building, and \$13,000 is included for upgrades to town hall.

Year two sees \$244,000 budgeted for improvements on the wastewater plant's water tanks.

"We've earmarked some money in year four for erosions protection. We estimate the total project will be \$200,000, which is a result of erosion of our coastal areas in town," Cleveland said.

The town planned to launch a new website Dec. 17 and the capital budget document will be one of the public documents available online.

Cleveland said the new site is more interactive.



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# New Maryland sets penalty for bypassing water system

■ BY ANDY WALKER

A four-month dispute in New Brunswick between the Village of New Maryland and residents in the Baker Brook Court neighbourhood over penalties for failing to hook up to the municipal water supply has been resolved.

The village began installing water and sewer lines to approximately 10 houses in the neighbourhood in September 2009. The move was not popular, especially after council ordered the residents to decommission their private wells and hook up to the water and sewer system.

However, the residents questioned council's authority to force the decommissioning and the provincial Department of Environment backed up their position. Council then decided to impose a yearly fee for residents who refused to hook up to the system.

The bylaw passed two readings containing a penalty of \$1,240. The residents asked council to reconsider the amount, saying the penalty should reflect the cost of providing the service. Council pulled the proposal before third and final reading, and, when it was passed in December (2010), the

penalty was reduced to \$440.

Mayor Frank Dunn called the final draft of the bylaw "reasonable and fair."

The municipality is offering a two-year interest free loan to Baker Brook Court residents who are willing to decommission their wells. The loan will be repaid through a surcharge on their bills. The village is also paying for the laterals from the main line to the foundation wall.

Since the issue was not settled until December (Municipal workers began installing the lines in the fall of 2009 but the discussion with the residents and a leak discovered during pressure testing slowed down the process.), the mayor said the residents will have the option of waiting until spring to decommission their wells and hook up to the system.

Mayor Dunn said the job will be completed in the spring and the road to the court will then be repaved. He is hopeful both the municipality and the residents can put the issue behind them and move on. "We will strive to ensure that in the future, good service will be given to them."

# Dashing through the snow

The Snowbowl, a 777-acre ski resort in Arizona, will be allowed to use treated wastewater to make snow on the San Francisco Peaks.

Controversy and lawsuits erupted after the U.S. Forest Service granted permission for the snowmaking plan.

A ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Mary Mur-

guia in late November 2010 upheld the Forest Service's decision.

The treated wastewater, provided by the city of Flagstaff, will be used on approximately 200 acres of land. Signs will be posted advising skiers not to ingest the snow.



Jessica Paterson-McDonald of the Department of Environment spoke Dec. 16 when Nova Scotia launched 'Water for Life', a new strategy that will manage the province's water resources. The strategy has 29 actions the government wants completed over the next 10 years.

# Wastewater plant online

■ BY RAISSA TETANISH  
AMHERST DAILY NEWS

[Upper Nappan, NS]—More than a dozen homes have a new wastewater treatment plant at their disposal.

Robert Streach, director of public works, told Cumberland County (Nova Scotia) council the retrofitted plant on Bigg's Drive is fully operational and has been since the middle of the month.

"We've reached substantial completion on the

project and it appears that we're in budget," Streach said Wednesday afternoon (Jan. 5).

"We're certainly within the time constraints that were associated with the initial funding agreement."

The plant went online Dec. 15 and serves 15 houses on Bigg's Drive and one on Route 6.

The county spent roughly \$400,000 on the project, which was 40 per cent of the lowest contractor bid of \$1million.

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# No odour solution until plant upgrades completed 2012

■ BY MONIQUE CHIASSON

## TRURO DAILY NEWS

[Lower Truro, NS]—Frustration was the overwhelming emotion Friday (Dec. 10) to the realization that the foul odour being emitted from the Colchester County Waste Water Treatment Facility in Lower Truro (Nova Scotia) is not expected to go away anytime soon.

"I want to see it fixed right away," said Lower Truro's Marjorie Weatherbee yesterday (Dec. 10), during a Colchester County hosted information session on the facility's design and upgrade project. "Every day (the odour) is there at one time or another."

Weatherbee has been forced to leave her yard and go to the outpatients department because she couldn't breathe due to the smell.

"And it's getting worse and spreading into town by the mall and Golf and Juniper (streets) and Old Barns," Weatherbee said.

The county's director of public works, Ramesh Ummat, said upgrading the plant will deal with the odour problem. He reminded people the \$12 to \$14-million upgrade construction project will hopefully begin in March and take two years.

"I don't expect (the odour) to change until the end of the two years. I know it's disappointing ... but any \$12-million project takes time and there's no immediate fix," said Ramesh.

"Many understand this, some are angry and some say, 'Oh, we have to live with it that long?'"

A two-year wait "is not good enough," said Beaverbrook's Bonnie Yuill. She smells the odour every time she drives through the Lower Truro area.

"Some days it's overpowering," Yuill said, adding it isn't attractive for tourists either.

American travellers asked Yuill for directions to the Tidal Bore this summer and when she told them they had to go through the area, their response was, "Do you mean we have to go back through that horrible smell?" It puts this area in a terrible light."

Yuill would like to see a study done to find a short-term solution until construction is completed in two years.

Lower Truro's Brent MacKinnon is also frustrated.

"We have been fighting this all summer. It's like we are talking to deaf ears," said MacKinnon.

He said although the Municipality of Colchester County held an information session, it's not enough.

"I want to see an outlined strategy ... I want to make people accountable. I'd like to see the plant audited, get sample admissions and find out the health issues related to the plant."

MacKinnon has lived in Lower Truro for four years and more than 20 years before that in nearby Old Barns. He said the stench from the plant has been overwhelming for about four years but was at its "worst this past spring."

"We cannot barbeque as much and in the evenings we have to close our windows when it's hot out," MacKinnon said. "It's an environmental and health and safety issue. It always seems to take a public outcry to do something."

About 20 people attended the information session Friday. Another session will be held today (Dec. 11) at the Lower Truro Community Hall on Kent Road from 9 a.m. to noon.

## ... But not a drop to drink

Snow and frigid temperatures paralyzed airports, trains and buses throughout Europe last month. But a sudden thaw before Christmas was the trigger that shattered antiquated water pipes in Ireland.

By Dec. 29, the water supply in 80 cities and towns was disrupted and 36,000 homes in Northern Ireland had been without water for over a week. Residents relied on water tankers and bottled water.

Serious health concerns were raised because some of the floodwater contained sewage.

Although Northern Ireland Water emergency crews worked around the clock, restrictions were still in place in some parts of the country Jan. 4. The company said its priorities

were the main supply system, refilling reservoirs and air locks.

According to the *Belfast Telegraph*, NI Water supplies 1.7 million people with over 600m litres of water daily. It is also responsible for 134m cubic metres of wastewater annually.

The company's 1,400 staff looks after 14,500 kms of sewer mains and 26,500 kms of water mains.

The newspaper reported that in 2010, NI Water finished a stormwater management undertaking that cost £160m and was involved in a £100m job to upgrade over 1,000 kms of water mains and a £45m sewer restoration project.

## NB wellfields designated

The areas supplying Woodstock, Edmundston and Drummond with drinking water now fall under the Wellfield Protected Area Designation Order – Clean Water Act.

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# Westville hiking water rates in response to rising costs

BY SHERRY MARTELL

## NEW GLASGOW NEWS

[Westville, NS]—Increasing costs to repair aging infrastructure coupled with rising wholesale water costs has prompted the Town of Westville (Nova Scotia) to seek a hike in customers' utility rates.

Recently, town CAO Scott Fraser shared his concerns about the future of the utility during a Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board hearing held in Westville.

"We noticed that the utility was starting to lose money and is getting into a deficit situation," he said.

At the end of March 2009 the utility was in a surplus position with \$184,000 available. From April 2009 to present, the utility suffered a loss of \$140,000 caused by repairing 30 to 40 leaks in the transmission and distribution system, as well as from buying water from the New Glasgow utility.

Last summer a water study was completed by G.A. Isenor Consulting Ltd. in association with W.H. Gates Utility Consultants Ltd, which determined if the town did not significantly raise its water rate it would end up with a deficit in the

hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Water rates in Westville have not increased during the past five years, however, the wholesale rate paid to the New Glasgow utility to provide potable water has increased each consecutive year for the past three years.

Fraser said looking to the future it would be necessary to replace problematic supply lines within the delivery system.

"We've been repairing them but they need to be replaced," said the town official.

The current system supplies water to about 1,600 customers, including businesses, homes and institutions.

The board could approve an increase to come into effect as early as next month (January).

"I think most people know the importance of having acceptable water quality and what it comes down to is we have a certain standard to live by," said Fraser.

The town issued a request to increase the current quarterly rate of \$34.40 for a 5/8" connection by about 40.4 per cent to \$48.30. Other connection sizes may also increase by 39.2 per cent to 40 per cent if the board approves the request.

# New sewage plant to tackle Windsor wastewater issues

BY ASHLEY THOMPSON

## HANTS JOURNAL

If all goes as planned, the Town of Windsor (Nova Scotia) will have a new, multi-million dollar sewage treatment plant by the spring of 2014.

The town's CAO, Louis Coutinho, says the project is estimated to cost about \$7.2 million, with the town's bill ringing in at about \$2.3 million for the construction of the facility, plus the acquisition of land. Coutinho says the federal, provincial and municipal governments will each cover one-third of the estimated \$6.8-million construction project.

Coutinho says the wastewater treatment facility is necessary. He says the investments made now will lead to a healthier, safer environment in the future.

"The sewage treatment plant is needed to address the untreated sewer discharge that

enters the mudflats area into the Avon River. Roughly 70 per cent of the Town's population is within the untreated service area," he said.

"It's the responsible thing to do and council deserves much credit for its leadership, despite the huge costs."

Coutinho says council must first evaluate proposals submitted by companies interested in initiating the project before awarding the contract and selecting a plot of land.

"The successful proponent will provide detailed engineering design, construction management and contract oversight services for the proposed wastewater treatment plant," he said.

"Completion of the project, once ground is broken, must be completed by March 2014."

*(Editor's Note: On Nov. 19, the province invested \$100,000 towards the new wastewater treatment facility project in Windsor.)*

# Engineering design initiatives

Four Newfoundland & Labrador municipalities have received engineering design initiatives that will assist them with infrastructure projects.

In late November the province provided \$850,000 to Eastport, Burlington, Aquaforte and Ferryland to use for project design submissions and tender documentation to expedite the construction process.

Eastport plans to upgrade its sewage list station; Burlington to install a new water filtration system; Aquaforte to construct a pumphouse and Ferryland to repair a damaged seawall.

The data accumulated through the initiative will give both the province and the municipality accurate information about costs and the chance to evaluate the design before construction begins.



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# Town's water tower unveiled

■ BY KATIE TOWER

## SACKVILLE TRIBUNE POST

It's a project that's been at the top of the town's priority list for nearly 10 years and Sackville (New Brunswick) Mayor Pat Estabrooks said she is pleased that the community can finally check that one off the list.

Sackville celebrated the official opening of the town's new water tower with a special ceremony and ribbon-cutting event on Saturday morning (Nov. 27), with all three levels of government on hand for the festivities.

"It's a special day for the citizens of Sackville," said Mayor Estabrooks.

She said the vision has now become a reality and will provide the community with not only greater fire protection capabilities but also better water.

"The elevated water storage tank will improve the water quality for our community and that is council's number one priority," she said.

The project involved the construction of an elevated water storage tank and transmission main, which will serve to increase water quality through improved water main flushing.

Funding for the project was announced last winter, a deal which saw each level of government pitch in one-third of the financing for the \$4-million project under the Building Canada Fund.

The mayor gave recognition to her federal and provincial counterparts for partnering and sharing the cost of the infrastructure project.

Mike Olscamp, Tantramar MLA and Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, said this project clearly demonstrates how all three

levels of governments can work together for the betterment of local communities.

"There were times there was doubt . . . but it came together in the end," he said.

Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen, who spoke on behalf of ACOA Minister Keith Ashfield, said the federal government has been working together with provincial and municipal governments to fund important investments and upgrades to municipal water systems

"This will provide Sackville with a more efficient water system that will respond better to residents' needs while also providing improved fire protection," said Stewart Olsen.

Saturday was also a proud day for public works and engineering director George Woodburn. Managing the project since day one, Woodburn said his staff did all they could to guarantee the water tower would receive infrastructure funding and ensure the project was "shovel-ready" when the time came to break ground on the project.

Woodburn said, for instance, when town officials visited Fredericton to apply for the funding early last year, they were able to show they already had tender documents ready to go whenever the financing was approved, "so that there was no way they could say no."

Mayor Estabrooks praised Woodburn for the work he did in keeping town council and staff up to date on the project for the last few years.

"I've never heard the words 'shovel-ready project' so many times in my life," she joked.

Mount Allison financial controller Robert Inglis said the university is also pleased that the water tower project was given the green light. As

a user of the town's services, Inglis said infrastructure projects such as these are beneficial to everyone in the community, including Mount A students and staff.

"We're a big fan of improving the infrastruc-

ture," he said. "This is excellent, we're very pleased to see this project move forward."

The tower, located off Hesler Drive, stores up to 550,000 gallons of water and is anticipated to go online this week (Dec. 2).

## Councillor's idea to set up fund for future sewer project nixed

■ THE NEW GLASGOW DAILY NEWS

[Pictou, NS]—A (Pictou County, Nova Scotia) county councillor's bid to have a rebate fund set up for people who will be affected by future sewer projects was washed away by council.

Coun. Jim Turple presented a motion that council create a fund that residents in the county could pay into so that when a sewer project comes up in their area, their installation costs wouldn't be so high.

He said Lyons Brook residents will be paying \$5,000 for lateral and installation fees and an additional \$269 per year operational

costs.

"I move we create an account now for future sewer projects," said Turple. The motion was seconded by Coun. Ed MacMaster, but it didn't sit well with other councillors.

"We've had a lot of sewer and water projects over the last 30 years," said Coun. Allister MacDonald. "I don't know what the people in Lyons Brook want. It's a lot better deal and there is a 15-year exemption. I don't want to hear any more crying from the Lyons Brook area. I am tired of it. Enough is enough."

The motion was voted down by council.

The Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater Association 2011 Seminar will be held **April 17-20, 2011** at the **The Westin**, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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After breaking away portions of the walls of the reinforced concrete structure, with a push from his excavator and an assist from a tow truck, Derrick Shaffer of Shaffer Enterprises brought down the nearly two-foot thick roof of the old Village of Port Williams, Nova Scotia water reservoir early Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 2. Despite the raw, windy conditions, several people dropped by to watch the demolition take place. The village recently celebrated the commissioning of its new, larger water tank at its 250th anniversary event. (Photos: Kirk Starratt/ Kings County Advertiser/Register)

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# Down to Option C for C.S.I. sewer

■ BY KATHY JOHNSON

The Municipality of Barrington is starting to run out of options for the proposed Cape Sable Island wastewater treatment facility.

Proposals for a grinder system installed at individual homes with small diameter collection pipes as well as a conventional system have met with public opposition and reluctance around the council table. The southwestern Nova Scotia rural municipality is left to consider Option C— a sand/textile filtration system with land based effluent disposal that would require the continued use of on-site septic systems.

“The proposed servicing option includes the use of septic tanks at individual properties; a small diameter collection system; municipal central pumping stations; re-circulating sand or textile wastewater treatment, and land based effluent disposal,” stated an ad from the municipality seeking requests for proposals of the sale of land for the facilities.

Operated as a cluster system in specific wastewater districts, the proposed system would only process liquid waste. Solid waste would be managed in another manner.

While the municipality has received seven responses to its request for proposals, there's some uncertainty whether or not Option C is the right avenue to pursue.

“To me the two best wastewater options have not flown,” said Councillor Shaun Hatfield. “The only other alternative is the sand filtration system. If that fails, then we're left saying (to senior government) that we don't want your money.”

Hatfield noted a textile/sand filtration system “is a totally different project than what we looked at before,” raising questions about capacity and cost, as well as the responsibilities and requirements for the onsite septic component of the proposed system.

“Does council even support this type of system?” he asked.

Public comment on the proposed treatment option has yet to be received but was expected at a town hall type meeting in January.

The municipality has been pursuing the establishment of a wastewater treatment system for 10 years, but has met one roadblock after another.

A total of \$6.2 million has earmarked for the project under the Build Canada Fund, split three ways by the three levels of government. The municipality has until March 31, 2014 to complete the project.

To date, the municipality has spent \$185,000 on the C.S.I. sewer project in studies and engineering fees. Of that, \$111,000 has come from the federal Gas Tax Fund for a net cost to the municipality of \$59,300.



Vehicles travel the Cape Sable Island Causeway, home to more than 3,000 residents in southwestern Nova Scotia. While the island town of Clark's Harbour with a population of under 1,000 people has a public sewer system, efforts by the Municipality of Barrington to provide the same service to the remainder of the island have been hampered. (Photo: Kathy Johnson)

# Answers, solutions for Moncton's storm drains expected soon

■ BY KATHY JOHNSON

While it's been 18 months since Tropical Storm Danny caused flash flooding in Moncton, New Brunswick, the after effects are still very much an issue for the city and its residents.

The Aug. 29-30, 2009 storm swamped the city's sewer system, flooding more than 200 homes in the greater Moncton area, including about 70 in the Hildegard subdivision area, causing damage to more than 100 properties.

Answers to what went wrong and what's the best way to ensure it doesn't happen again are expected early this year.

The city has hired consultants to investigate what happened and why the drain pipes failed during the storm. Computer simulation is being used to recreate the scene. The findings are expected to be finalized within the next two months.

Decisions on the best options to upgrade the system and increase capacity are also expected early this year, during the city's budget deliberations.

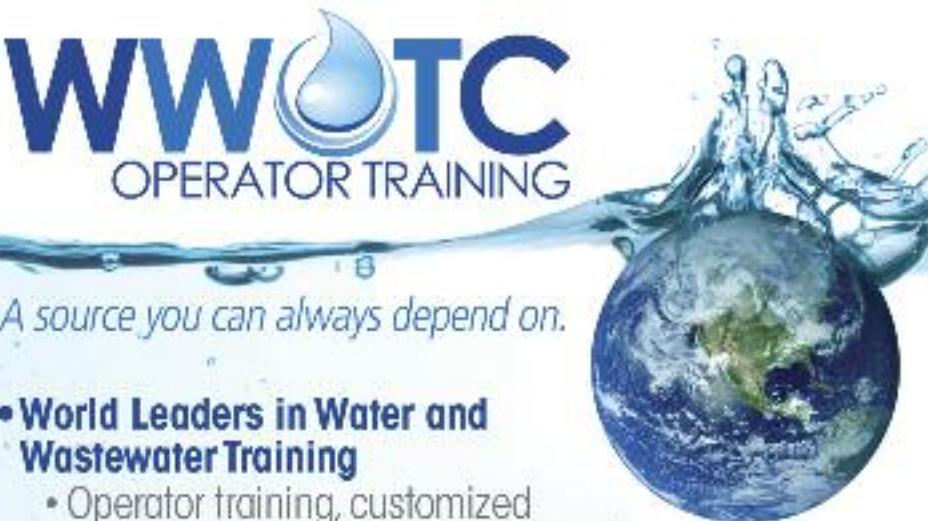
The city has taken steps already to counteract backwash in the system, by installing inlet control devices.

“About 500 have been put in to deal with minor drain issues,” said Paul Thomson, communications director for the City of Moncton.

He said, “Other options are also being considered” including a combination of piping alternatives and storage units.

“There are a few options out there.”

The various options were presented to City Council in July, Thomson said, but will not be fully considered until budget deliberations. “This all will be discussed and presented publicly in the next couple of months.”



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# Water and sewerage rates going up in New Brunswick

New Brunswick cities, towns and municipalities have been crunching numbers preparing budgets for 2011.

Miramichi—the only city with a decreasing tax base—was still working on spreadsheets at press time. With the mills closed and the population declining, the city's tax base went from \$1.22 billion in 2010 to \$1.21b in 2011.

The outlook is much better for residents of Bathurst and Dieppe. For the fourth consecutive year there will be no tax increase in either city.

Bathurst water rates will go up by 3 per cent (about \$1.50/month) to \$5.06/1000 gallons or \$18 a year.

According to the *Telegraph Journal*, the increase will cover modifications and improvements for Bathurst's water and wastewater facilities and distribution systems. The valve replacement program ended in 2010 and the city was able to eliminate \$110,000 from its operating budget.

Dieppe will raise its water and sewer rates slightly. The average homeowners will pay \$716/year.

For the third consecutive year, there will be no tax increase in Campbellton.

According to the *Times-Transcript*, the city's Water Utility Operating Fund will be \$2,033,336—almost \$50,000 less than it was in 2010.

The property tax rate decreased in Moncton again this year but water and sewer rates increased slightly. City Council said the "quarterly water and sewer utility bill for a typical household in Moncton will increase to \$197.50 in 2011 from \$180.00 in 2010 (represents an annual increase of approximately \$70).

"This increase is as a result of improvements and upgrades at the Greater Moncton Sewerage Commission as well as infrastructure improvements to Moncton's water distribution system."

Moncton's water and sewer budget for 2011 is \$29,963,102.

Utility rates are also going up in Fredericton. While the city's tax rate went down the *Daily Gleaner* reported that as part of a five-year plan, both water and sewer rates increased from 66¢ to 71¢/cubic metre. The newspaper said, "The funding increase will be applied to the utility's \$119-million infrastructure deficit."

Fredericton's capital budget for water and sewer in 2011 is \$1.8 million. It will finance a number of projects including: Northbrook

reservoir construction, the second phase of the sewer and water main in Devon and jobs in Forest Hill and McLeod Hill Road.

To maintain its aging water and sewer systems, rates in New Brunswick's Port City are going up. On Dec. 20, Saint John councillors approved an increase in water rates of 8.3% this year and 11% in 2012.

*News 88.9* said there were "heated exchanges in council chambers" when rates were discussed and that Deputy Mayor Stephen Chase believed the increases—\$72 this year and \$104 in 2012—were too high.

The city plans to resume work the \$1.039m storm sewer project on Woodward Avenue when the frost has completely disappeared. The sewer that runs from Millidgeville North School to Brentwood Crescent should be completed in May.

For the fifth consecutive year the property tax rate in Sackville was maintained. There were no changes in water and sewer rates.

There will be no property tax rate increase in Quispamsis in 2011. Sewer rates will go up \$12 to \$368/per unit. The town's water consumption charge will also increase.

The *Telegraph Journal* reported that Quispamsis' utility operating budget is \$2.137m. This will cover work on the Hampton Road (\$1.5m for a water main distribution system and \$1.3m for sewer line expansion), and \$1.5m for a treatment plan for the Wildwood subdivision and \$1.2m to enhance the collection system in Cedar Grove.

The tax rate in Sussex is \$4 lower this year than in 2010. But there will be a modest \$8 increase for water and sewer use—from \$368 to \$376—\$202 for sewer and \$174 for water.

The town has budgeted \$438,800 for its water supply and \$555,300 for sewerage.

The municipal tax rate in Rothesay dropped by 2¢ but water and sewer rates went up from 60¢ to 90¢/cu metre. Fixed water rates will go from \$160 to \$189 and sewer rates from \$250 to \$265/year.

Utility rates are also going up in St. Stephen. The town approved an increase of 13.5% in 2011 to pay for new infrastructure investments. Its water and sewer rates rose in 2009 by 17.5% and in 2010 by 12.5%.

On Dec. 20 the village of Belledune passed its general operating budget that included a decrease in the remuneration to the mayor and council. A water and sewerage rate of \$600/year for its 30 users was also endorsed.



Heavy rainfall Dec. 13 caused damage to highways and property in various locations throughout New Brunswick including this road in St. Stephen. (Photo: Communications New Brunswick)

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# Appleton council approves largest budget in town's history

■ BY MATT MOLLOY

## THE BEACON

An historic Town budget was passed in Appleton (Newfoundland & Labrador) last week (Dec. 20-24).

Council approved a \$562,000 balanced budget, the highest budget ever brought down in the town's near 50-year history.

The budget comes with no tax increases, and Mayor Derm Flynn said it's reflective of the growth Appleton continues to experience.

"It hasn't been huge, but relatively speaking, every time a new house goes up it's an extra thousand dollars or so on the bottom line of the budget," said Mr. Flynn of the growth. "That's been our saving grace, I suppose, in relation to keeping ahead of the expenses, because they never seem to go down."

Appleton is one of the youngest towns in Newfoundland and Labrador, and one of the growing towns in the under-5,000 population. Mayor Flynn said he would like nothing more than to spend money on things like more playground equipment and grassy fields, but money continues to be spent to do things such as road repair, and maintaining water and sewer pipes.

"Things like that happen every year," said Mayor Flynn. "In fact, it happens more and more as the town gets older. Some of the infrastructure in town is 30-plus years old, and those things have a life expectancy of 20 or 25 years. You hope to get 50 years out of them, but it doesn't always work like that."

One bit of maintenance that will continue around Appleton is ditching. With the amount of rain that's fallen so far this winter, along with the

amount of rain that fell over the year and when Hurricane Igor visited the area, the Town has done extensive work on water and runoff control so people aren't flooded out of house and home.

"If one house gets flooded, it's one house too many," said Mayor Flynn. "It seems like when we get rain now, we don't just get a shower, it rains for two and three days. It's just unbelievable the amount of water we've had to deal with over the past year. All of the water that lands above us has to come down through the town, so we're constantly involved with that and trying to do things to improve it. Those are expensive items."

The Town continually works on its ditching, which is extremely important, according to Mayor Flynn, because if work had to get done all at once, a few residents may lose their homes in the process.

"It's a huge concern, and one that keeps us awake at night," said Mayor Flynn. "We're always wondering about it, but that's the way it is."

Water and runoff control is one of the biggest expenses in the Town's public works area, but the major project is the water distribution service on Bowater Drive. Mayor Flynn said it's a huge undertaking, and a million dollar project, but it's work the Town is prepared to do.

Council has already gone to the provincial government for financial assistance.

"Because we didn't get approval to do the major project last year, we had to do some remediation work. We had several water breaks right on that line again, so we had to go do that. The work we did at that time will put us in good standing when we go and replace the rest of the line," said Mayor

Flynn. "That line was not replaced about 15 years ago when we put in the water tower, which services both Appleton and Glenwood. We have an application in before the Department of Municipal Affairs now for its capital Works Program for this coming year. We already have our borrowing approvals in place in order for the Town to do its part, and we're hoping that's going to get approved this coming year."

Council continues to keep in contact with government officials so they know the water distribution project isn't just a nice project for Appleton

and Glenwood — it's an essential one.

Whenever the line is shutdown due to breaks, it means residents of both towns could be affected from anywhere between an hour to days.

"It's an important project for us, and we'll be quite pleased when it's behind us."

Overall, Mayor Flynn is quite pleased with the Town's budget, and how Appleton continues to grow. He was happy to announce that council will continue with its discount programs for seniors, and that the town's tax collection currently sits at a staggering 99 per cent.

## Canso in *Catch-22* situation

Four major leaks in Canso's water system have propelled it into a *Catch-22* situation.

In order to fix the leaks, the Nova Scotia town will be forced to significantly increase its water rates from \$88.71 (2009-2010) to \$186.88 in 2012-13.

Last year Canso applied to the Nova Scotia Utility & Review Board (NSURB) to dissolve and join the Municipality of Guysborough.

But the town's infrastructure has to be in good working order before the merger is ap-

proved.

Canso's water treatment facility was built two years ago to meet federal regulations. Various levels of government financed the plant's construction but operation and maintenance expenses were not covered.

Canso's water rates have to be adjusted to ensure the treatment facility is self-sufficient.

A public meeting about its application to the NSURB to increase the water rates has been scheduled for March 1.

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