



Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater REPORT

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CBRM moving ahead with plans to establish regulated commission

■ BY ANDY WALKER

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality is establishing a new governance and operational structure for water and wastewater.

In a presentation to council in June, the manager of technical support services and utilities noted staff has been working on the file since last December. Greg Campbell explained the Water Utility and the wastewater department will become the CBRM Water and Wastewater Commission. The provincial Utilities and Review Board will regulate the commission.

“Under a commission structure and with the regulation and oversight of the review board, the transparency, accountability and sustainable financial resources will be available to meet federal discharge regulations in an acceptable timeframe,” Campbell told councillors during the presentation.

Those regulations require wastewater to be treated before re-entering the environment. Currently in CBRM, capital projects are underway to eventually treat all effluent from the municipal systems to comply with regulations. Some treatment plants are complete, such as the treatment plant in Dominion. The Battery Point treatment plant in Sydney will require upgrades to meet new regulations. Plants are under construction in Westmount, Glace Bay and Port Morien, while others in North Sydney, Louisbourg, New Victoria and New Waterford areas are planned but not yet funded.

The changes planned will modify how the delivery of water and removal of wastewater are funded. The new model will be entirely based on customer usage. Currently, the system is a combination of customer use billing and property tax billing.

The municipality has made a special request for legislation to the minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to set up the commission. The legislation is expected to be tabled during the autumn sitting of the legislature.

“Under the new model, residents will no longer see a sewer charge on their tax bill. The cost of wastewater collection and treatment services will appear as a separate line item on their water bill,” Campbell said. “The new commission will apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board



Construction continues on the Cape Breton Regional Municipality’s Sydney Harbour West Wastewater Treatment Plant. The municipality is planning for commissioning in September. (Cape Breton Regional Municipality photo)

to set rates. The next step in the project’s progress is a rate study to determine the appropriate rate for the service delivery.”

The CBRM Water Utility provides treated water to residential and commercial customers. Current customers are billed by water usage as recorded by their in-home meter. The operations of the CBRM wastewater department are supported by taxes. All residential and commercial taxpayers on municipal wastewater systems pay a sewer rate of \$0.191 per \$100 of assessment.

The proposed structure will remove the

wastewater component from the tax rates and will begin a user pay system that measures water usage and estimated discarding of wastewater. The addition of wastewater to the calculation reflects the service provision of sewer services that address water that leaves the home. Examples include water from showers, washing machines, toilet flushing and sprinklers.

Preliminary estimates for establishing the new commission were in the range of \$500,000 to \$600,000. Campbell told councillors the final cost has yet to be calculated but the project remains on budget.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

■ BY JEFF ROGERS

Summer is here, kind of. Hopefully everyone is enjoying their summer, even with all the rain.

Planning for the 2024 seminar in Saint John is under way. The education committee is working on topics for our autumn session workshops. If you have any topics that you would like to see or training that is needed in your area, please reach out to your zone rep or a member of the board.

Thank you to all applicants for submitting applications to the MPWWA bursary. Stay tuned to the website for the successful candidates.

INDEX	
Bridgewater upgrades	2
Infrastructure funding	3
Sewage improvements	4
Wastewater volumes	5
Utility master plan	6
Contract awarded	7
Protecting resources	8
Rate changes	9

ADDRESS LABEL HERE

Publication No. 40064799

Bridgewater awards \$2.2 million procurement for below-ground service upgrades

■ BY KEITH CORCORAN

A new water main, strengthened sanitary and storm sewer capacity and a road upgrade is bound for a section of Bridgewater's High Street, located on the town's west side.

The below-surface work is set to begin as the town continues to try and keep up with ongoing pressure to improve wastewater infrastructure, whether it be in terms of deadlines set down by other levels of government or to service the area near a new Highway 103 interchange.

In early June, town council endorsed its engineering department's recommendation and awarded a \$2.2 million procurement to Halifax County-based Dexter Construction to complete the job.

The scope of the work includes "road widening from the Victoria Road intersection and blending in near Empire Street intersection," reads the tender, available online. The job also involves "new storm, sanitary and water main replacement on High Street, including sanitary and water service laterals, one storm service lateral,



Work is expected to begin soon on below-ground services along a section of High Street in Bridgewater.

(File photo)

and hydrants along High Street." In addition, the labour involves "water main replacement and water service laterals along Victoria Road."

In her written report to council, Audrey Buchanan, the town's environmental services manager, said new water infrastructure is needed on High Street and St. Phillips Street to ensure domestic water and fire protection in the area of the new interchange and for future use of Bridgewater-owned land north of the new exit, slated to open next year.

"Since this work would have to proceed as part of the Exit 12A project, the town reviewed the two streets to be upgraded which already had wastewater upgrades proposed for future year capital work so this work was realigned to be completed at the same time as the water upgrades to provide construction efficiencies and minimize disturbance

to the residents on the street."

The town's attempt at a joint procurement for both projects resulted in the lowest qualified bid coming in more than \$6 million above what the town budgeted. Town council tasked staff with re-scoping and re-issuing tenders.

The St. Phillips Street job, which includes upgrading a water main to a new 600-millimetre diameter pipe, new separated sanitary and storm infrastructure and road reconstruction, was still under design, Buchanan explained to council on June 5.

During the same council session, town officials discussed applying to the province for money to help cover replacement of \$850,000 worth of some equipment at the LaHave Street sewage plant.

Bridgewater's mayor, David Mitchell, said it's all required labour.

"The bulk of the work we have to do over the next decade is wastewater," Mitchell said during the meeting. "It's going to be disruptive and it's very costly but, when we're done, then we have essentially replaced the majority of our system. We can chip away at a much more leisurely pace."

Mitchell described the circumstances as "short-term pain for long-term gain."

A 2018 study of Bridgewater's sanitary stormwater system estimated that spending of between \$25 million to \$48 million would be needed to meet sewage facilities and operations requirements dictated by other levels of government.

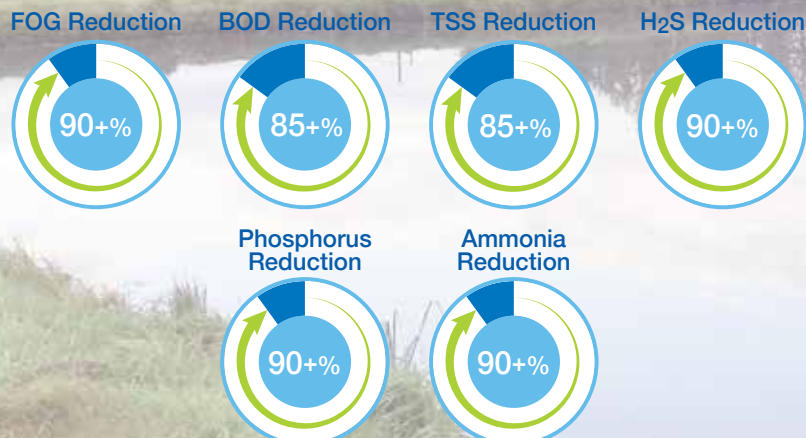
Wastewater overflows have to be eliminated by 2039, a deadline that's left municipalities, some fortunate to secure additional public funding, rushing to make expensive upgrades to aging equipment.



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Infrastructure funding announced in four Nova Scotia communities

■ BY ANDY WALKER

Water and wastewater infrastructure in four Nova Scotia communities will be upgraded thanks to joint funding from the three levels of government.

In Mahone Bay, the project will increase fire flows, support new development and increase the capacity to treat and manage wastewater and stormwater to the more than 70 commercial, residential and institutional properties in the area. The project will replace and upgrade water, wastewater and stormwater lines on Main Street to increase the capacity to treat and manage wastewater and stormwater, as well as allow for future development.

Under the Green Infrastructure Stream, Ottawa will contribute \$2,234,000 while the province will be adding \$1,861,667 and the municipality will provide \$1,489,333.

"This provincial and federal support for planned water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades in Mahone Bay meets an essential capability to move our town forward," Mayor David DeVenne explained.

"Our town water and wastewater systems will be enabled to keep pace with changing regulatory requirements while meeting our community needs and addressing the changing climate. We could not achieve these goals without the support of our provincial and federal partners."

In Yarmouth, three interdependent projects that are in close physical proximity will increase the capacity to treat and manage wastewater and stormwater and increase access to potable water. The Vancouver Street intersection will be improved, including the water lines supplying the Yarmouth Regional Hospital.

In the neighbouring combined sewer overflow, a tidal check valve will be installed to prevent tidal water from entering the combined sewer system. The Gardner Street Lift Station will be disconnected from the stormwater connection to receive a new exterior dedicated line and outfall.

The federal government, through its Rural and Northern Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, will be contributing \$959,600. The provincial government will be contributing \$799,667 while the town will provide \$639,733.

"We are tremendously thankful to both the federal government and the province



Workers repair a water pipe in the street.

(22rus83 photo/Bigstock.com)

of Nova Scotia for the funding provided for this much-needed project," said Yarmouth Mayor Pam Mood. "Upgrading the water and sewer infrastructure in this location is an important part of the work we need to do, work that can only be done when all levels of government work together."

In the Municipality of the District of Clare, this funding will enable the expansion of wastewater infrastructure in the community of Meteghan River on the site of a proposed housing development on Sunset Road.

Through the Green Infrastructure Stream, the federal government will provide \$623,200, with the provincial share being \$519,333 and the municipality adding \$415,467.

"By way of this project, the municipality is not only investing in its capacity to manage wastewater, it is also enabling the construction of new, eco-friendly housing stock and increasing both the amount and variety of affordable housing options within the municipality," explained Yvon LeBlanc,

warden for the Municipality of the District of Clare.

Meanwhile in Digby, funding under the Rural and Northern Infrastructure Stream will enable the municipality to bring a section of Mount Street up to current wastewater standards and make it possible to service the residential buildings that will be built on the vacant land. The project will replace deteriorated water and sewer infrastructure from Victoria Street to King to improve services to residents and allow for future development. Ottawa will be contributing \$936,000, with the province adding \$780,000 and the municipality's share pegged at \$624,000.

"The Mount Street improvements, such as the surface refinishing, sidewalks and upgrades to our water and wastewater, will mean a safer neighbourhood and more opportunities for housing developments," said Digby Mayor Ben Cleveland.

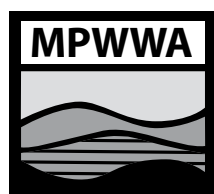
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Sean Fraser, who is also the MP for Central Nova, announced the federal por-

tion of the funding on behalf of his cabinet colleague, Dominic LeBlanc, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities.

"The Government of Canada is committed to supporting infrastructure projects that enable communities to grow and thrive," Fraser said. "The investment in wastewater infrastructure for four communities in Nova Scotia announced today will help protect our water supply from environmental threats, ensuring that community growth is green and inclusive."

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Lohr announced the provincial funding for the four projects.

"Our municipalities depend on modern infrastructure to be competitive and attract new residents to their communities. By making these investments, we will improve the efficiency of the water and wastewater systems, ensuring residents and businesses have the services they expect and depend on every day and laying the foundation for continued growth for years to come," he said.



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Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater Report
2882 Gottingen St.
Halifax, NS, B3K 3E2
Phone: 902-422-4990
Fax: 902-429-9058
Email:
raissatetanish@advocatemediainc.com



Governments pledge millions toward Chester wastewater service upgrades

■ BY KEITH CORCORAN

Two other levels of government announced multi-million dollar spending commitments to aid the upcoming expansion of below-street service piping to benefit a proposed Stanford Lake Road housing project and improvements to the Nauss Point Road sewage treatment plant.

The federal government, to the tune of \$3.34 million, and province, at \$2.78 million, recently announced its funding pledge, which will combine with the Municipality of the District of Chester's (MODC) commitment of \$2.24 million toward the effort. Optimistically, said Warden Allen Webber, the work will start before summer's end and finish before 2024.

In an Infrastructure Canada news release, Webber said the spending is "critical" to the area's prosperity and the project will attract future development.

"It's expensive to do this sort of stuff," he added, during a phone interview. "Without the help of the (other levels of government), it would be very difficult for us to do what needs to be done to accommodate growth in our community."

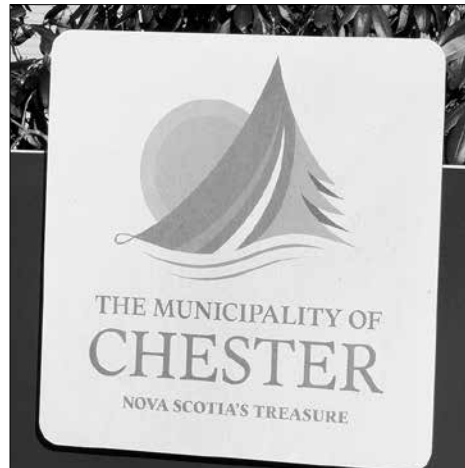
The \$8-million project involves modernizing the wastewater treatment plant in the village and, as the news release indicated, "help release cleaner water into neighbouring waterways." MODC expects to have an improved, increased and better performing wastewater infrastructure and service delivery, while providing sewer capacity to a new housing development project.

Last year, Kings County-based Halyard Developments indicated its intention to build more than 200 units of housing on 21 hectares of Stanford Lake Road property, which borders the community of Robinsons Corner. The Kentville company applied to MODC to build about 62 structures as part of a development coined Chester Hills.

The existing major piping ends in the area of the corner of Highway 3 and Stanford Lake Road, Webber said, about a kilometre away from Halyard's property.

"Everybody knows there's a housing crisis, everybody knows we need more homes and that kind of stuff, and the biggest role we can play in that it to expand the services we provide to make it easier for developers to do so," said Webber.

In the news release, Chester-St. Marga-



An \$8 million-plus upgrade to sewage service infrastructure is planned for Chester. (File photo)



Warden Allen Webber, Municipality of the District of Chester.

(File photo)

ret's MLA Danielle Barkhouse said new infrastructure projects are key for municipalities to be competitive and attract new residents. Barkhouse, a MODC councillor before entering provincial politics, said it sets "the foundation for continued growth for years to come."

Salem water project to move ahead with gas tax reserves

■ BY RAISSA TETANISH

Quality water will soon be coming to homes in the Salem area.

During the Municipality of Pictou County's council meeting on July 4, council was unanimous in awarding the Salem Water Project tender to BD Clifton, the lowest of four bids for the project coming in at \$2.327 million.

The county is funding the project using federal gas tax reserves, a decision councillors made during a property services meeting back in March.

"That community is very upset because they're getting the brunt end of things here through no fault of theirs," said the warden at that meeting regarding the Salem Loop water and wastewater project. "They expected this project to go through like many others we approve here, then we go spend our money on design and whatnot, which we did for \$60,000, with no reason to believe it wasn't going to be approved."

During the February property services meeting, Warden Parker spoke

about the province denying the municipality's request for funding for the project. The municipality had applied through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Green Stream. Without provincial approval, the project wouldn't see federal assistance. The entire project, which would see water and wastewater lines extended for about two kilometres, was originally budgeted around \$5 million, however costs had increased to more than \$6 million.

Thirty homes in the area were to benefit.

During its meeting in March, chief administrative officer Brian Cullen told those around the council table they had an estimated cost of \$2.7 million, including net HST, for just the water project. He presented three options for funding, with the recommendation being gas tax reserves.

The municipality is expecting work to begin late this summer, with a completion goal by the end of the calendar year.

Infrastructure funding announced for Kentville

■ BY ANDY WALKER

A joint contribution of more than \$9.7 million has been announced for new water and wastewater infrastructure in Kentville.

The town will install new water distribution pipes, sanitary sewer collection pipes and a stormwater management system, as well as replace an existing water tank and treatment plant under the future Donald E. Hiltz Connector Road, which will connect the Kentville Business Park to Prospect Avenue.

Under the Rural and Northern Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, the federal government is providing \$3,893,200 for the project. The Nova Scotian government is contributing \$3,244,333, while the Town of Kentville is spending \$2,595,467.

"Kentville is poised for growth and prosperity," said Mayor Sandra Snow. "Our partners at both the federal and provincial level of government have recognized our commitment with this funding. The Donald Hiltz Connector will increase the opportunities that encourage continued growth and prosperity in our town, including social prosperity. The potential is within our grasp, as we plan for com-

mercial, residential and recreational uses of the land. We continue to be true to our brand promise, to be a breath of fresh air."

She added the financial contributions will increase capacity to treat and manage wastewater and stormwater while opening up new land to build housing in Kentville.

"Investing in improved wastewater and drinking water facilities is an important part of delivering on our government's priority to build vibrant and sustainable communities," explained Kody Blois, MP for Kings-Hants, who announced the federal funding on behalf of Dominic LeBlanc, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities. "With projects like this one, we are not only preserving public health and protecting the environment, we are also equipping communities with the infrastructure they need for population growth and economic recovery."

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Lohr called the announcement "a great day for the Town of Kentville."

"This investment will open up a vast new area for housing demand and other opportunities for years to come," he said. "Building upon years of demand for housing in the community, this is a great area for more development."

Profiling municipal wastewater systems in Canada from 2018 to 2020

Canadian municipalities reported a 3.9 per cent decrease in wastewater volumes in 2020 to 5,793 million cubic metres, following a 4.7 per cent increase in wastewater volumes in 2019, according to a study Statistic Canada compiled.

The year 2020 marks the third decline of wastewater volumes since the start of the series in 2013. Similar to previous years, 3.7 per cent of wastewater, including combined sewer overflows, was untreated prior to being discharged in 2020.

In 2020, just under 5,800 million cubic metres of sewage flowed through municipal wastewater systems in Canada. These systems receive sewage discharged from residential, industrial, commercial and institutional sources. The volume also includes stormwater that enters the collection pipes, which convey the wastewater to treatment plants before discharge to surface water sources such as lakes, rivers or oceans.

From a provincial standpoint, seven of 10 provinces recorded lower volumes of sewage processed by collection and treatment systems in 2020, with Ontario (-5.3 per cent) and Quebec (-5.1 per cent) contributing the most to the decline. Combined, volumes of processed waste-

water in Quebec and Ontario accounted for around 71 per cent of Canada's total.

An additional 117 million cubic metres was reported to be discharged from combined sewer overflows in 2020. Combined sewer systems convey both stormwater and sewage to wastewater treatment plants. Many of these systems have multiple overflow structures that may discharge untreated sewage mixed with stormwater into receiving waters when full capacity has been reached during intense runoff.

In 2020, 1,449 million cubic metres of wastewater was discharged from primary treatment systems, which removes a portion of suspended solids and organic matter by physical and/or chemical processes.

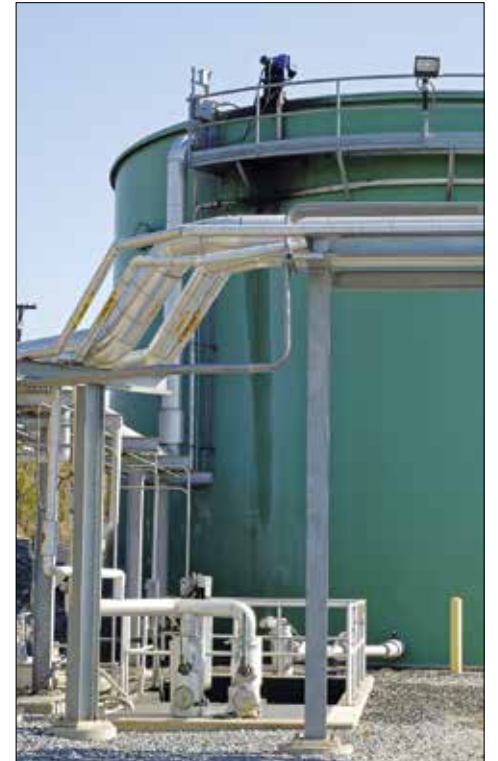
Secondary treatment systems, which remove biodegradable organic matter and suspended solids using biological treatment processes and secondary settlement, processed 2,776 million cubic metres of wastewater.

Tertiary systems, which further remove residual suspended solids, nutrients and other contaminants using various physical, chemical or biological processes, released 1,466 million cubic

metres of wastewater. Systems that provide no treatment discharged 102 million cubic metres of wastewater back into the environment in 2020.

The total volume of untreated wastewater from systems that provided no treatment and combined sewer overflow that was discharged amounted to 219 million cubic metres in 2020. This is equivalent to about 3.7 per cent of all wastewater collected and discharged by municipal wastewater systems in Canada.

In 2020, just under 31.5 million people were served by municipal wastewater systems that have daily flows that process 100 cubic metres or more per day. Primary treatment systems served almost 5 million people, secondary treatment systems processed wastewater for 15.6 million people, and tertiary treatment systems served 10.3 million people. Over 672,000 people discharged their wastewater into systems that provide no treatment. The remaining 5 million people either had their own on-site wastewater system or were served either by other systems with daily flows less than 100 cubic metres per day or by other facilities outside the scope of this statistical activity.



A modern industrial waste and stormwater treatment plant.

(EyeMark photo/Bigstock.com)

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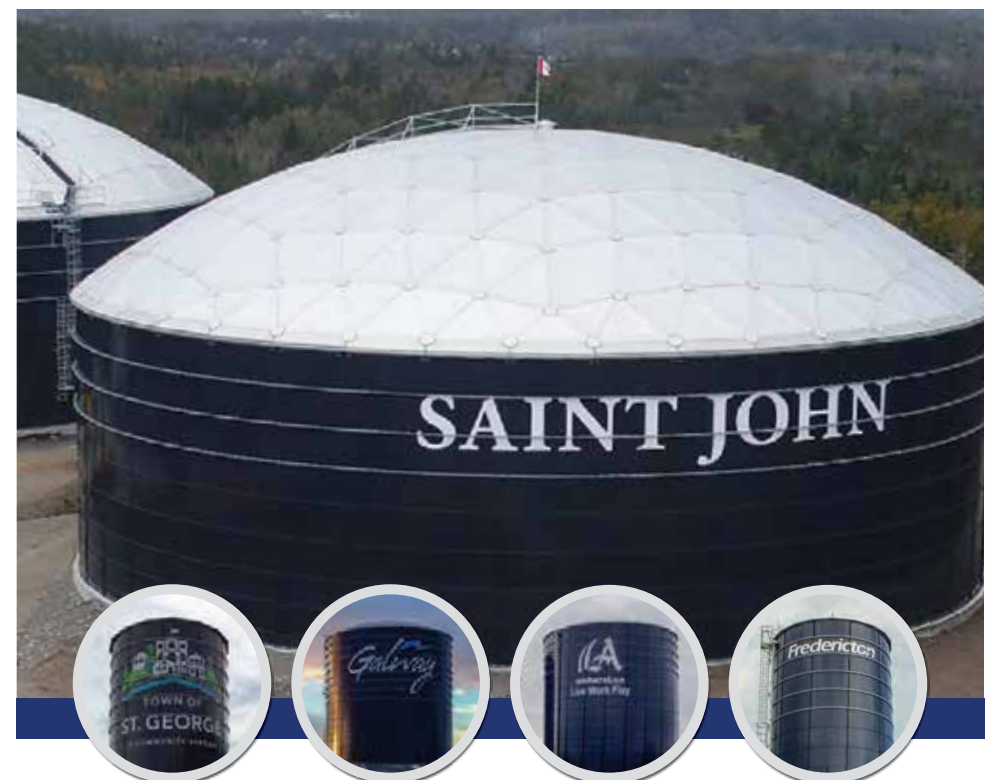


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Federal funds to help modernize St. Peter’s infrastructure

Drinking water infrastructure in St. Peter’s will soon be modernized thanks to government funding announced this spring.

Through the joint funding, the Village of St. Peter’s will be able to replace and upgrade an aging water main on Pepperell Street, which will improve access to drinking water and fire flows, which fire-fighters rely on.

Through the Green Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, the federal government is providing \$633,600 for the project. The province is contributing \$528,000.

“This project will help us to improve the sustainability of aging infrastructure, provide clean water in an environmentally responsible manner and improve our firefighting flows to the village of St. Peter’s,” said Barry Culligan, chair of the St. Peter’s, Samsonville and Area Water Utility. “Thanks to this wonderful

partnership, we are finally able to move forward on the mandated improvement of the utility’s aging infrastructure and the improvement of its existing services with regards to firefighting flows. A great day for everyone involved.”

Allan MacMaster, deputy premier and minister of Finance and Treasury Board, said the contribution will mean residents continue having a safe and reliable water supply.

“These are strong communities with bright futures,” he said, while acknowledging MLA Trevor Boudreau’s help in the project.”

Cape Breton-Canso MP Mike Kelloway said high standards for drinking water quality will be met through the upgrades.

“This will be done in a safe, healthy and environmentally sustainable way in accordance to all of the federal government’s green initiatives,” he said.

Cornwall awards tender to develop utility master plan

■ BY ANDY WALKER

The fastest growing municipality in Atlantic Canada is developing a master plan for its water and sewer utility.

According to the 2021 census, the suburban town of Cornwall on the western edge of Charlottetown saw a 22.9 per cent population increase from 2016 to 2021, going from 5,348 to 6,574. That makes it the fastest growing municipality with more than 5,000 people in the Atlantic region and the 14th fastest growing municipality in the country.

Coun. Jill MacIsaac explained the water and sewer infrastructure requires significant upgrade and a master plan is necessary to evaluate the existing

system and make short and long-term recommendations for improvements. The veteran councillor said the town, incorporated in 1995 through an amalgamation of three smaller municipalities, wants to ensure long-range planning takes into account both the steady population growth and the potential impacts of climate change.

Council awarded the contract for the work to exp. at a cost of \$126,548 plus HST. That firm submitted the lowest of three bids received for a request for proposals. The town received funding through the Gas Tax program for the study and Coun. MacIsaac said the tender falls within the \$132,000 that had been budgeted.



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Stratford gives green light to new wastewater infrastructure

■ BY ANDY WALKER

The Town of Stratford has awarded a \$1.2 million contract for a new water reservoir on the Georgetown Road.

In moving the motion, Deputy Mayor Stephen Gallant said Greatario Engineered Storage Systems submitted the only bid, coming in at \$1,241,000 plus HST. The deputy mayor noted the company has a proven track record with many water reservoir projects throughout Atlantic Canada and across Canada, including the town's current water reservoir. He noted the bid is within the \$1,300,000 approved for the project in the capital budget.

Gallant also noted the town had obtained \$587,145.98 for the project through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to construct the second water reservoir alongside the existing reservoir on Georgetown Road. The deputy mayor said the project will increase water storage capacity needed for the significant growth and increased water demand within the town.

The town also awarded Hanson Electric a \$695,000 contract (excluding HST) for the construction of the Bunbury Sewer

Lift Station upgrades, including replacing pumps and a flow meter, and installing a generator for backup power supply. The deputy mayor explained the bid was the lowest of two submitted with both bids being over the allocated budget amount of \$600,000. The project is receiving \$288,750 through the Municipal Strategic Component of the Canada Community Building Fund.

Deputy Mayor Gallant explained they negotiated a reduced scope of work with Hansen Electric resulting in a reduction in construction cost of \$105,000, from \$800,000 to \$695,050 excluding HST. The engineering fee is estimated to be \$40,000 excluding HST, for an estimated total project cost of \$735,050.00 excluding HST. This results in a cost overrun of \$135,050. He explained the town take the extra money from the Sewer Treatment Reserve Fund.

As well, council awarded Island Coastal a \$1,679,646.83 contract for upgrades to the Corish Sewer Lift Station. The company bid was the lowest of two submitted but was still over the budgeted amount of \$1,203,500.

The engineering fee is estimated to be

\$43,500 excluding HST, for an estimated total project cost of \$1,723,146.83 excluding HST, resulting in a cost overrun of \$519,646.83. The project, which includes replacing all pumping components and installing an above ground valve structure

and a generator for backup power supply is receiving approximately \$486,000.00 through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The cost overrun will also be coming out of Sewer Treatment Reserve Fund.

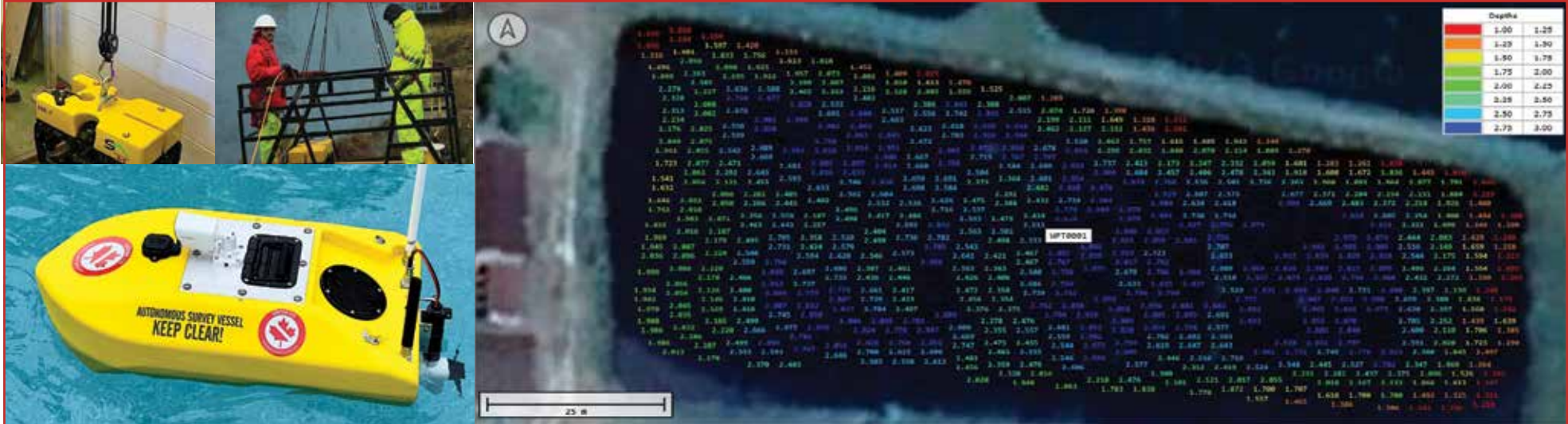


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P.E.I. developing climate action plan

■ BY ANDY WALKER

Protecting water and wastewater resources will be a major focus of the development of a climate action plan in the P.E.I. capital.

Charlottetown recently released the first phase for the development of its action plan, noting “Climate-related events such as heavy precipitation, drought and storms can negatively impact water supply and treatment infrastructure and cause stress across watersheds.”

Given Charlottetown’s reliance on groundwater and wells, the report recommends climate-resilient water systems are best achieved through an integrated approach that includes watershed protection, managing water consumption, and protecting water-related infrastructure including drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems.

The report recommends a focus on partnerships and programs to protect the various watersheds in the city including Ellen’s Creek, Wright’s Creek, Winter River and the Cornwall and Area Watersheds. To help prevent and

manage flooding in an era of climate change, the report recommends adapting water infrastructure such as the Wastewater Treatment Plant and storm water management systems to future precipitation projections.

Priority areas include a focus on prioritizing resilience and mitigation approaches for water and wastewater infrastructure and advancing requirements for storm water infrastructure design to accommodate projected increases in precipitation. It also advocates water conservation and reuse initiatives, and working with regional partners on watershed protection initiatives.

The proposal recommends building on past initiatives like a 2014 conservation plan to improve the health of streams within the island capital and support the health of brook trout and a water conservation plan developed at the same time.

The new report suggests the capital continue to invest in green infrastructure to reduce stormwater intrusion into storm sewers and adopt nature-based solutions to mitigate coastal hazards and storm water.

Funding announced for infrastructure improvements in Arcadia

■ BY ANDY WALKER

Funding from the three levels of government will help revitalize the sewage treatment lagoon in the Village of Arcadia.

Close to \$400,000 was announced in early July for the project in the Gagetown area.

“We are grateful to our federal and provincial partners for their contributions to this worthy project,” said Arcadia Mayor Derek Pleadwell. “Arcadia is excited to begin this much needed project.”

The Government of Canada is providing \$235,980 for this project through the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The provincial government is contributing \$131,087 and the Village of Arcadia is providing \$26,233.

The project will optimize the lagoon operations to improve the reliability of the treatment systems and protect the health of the environment and residents.

The work will include the construction of a pad to install bag filtration systems that will dehydrate the biosolids. A licensed disposal facility will remove the biosolids that build up on the bottom of the lagoon.

“Investments in modern wastewater infrastructure protect the health of local ecosystems and enable communities to welcome new residents,” said Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities Minister Dominic LeBlanc when announcing the federal funding. “Working alongside our provincial partners, our government will continue to support projects like this one and improve the lives of New Brunswickers right across the province.”

Réjean Savoie, minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, said contributing to this infrastructure benefits residents and helps build a vibrant and sustainable community. Savoie said his department is “pleased to work with municipalities across the province to help fund their infrastructure priorities.”

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Woodstock approves water, sewer rate changes

■ **BY JIM DUMVILLE**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After approving some text adjustments to the final draft, Woodstock council unanimously approved the final reading to water and sewer amendments affecting utility rates and the billing system.

The new water and sewer rates, which will eliminate, at least temporarily, water metres for residential use, sets a four-tier flat rate system. Homeowners will see a significant jump in their annual utility costs.

Finance director Kristen Pelky said the town expected to issue the 2023 utilities by the third week of July.

Tier 1 sets a rate of \$550 annually for residents who previously paid an annual average of \$450 or less. The Tier 2 rate is

\$750 annually, affecting those previously paying between \$451 and \$600. Tier 3's rate of \$825 annually will include those previously averaging \$601 to \$750. Tier 4 will see residents who previously paid \$751 and higher now paying \$925 annually.

Mayor Trina Jones noted that property owners will have the option for equalized payments. Low-income families with an annual of \$47,5000 or less can apply for financial relief.

The mayor also pointed out the rate changes reflect the town's need to meet the demands of an aging water and sewer system in need of significant upgrades.

The bylaw sets rates for new dwellings or new owners at the Tier 2 level, and multi-unit buildings will be charged \$350 per unit annually.

Under the new bylaw, low-consumption commercial rates would see busi-

nesses billed for water at \$550 per year and sewer at \$350 annually. The bylaw will calculate large commercial and industrial metered rates of \$5.88/1,000 gallons.

Jones also explained the changes are not designed to be permanent, noting staff and council will review all fee schedules and billing systems within a year.

She said the town would also closely monitor water usage under the new structure, including any negative impacts on water conservation.

Jones said the town still wants to consider the potential of smart metering and will study that and other options over the next two to three years.

River Valley Sun



A water main break in June 2022 left almost the entire town of Woodstock without water. Mayor Trina Jones said that type of emergency fuels the need for increased revenue to repair the town's aging and deteriorating utility infrastructure.

(Stephen Chisholm photo, River Valley Sun)

Funding announced for three northern New Brunswick communities

■ **BY ANDY WALKER**

Officials from the three levels of government announced more than \$3.4 million to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure in three communities in Northern New Brunswick during a recent visit to Vallée-des-Rivières.

The Town of Saint-Léonard in Vallée-des-Rivières will upgrade the water network and connection infrastructure on Honoré-Roy Street (Bellefleur, Champlain and Roland J. Martin areas), which will increase the quality and pressure of the drinking water. The project will also replace sections of sewer to improve wastewater and stormwater management. Additionally, it will increase the town's capacity to serve new housing projects, which are in demand in the region.

Ottawa will be contributing \$339,187 under the Green Infrastructure Program while the province will be kicking in \$282,628 and the municipal contribution will be \$226,153.

"The local council of Vallée-des-Rivières is grateful to our governments for the water infrastructure investment upgrades, not only for our municipality, but for other municipalities across northwest New Brunswick," said Mayor Lise Anne Roussel. "For Vallée-des-Rivières, it represents an opportunity for both economical and housing development, an important step in building a strong and viable community for our generations of today and tomorrow."

The Town of Heron Bay received funding under the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure program to separate existing storm and wastewater sewers and replace fire hydrants and drinking water lines on a section of Adelaide Street, from

Renfrew to the east end. This will increase the town's capacity to manage wastewater and stormwater and provide better access to drinking water.

The federal government will provide \$1,618,648 with \$899,159 coming from the province of New Brunswick and \$179,940 from the municipality.

Meanwhile, Haut-Madawaska will refurbish a water reservoir and well in the Baker Brook area to ensure longevity and capacity to provide good quality water for years to come. This will increase the community's access to drinking water.

The federal government will be contributing \$469,424 under the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure program, while the province is contributing \$260,765 and there is \$52,184 in municipal funding.

"Our communities deserve clean and safe drinking water," said René Arsenault, MP for Madawaska-Restigouche, who announced the federal funding on behalf of Dominic LeBlanc, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities.

"That is why we are proud to support improvements to water infrastructure in New Brunswick communities. This funding will allow these three communities to restore and improve their aging infrastructure while increasing their capacity to treat and manage wastewater and stormwater. This will ensure the longevity of the infrastructure and better safeguard the health and environment of our citizens for years to come."

Réjean Savoie, minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, said "Investing in these infrastructure projects in three communities in the northwestern part of the province will help prepare the region for future growth."

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Funding for wastewater infrastructure in two New Brunswick communities

■ BY ANDY WALKER

Over \$4 million in water and wastewater infrastructure improvements has been announced for two New Brunswick communities.

The Municipal District of St. Stephen will see separation of combined sewers and upgrades to underground infrastructure on a section of School Street, from Queen to Main streets. The federal government will contribute \$680,000 to the project, while the New Brunswick government will add \$566,610 and the municipality will spend \$453,390.

There will be a second project to separate the combined sewers and upgrade underground infrastructure on a 425-metre section of Union Street between Hawthorne and West streets. The federal portion of the project will cost \$704,000, with the province’s share pegged at \$586,608 and the municipality paying \$469,392.

“This funding is a great example of the benefits that can be achieved when munic-

ipal, provincial and federal governments work collaboratively for the public interest,” said Mayor Allan MacEachern. “We look forward to continued partnership as St. Stephen works to address its infrastructure deficit over the coming years. Our community will not only appreciate the newly paved streets, but they will also benefit from the improved and updated water, sewer and stormwater lines underground being more dependable and efficient.”

Mayor MacEachern said the upgrades will decrease costly repairs and avoid the wasted energy used to treat and pump stormwater at the treatment facility. The work will include constructing new storm sewers, replacing existing water mains, adding several catch basins and manholes, as well as renewing the asphalt on School Street and Union Street. Combined sewer separation projects will help reduce the chance of a sanitary pump failure during flooding events, reduce the risk of basement flooding for residents and lower operation and maintenance costs.

Meanwhile, the Nackawic-Millville Rural Community will see upgrades to the trickling filter system at the wastewater treatment facility serving the north side of Nackawic. Upgrades will include the replacement of the settling and humus tanks, replacement of the aluminum dome structure and a UV disinfection system at the outlet.

The federal government is providing \$313,344, with the province spending \$261,094 and the municipality paying \$208,922.

“We are very pleased with the support of our federal and provincial partners for this critical infrastructure project that will upgrade and extend the life our current facility,” said Mayor Tim Fox. “Without the financial support of both levels of government, this project would not have been able to be completed.”

The federal government is investing a total of \$1,697,344 in the three projects with all the money coming from the Green Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in

Canada Infrastructure Program.

“Investing in water and wastewater infrastructure is critical for the growth and health of our communities and environment,” said Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities Minister Dominic LeBlanc. “Upgrading these assets in Nackawic-Millville and St. Stephen will better protect homes from flooding events and contribute to healthier Saint John and St. Croix Rivers.”

The New Brunswick government is spending a combined total of \$1,414,312 on the three projects. Réjean Savoie, minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, said funding improvements such as these are part of the government’s commitment for building vibrant and sustainable communities.

“These projects will provide the Nackawic-Millville and St. Stephen with increased access to potable water, improved capacity to manage wastewater and stormwater, as well as better streets,” said Savoie.

MPWWA Executive 2023

Chair, Jeff Rogers
Town of Quispamsis
Fax: 506-849-5799
Cell: 506-333-0610
jrogers@quispamsis.ca

Past Chair, Jerry Villard
Town of Stratford
Phone: 902-393-6281
Fax: 902-569-5000
Cell: 902-393-6281
jvillard@townofstratford.ca

Zone 1, Vacant

Zone 2, Troy Atkinson, Vice Chair
CRTP Service Coordinator
Cell: 506-381-9811
troyatkinson77@yahoo.ca

Zone 3, Jeff Rogers
Town of Quispamsis
Fax: 506-849-5799
Cell: 506-333-0610
jrogers@quispamsis.ca

Zone 4, Rick Larlee
City of Fredericton
Phone: 506-460-2224
Fax: 506-460-2013
Cell: 506-474-3472
rick.larlee@fredericton.ca

Zone 5, Shane White
Municipality of Lunenburg
Ph: 902-521-2023
shane.white@modl.ca

Zone 6, Vacant

Zone 7, Kevin Kelloway
Halifax Water
Phone: 902-869-4290
Fax: 902-435-8403
Cell: 902-717-2353
kevink@halifaxwater.ca

Zone 8, Ross MacInnis
Town of Port Hawkesbury
Cell: 902-227-7143
rmacinnis@townofph.ca

Zone 9, Jerry Villard
Town of Stratford
Phone: 902-393-6281
Fax: 902-569-5000
Cell: 902-393-6281
jvillard@townofstratford.ca

Zone 10, Vacant

Zone 11, Corbin Stevens
AFNWA,
Ph: 902-297-2683
corbin.stevens@afnwa.ca

Zone 12, Tim Henman
DND
Eastern Passage
Phone: 902-427-3797
Fax: 902-427-0212
Cell: 902-802-3595
timothy.henman@forces.gc.ca

Secretary, Jerry Villard
Town of Stratford
Phone: 902-393-6281
Fax: 902-569-5000
Cell: 902-393-6281
jvillard@townofstratford.ca

Treasurer, Rick Larlee
City of Fredericton
Phone: 506-460-2224
Fax: 506-460-2013
Cell: 506-474-3472
rick.larlee@fredericton.ca

Executive Secretary, Clara Shea
MPWWA
Phone: 902-434-8874
Fax: 902-434-8859
Cell: 902-830-9208
contact@mpwwa.ca

Environment Canada, Paul Klaamas
Environment Canada
Phone: 902-426-4378
Fax: 902-426-6434
paul.klaamas@canada.ca

New Brunswick, Devin Wells
Ph: 506-259-5970
devin.wells@gnb.ca

Nova Scotia, Simon Yap
NS Environment, Halifax
Phone: 902-225-5037
simon.yap@novascotia.ca



PEI, Ben Lanigan
Charlottetown
Phone: 902-368-5043
Fax: 902-368-5830
bplanigan@gov.pe.ca

Newfoundland, Deneen Spracklin
St. John's, NL
Phone: 709-729-1158
Fax: 709-729-0320
Cell: 709-693-0296
dspracklin@gov.nl.ca

Commercial Rep, Melanie MacKinnon
Fall River
Phone: 902-861-4710
Fax: 902-861-1366
Cell: 902-802-8238
melanie@nulantic.ca

Seminar Coordinator, Rob Hamilton
Ph: 506-639-4131
rhammer13@hotmail.com

Commercial Rep, Andre Van Der Velden
Dartmouth
Phone: 902-450-1177
Fax: 902-450-1170
Cell: 506-852-0411
andre.van.der.velden@xyleminc.com

Webmaster, Rick Larlee
City of Fredericton
Phone: 506-460-2224
Fax: 506-460-2013
Cell: 506-474-3472
rick.larlee@fredericton.ca

Training Coordinator, Tim Henman
DND
Eastern Passage
Phone: 902-427-3797
Fax: 902-427-0212
Cell: 902-802-3595
timothy.henman@forces.gc.ca

Summer public works projects underway in St. Stephen

■ **BY ROBERT FISHER**

ST. STEPHEN – As one public works project winds down in St. Stephen, another has begun.

Crews have started road work on School Street north of Union while the public plaza project at the corner of King Street and Milltown Boulevard is winding down.

Zach Best of Dillon Consulting, which is managing the School Street project, estimates they will finish the work by the end of October except for the final asphalt course, which will come next summer. The project will see new water and sanitary services extend to residential property boundaries on the street where work is being done.

Crews are digging out old pipe infrastructure, some of it more than a century old, and updating the water and wastewater infrastructure.

Chief administrative officer Jeff Renaud said upgrading the underground piping is something they have been doing over the past several years to separate storm runoff from sewage. Historically the two have been funneled into the same pipe and flowed to the wastewater treatment plant, “which puts extra stress on the sewage lagoon.”

Renaud said that means more expense to treat water that doesn’t require it.

“What we do now is separate the storm

off so it can go naturally back to the river where it wants to go, (with) the ultimate goal to reduce costs and get more efficient.”

Separating the two helps build capacity in the system without enlarging it, which results in taxpayer savings in the long run if the town doesn’t have to expand the facility before it’s required.

Funding for large infrastructure projects like this comes primarily from grants the municipality can access. Renaud said the federal gas tax fund is one they have relied on and is stable. Smaller municipalities like St. Stephen don’t have the property tax base to fund large projects, and they turn to available grant programs for assistance.

Renaud said over the past several years, that is how they completed King Street, Milltown Boulevard and Prince William Street.

“We continue to talk to our partners at the other levels of government and find other ways to finance these much-needed projects,” he added.



Crews have started digging up School Street as part of the project to replace water mains and separate storm and wastewater piping before resurfacing. There is similar work being done on Union Street. The anticipated completion, with the first course of asphalt, is Oct. 31.

(Robert Fisher photo)

Renaud said costs of \$1 million per 100 metres are “in that order of magnitude” when underground infrastructure is involved.

The project on Union Street was \$241,000 over budget and the School Street project for similar work was \$255,000 over budget. The utility reserve fund will cover most of the cost overruns.

Renaud said the GEMTEC report,

which the firm presented to council last month, discussed the utility system, project financing, billing and building reserves.

“Some decisions will be forthcoming from council on rates and other things that are going to need to be looked at will impact how quickly those reserves can be replenished,” Renaud said.

Another finding in the GEMTEC report was a significant billing arrears balance in the water utility. Renaud said staff and council are looking at options for addressing the arrears. They may look at shortening timelines for payment and, if necessary, shutting off ratepayers

who are behind. He said being a small town where everybody knows everybody and with small town culture, they don’t like to turn people’s water off.

“From a purely business side, we have to be looking at turning those valves off in order to get compliance with payment and collect those funds,” he said, adding council has indicated it wants to see a plan to improve the status quo.



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For further information please contact:

Brad Matchett
Operations Manager, The Panel Shop
506-455-1925
Bradley.Matchett@pennecon.com

Mark Whalen
Controls & Automation Manager, Pennecon
mwhalen@pennecon.com

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