

Miramichi RSC improving service, image, says director

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

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The most public example came when Miramichi city councillors suggested earlier this year that planners were too strict in the way they dealt with clients and that its methods could, at worst, discourage people from investing in the city.

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Overall, the value of construction throughout the Miramichi region



Wilson Bell, executive director of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission. PHOTO: MIRAMICHI LEADER ARCHIVE

registered in at \$48.77 million for the year, including \$10.54 million in the region's unincorporated areas.

Even so, Bell noted that – in the city's case – the commission has already taken it upon itself to examine some of the city's bylaws to determine whether there is any room for improvement.

"We drafted the city's building bylaw last year and we had recently identified a few things in that that we wanted to tweak," he said. "And in the fall we'll be, for lack of a better term, be looking at some housekeeping amendments that we've identified in the zoning bylaw, basically some administrative type things that we could stand to clean up that would make it easier to administer."

While none of these changes would classify as major, Bell said the RSC is constantly examining what it does and trying to determine if there's a better way.

As for what the city chooses to do about its relationship with the commission, the ball remains in their court.

The Department of Environment and Local Government confirmed that individual municipalities can opt out of the planning side of the service commission, albeit only after they provide two year's notice.

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Noel was instructed by council in March to look into the "benefits and detractions" of the city's relationship with the RSC and to report back at a later date.

In the meantime, and separate from this issue, the city currently doesn't have any formal representation on the commission's board.

While the regulations of the commission stipulates that municipal representation on the board must come in

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King was present for the board meeting at the commission's offices on Water Street Wednesday night but only sat as public observer. While the board says it would be fine with having King serve, authorizing it would require special permission from the province.

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With that in mind, the board passed a motion to reach out to the province in order to formally relay those concerns.



Firefighters spent more than 40 minutes putting out a fire behind James M. Hill Memorial High School on April 29, 2013. PHOTO: MIRAMICHI LEADER ARCHIVE

Forest fire danger less serious this summer, still a concern

LUKE CARROLL
MIRAMICHI LEADER

MIRAMICHI • The Department of Energy and Resource Development of New Brunswick said despite the recent wet weather, forest fires are still a risk.

"Right now the conditions are pretty normal, I know we just came off a string of rain," said Roger Collett, of Forest Ranger Wild Fire Prevention. "But it doesn't take a whole lot to dry things up a bit."

Collett said wind can dry surface fuel such as twigs, pine needles and other material that burns easily.

Phillipe St-Onge, resource conservation manager at Kouchibouguac National Park, said the park takes pre-emptive methods for dealing with fires.

St-Onge said Kouchibouguac has a team go out in the fall and collect any material which could be fuel to a fire and destroy it in a wood chipper.

Kouchibouguac follows the Government of New Brunswick fire index to keep track of fire danger. When the index indicates a high risk rating, the park will start putting out either partial fire bans or all-out fire bans. Kouchibouguac had a partial fire ban in June which didn't allow fires between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. The timing of the partial fire ban is common as Collett said spring is the busiest time of year for prevention.

Although the hot summer weather makes it easier for forest fires to start, Collett said spring is actually the worst

time of year because of the lack of moisture in vegetation.

"In moisture content, even the evergreen is low because they haven't really been sucking up any water all winter," he said.

The lack of moisture allows for fires to start quickly and spread fast.

Collett said time of year isn't the only cause as wind is a major factor in the size and danger of fires.

"Wind is big driver of how fast a fire will spread. If you have really dry conditions but no wind it's not going to go very far or quickly."

He said huge fires can be so dangerous because of how they create their own weather, including wind.

"As a fire goes, it can generate its own weather system," he said, adding that this typically isn't a concern in this area. "We're talking about really big fires, which we don't really see here in New Brunswick."

Collett said the last big fire in New Brunswick goes back to the 1980s.

St-Onge said it's been a long time since Kouchibouguac has had a fire because of their methods. He said they have a firefighting team on the national park which is on call for an emergency.

St-Onge said the humidity from the ocean also lowers the danger of a fire, but just in case, on top of their personal fire fighting crew they also have Saint-Louis-de-Kent's fire department if need be.



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Laura Clerk
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Moncton, NB

Third-year Student



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Wolfville, NS

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Monday

July 18, 2016

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PLEASE SEE → FIRE, A2

Eel Ground celebrates



The annual Eel Ground First Nation Natoaganeg Powwow opened on Thursday, July 14, until Sunday, July 17. Pictured above are dancers dressed in traditional and grass dance regalia during the grand entry ceremony on Saturday, July 16. See inside for more photos from the powwow and online at miramichileader.com. PHOTO: K. BRYANNAH JAMES/MIRAMICHI LEADER

City's RSC making inroads on improving client services

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In terms of personnel, the body has

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Community City celebrates annual Canada's Irish Festival on the Miramichi **B3**

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People from around the world come to city for annual Irish Festival

K. BRYANNAH JAMES
MIRAMICHI LEADER

It was an international affair in the city this past weekend as people from around the world descended onto Waterford Green for the 33rd annual Canada's Irish Festival on the Miramichi.

The annual festival kicked-off Friday evening, July 15, with live performances on the outdoor stage as piper Hannah Johnston led local and provincial dignitaries and Irish Festival committee members to the stage.

Some political officials present for the opening ceremony included city councillor Billy Fleiger, Miramichi MP Pat Finnigan, Seniors and Long-term Care and Celtic Affairs Minister Lisa

Harris – all of whom spoke during the ceremony – and David Coon, leader of the province's Green party.

Outgoing Irish Festival committee member Veronique Arsenault was the master of ceremonies Friday.

Arsenault said she had an amazing time being part of Canada's Irish Festival on the Miramichi.

"I've learned so much from all the people that I've gotten to work with and I think that it's time that somebody else get to enjoy that experience as well," said Arsenault.

Speaking with the Miramichi Leader Saturday afternoon, she said this is her last year as a committee member.

Arsenault has been on the committee for the past six years, during which time included two years as president.

Prior to that, she had volunteered for a decade.

But while she's stepping away from the committee, that doesn't mean she won't be volunteering.

Arsenault said she'll be a volunteer for the rest of her life.

"I think new is good and I think it's time for some other people to step in and share their great ideas and really help the festival to grow and go from here," she said.

Throughout her years working with the festival, she said a memory that will stand out against the many, is about a mother and her adopted daughter in 2006 to 2007.

She said it was the first weekend away for the two of them prior to adoption.

"And I met her, we were doing children's crafts and they told me the whole story and so she went to the Celtic dance and she did the crafts with me and everything," she said. "And then off they went. And then the next year she was back and so they had adopted her and she was having a wonderful experience."

She said they come to the Irish Festival every year.

"It was such a wonderful family moment."

Paddy Quinn, outgoing president of the Irish Festival, said as of Saturday afternoon, everything had gone well during the weekend, and estimates since opening night on Friday suggest

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news

Rendez-Vous Neguac kickoff just days away

JEREMY TREVORS
MIRAMICHI LEADER

It's a time special time when people in the village of Neguac get together with friends, family and loved ones to reminisce about the past and talk about the future.

The community is preparing for Rendez-Vous Neguac Inc., an event that takes place every four years where families return to Neguac and take part in various activities over an eight-day span.

This year's event takes place from Saturday July 16, to Sunday, July 24.

Gérard Godin, president of Rendez-Vous Neguac, said the importance of the festival is to bring families and friends back together who may not have seen one another for several years.

"People come from everywhere to go to this and there are some people who are looking forward to this, especially since they're away from their families," Godin said in French. "The ultimate goal of this festival is to bring families and people together."

The first Rendez-Vous Neguac took place back in 1988 and has provided the local economy with a major summer boost every four years since.

Things get underway on July 16 with a ball hockey tournament at Centre Scolaire Communautaire La Fontaine at 9 a.m. with other activities taking place throughout the remainder of the day.

The opening ceremonies gets underway at 2 p.m. at the Neguac Sportplex Arena. Admission is free. Later that evening, there will be a dance for those 19 years of age and older with the band Beer for Iguanas providing the entertainment.

Tickets for that performance are \$15



Rendez Vous Neguac Inc. 2016 is taking place in the Village of Neguac from Saturday, July 16, to Sunday, July 24.

PHOTO: JEREMY TREVORS/MIRAMICHI LEADER

in advance and \$18 at the door.

There will be a presentation of the book "Femmes d'ici" organized by the "Regroupement de Femmes Neguac". For more information on that one, contact Carmel Robichaud 776-3292. Events continue on Sunday, July 17 with a breakfast featuring, eggs, beans, bacon and fruit at the Neguac Golden Age Club starting at 7 a.m. Admission is \$5 for children, \$7 for adults and \$18 for a family.

A Show and Shine antique car display takes place at 10 a.m. at Centre Scolaire Communautaire La Fontaine.

Registration is \$10.

From 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. there will be activities for children at Park Richelieu with jumping castles, "Le Paradis" mini-farm, face painting and more. Admission is \$5.

A fireworks display gets underway at 10 p.m. at the Neguac Wharf.

Georges Savoie, the Mayor of Neguac said it's a huge boost to the local economy and gets people moving.

"For some it might be the only chance for people to return and visit their families and it also gives graduation classes for 10, 20 or 25 year reunions, for

example," Savoie said in French. "We always hope that these people will take in activities that go with the festival, but there are also families who have reunions and there are all kinds of other activities that go on that tie into the festival and the idea is for everyone to coordinate things to get the most people attend different activities as possible."

Savoie, who has taken part in the event in the past and sat on one of the organizational committees and said an event like this can take a lot of time and volunteer work to make things possible. "Some people may not be use to

working together and they have find a way to make things work and I tip my hat to them because they always put in a lot of work and it's always well-organized," Savoie said. "Nothing is perfect, because that's just the way life goes, but these people do a great job of putting this together and making it work."

Besides the festival itself, Savoie said the region has a lot of offer any other day of the year.

"We're right beside the ocean and people come to visit just for that, we may not think that it's an asset like that, but when you're living in a big city and you have all these buildings surrounding you, seeing the ocean is something special," Savoie said. "We have the forest right in our backyard and we have rivers that bring people in to fish and come into our community to benefit what we have and we hope that people will enjoy themselves, see their friends, family, spend locally and help boost the economy in Neguac for a little more than one week."

Meanwhile, Godin, who has been president of the festival the last four years in preparation for the 2016 event, said the event is a welcome back for some and it helps boost the economy by keeping the hotels, restaurants and shops filled for more than a week.

"There are events for all ages from older people to younger people," Godin said. "We have events that tie into people from every walk of life whether they're a fisherman or a biker, everyone is going to find something they're going to really enjoy about this festival."

For more information and for other events, visit the Rendez Vous Neguac Inc. 2016 Facebook page or call 506-776-3950.

RSC making inroads on improving client services, improving image: executive director

RSC → A1

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news

Jobs, rural growth discussed during meeting with premier

JEREMY TREVORS
MIRAMICHI LEADER

One Miramichi city councillor said an open dialogue between communities, cities and local service districts is the first step towards making every corner of the province a better place.

Premier Brian Gallant, with Miramichi MLA Bill Fraser and Miramichi Bay-Neguac MLA Lisa Harris, was in Doaktown on Tuesday evening as part of a six-week provincial tour where he is visiting with numerous regional service commissions. Members of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission had the chance to ask the premier of the province what he and his government will do for the region.

The main topic of discussion at the meeting, which had representation from communities from Miramichi to Upper Miramichi, was the state of rural New Brunswick and economic growth.

The topic of the discussion was what can the Government of New Brunswick do to assist the economy of your community, your region and the province? There certainly wasn't a lack of answers.

Coun. Chad Duplessie, of the City of Miramichi, said rural New Brunswick needs to see what the Government of New Brunswick can do for it.

"We need a true partnership, true dialogue, less patronage, less rubbing each other's backs about what is the path we take to move forward," said Duplessie. "When I think of Miramichi, we are a collection of small rural communities so I think no one here is different in this room."

Duplessie said in other parts of the province, the road, metaphorically speaking, is paved and there is a vision.

"I think there are pockets in this province where the road hasn't been paved as much, but you can see some of that work being done and you can invest in infrastructure and in education," Duplessie said.

For Duplessie, he said it's a matter of creating dialogue between the municipalities, communities, local service districts and the province as to how they are going to make things better for each place, rather than just focusing on



Blackville mayor Chris Hennessy during the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission meeting on Tuesday night in Doaktown. PHOTO: JEREMY TREVORS/MIRAMICHI LEADER

one place and neglecting the other.

Although the opening of mills and issuing wood allocations have all seen definitive no's from the province as possible visions for the community, Duplessie asked Gallant, and what can the province do to help the local economy?

"The more direct and more dialogue to focus and develop real strategic plans, now that we have infrastructure and now the work is being done, what's the economic driver to drive on these roads and move this thing forward?"

Over the past year, the Gallant government has invested in the Miramichi region which includes a commitment to build a new 240-bed nursing home, repair work on the Centennial Bridge, investing \$22.7 million dollars on roads, highways and bridges and upgrades to the Centre Scolaire

Communautaire La Fontaine to add trade shops and a combined \$37.9 million dollars on the new Max Aitken Academy school and a new school that has yet to be named in the former town of Chatham, to name a few.

For Bev Gaston, Doaktown mayor, it all boiled down to job creation for the region from private investors.

"We don't care where the jobs come from," Gaston said. "We're smart people here on the Miramichi and we can get things done. I know [Premier Gallant] you understand rural New Brunswick, because you lived in Nigadoo and Shediac Bridge and I worked all over this province and there's fine people around there and rural New Brunswickers urge you to support us and make sure that we keep rural New Brunswick strong."

Although Gaston does agree with the

fact New Brunswick is a bilingual province, students in the region are at a disadvantage to become bilingual and said it hurts their chances to find certain types of employment once they leave school and head out into the work force.

"We know we need that for our students and need it strengthened, we urge you to support us in that effort and we will do as municipal politicians and LSD people, we will do anything we can to make that work, but we desperately need you to help and support rural New Brunswick for us," Gaston said.

Blackville Mayor Chris Hennessy, said everyone in the province is having a difficult time finding employment and said the Energy East Pipeline could be a God send if the provincial government lifts the moratorium it currently

has on the pipeline.

"The government has to look at that and take it very seriously," Hennessy said. "Our economy in rural New Brunswick is resource driven and we have to develop every single one of our resources. No one is going to come here and build solar panels. We already tried that and it didn't work, we have to develop our resources. We're all small business owners in this region and you have to have meetings with them and someone sitting in Fredericton is not going help. It needs to be a local economic development officer, it needs to be someone local or the regional service commission or whatever because it's not working the way it is now."

Hennessy insists the government must reach out to local residents when it comes to local resource development.

"Not someone or some anti-group who is for or against it big business or big industry, come and talk to someone like myself or other people in our rural communities who knows about this. You can't listen to all this negativity and base it on that, it doesn't work. It never worked and it never will if you want the province to move forward, talk to a local person," Hennessy said. "Rural New Brunswick is in bad shape and we need help, plain and simple, start somewhere and start local."

Afterwards, Gallant addressed the crowd and said the government is currently in the process of working out the kinks and is going to go through all the feedback he received.

"We've been pushing something with the federal government something I think what will affect rural New Brunswick in my opinion," Gallant said. "We want to make sure that their programs are going to be more accessible to smaller provinces and a smaller communities because they'll talk to dozens and dozens of MLA's from larger cities and sometimes they may not get to hear about rural Canada, so we wanted to make that point as a province and we did. I'd like to see programs reflect that."

Gallant said if the region is to move forward, the LSD's, municipalities and the province all have to work that way.

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Parliament of Canada
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opinion

Miramichi Leader

The Leader since 1906

Shannon MacLeod, Editor
Andrew Bishop, Sales Manager

More united Miramichi would improve standing

The popular saying is that the Miramichi stretches from the farewell buoy to the headwaters, a rough delineation of this unique area and all that binds it together.

Something that would qualify these days is a strong collective feeling that the Miramichi can do better, particularly economically. We agree wholeheartedly, and although we have seen incremental progress on that front, one area that has been lacking - to the detriment of that ultimate goal - is a spirit of collaboration among the municipalities and local service districts.

The Miramichi would be far better served if municipal representatives and stakeholders from Miramichi city, in collaboration with Blackville, Doaktown, Upper Miramichi, Neguac, Sunny Corner and every place in between realized they could level the playing field by rowing in the same direction. That conversation should also include our rural local service districts, which we believe have much to offer in terms of helping shape a better Miramichi. While we still feel strongly that the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission can and should be the vehicle by which these conversations are facilitated, too often the discussions at the table are limited to matters of planning and waste disposal.

We understand that the mandate of the commission is, for now, limited to those specific matters but it would be ideal to see the scope of the conversation expanded into different areas of mutual interest.

These commission meetings serve as a rare window of opportunity for the mayors and, in some cases, councillors and LSD members from our different communities sitting together in a single room.

With so many common issues - a lack of job opportunities, infrastructure needs, aging populations that are in decline, fiscal issues, environmental concerns, particularly with the Atlantic salmon - there clearly isn't a lack of practical conversation our officials could engage in.

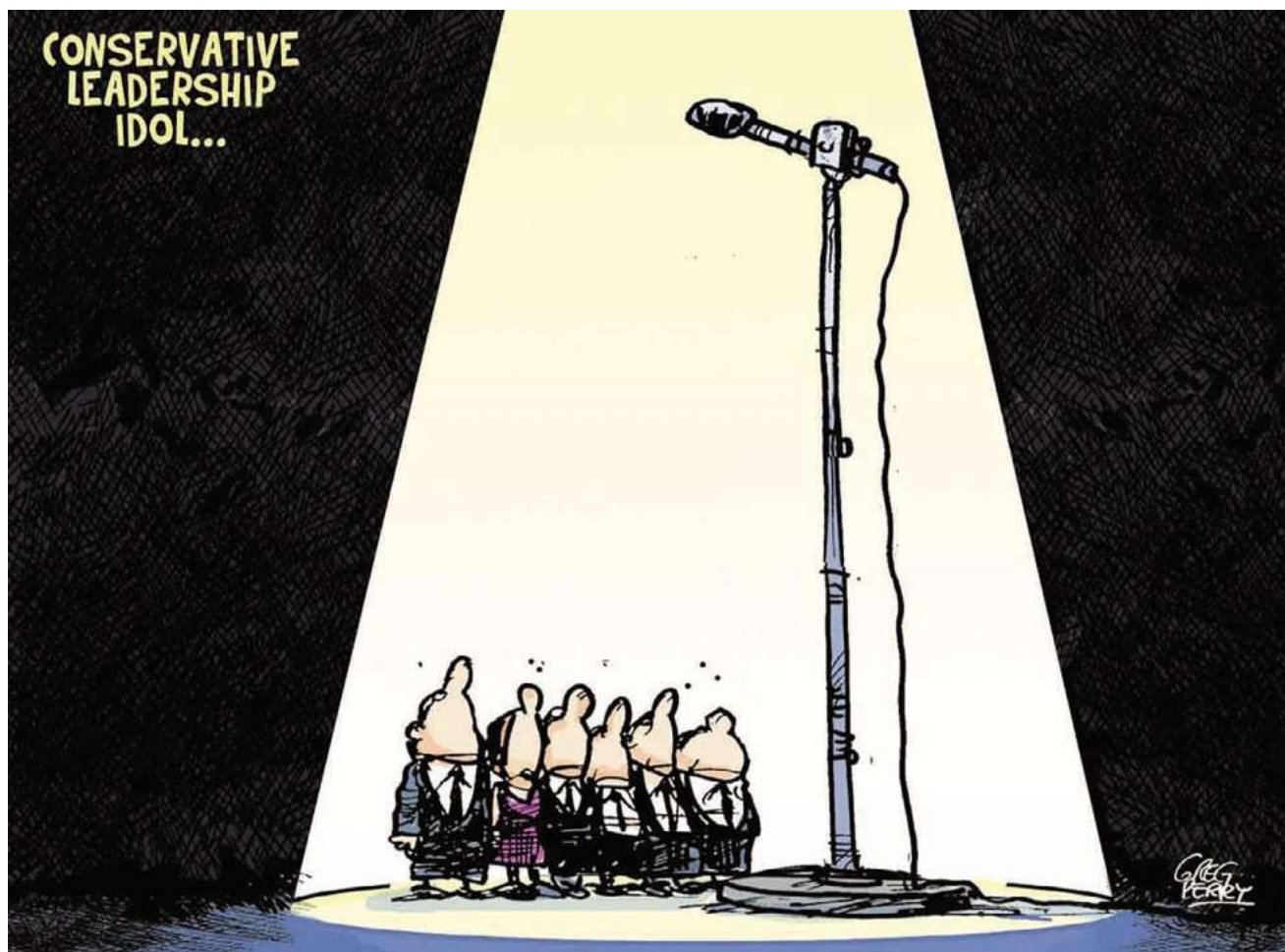
Miramichi's population has dropped by roughly 6,000 people since 2001 and Doaktown has bled 10 per cent of its population from 2006 to 2011. Given that backdrop, we believe it would be prudent for a certain amount of time to be set aside on, at the very least, a semi-regular basis, for our officials to get together and discuss ways to overcome these hurdles and, ultimately, strengthen the positioning of our region.

While it would be easy to say that Miramichi's challenges are unique and don't necessarily relate to what's happening in Doaktown or Blackville, for instance, that's not entirely true.

Miramichi is a city in name but, in reality, it retains a rural, small-town character. The Miramichi is a largely rural region that faces all of the issues the rest of rural New Brunswick are facing.

Instead of the traditional way of doing things, in this case working in silos, a lot could be said for harnessing all of brainpower we know this region has and work more collaboratively toward solving some of this.

We would hope that, after meeting with Premier Brian Gallant last week, everyone who attended has a better understanding that the Miramichi is better off with everyone working together rather than worrying solely about what happens in their own backyard.



Miramichi Leader reporter says goodbye



Our View Bryannah James

Four years ago a reporter fresh out of the St. Thomas University journalism program arrived in Miramichi after accepting a six-month internship in a community she'd always visited and loved as a child but never truly knew.

Miramichi is a place I've come to know and love and the community that gave me the first opportunity to grow not only as a reporter but as an adult too.

Miramichi gave me my family. All of this to say because I recently accepted a full time reporter position at our sister site the Bathurst Northern Light, which will start effective Monday, Aug. 22.

I feel like I'm on a roller-coaster of emotions right now. I'm ecstatic to begin work at a new paper in a community I have also grown to love and one I've been commuting from for work for years. Bathurst is where my fiancé and I welcomed our son into the world and where my step-daughter is now lacing-up her soccer shoes and growing up right before our eyes.

I'm excited to be closer to my family

and giddy at the opportunity to start reporting in a new community.

But this means leaving Miramichi and I'm leaving a piece of my heart here. In the last four years, I've had the opportunity to tell countless stories in the community, and have been provided the opportunity to meet a lot of people locally, nationally and internationally.

James M. Hill field is where I helped coach the Miramichi United soccer club under-12 girls team for two summers.

The former Canadian Forces Base Chatham is where I had the opportunity to meet Canada's only military parachute demonstration team the Sky-Hawks in 2013 during the Atlantic Canada Air Show and stand at 30,000 feet elevation in the back of CC-130 J Model Hercules and photographed the world below.

Miramichi has presented me with the honour of telling the stories of people like Holocaust survivor Philip Riteman; Canadian peacekeeping veteran and concentration camp survivor Nicolaas Haars; reporting as veterans of the Korean war were finally awarded their Ambassador for Peace medals from the Republic of Korea and, of course, breaking the news that Kevin Vickers shot and killed Michael Zehaf Bibeau, the armed gunman on Parliament Hill in 2014.

People from around the globe come to Miramichi to take in the beauty and hospitality of the river. That beauty has drawn such individuals as the current prime ministers mother Margaret Trudeau, to NHL great Theo Fleury and former prime minister Stephen Harper; all of whom I have been fortunate to have

met and interviewed because of my role with the Miramichi Leader. Miramichi let me spread my wings as a reporter and made me part of the community.

The New Brunswick Community College Miramichi campus and the Doolys in Chatham hold the biggest significance and impact in my life. The former is where my fiancé attended school, and because of which we met. The Doolys is where we first hung out and spent the night playing pool.

Miramichi, you gave me the love of my life and as a result of that my step-daughter, son and, as of this fall, my second son. You gave me my family and I will forever be grateful for that.

The crew at the Miramichi Leader is second to none. Kris and Jeremy are amazing reporters and Shannon is an amazing editor, they all love this community and work their tails off to bring you the best community reporting to date. They're passionate about Miramichi and the community and it's going to be an adjustment not spending my days surrounded by these amazing people.

Miramichi, a piece of me will always be in this community. The beauty of the people, the river and the spirit of this community stays with a person and builds a person. Part of my heart will always be here and I'll always remember how the Miramichi helped me grow as a person, a reporter and to fall in love.

K. Bryannah James

is a former reporter/photographer for the Miramichi Leader and now working at the Bathurst Northern Light

We need to work together to protect migratory bird habits

KATHRYN FOLKL COMMENTARY

This year we mark the centennial of the convention between the United States and Great Britain, on behalf of Canada, for the protection of migratory birds - also called the Migratory Bird Treaty - that was signed on Aug. 16, 1916.

A century ago, it was an era when many bird species were threatened by fashion! Today you might not look twice at a hat with a feather in the brim, but I bet seeing a hat with whole dead bird (or multiple whole birds for that matter) might warrant a double take. In the late 1800s, though, bird hats were so popular that hat makers were harvesting millions of birds each year. Most people didn't think much of killing the birds and had no idea they could put a dent in an animal's population.

Birds were so abundant, they were deemed an inexhaustible natural resource. But by the late 19th century, the popularity of the snowy egret plume had nearly wiped out the species' population in the United States.

What did the treaty do? The Migratory

Bird Treaty led to important environmental legislation being passed in both the U.S. and Canada to make it illegal for anyone to take or sell any migratory bird, its parts, nests or eggs unless they had a valid permit to do so.

Why is the treaty international? Simply put, birds migrate! If you want to protect them, you have to protect the habitats throughout their lifecycle. This international treaty has resulted in continued cooperation among governments, NGOs and other stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada to coordinate conservation efforts for migratory birds, even 100 years later.

Why is this important now? The state of the birds: Even without a bird hat fashion craze, more than a third of all North American bird species are at risk of becoming extinct unless significant action is taken.

With the treaty in place, few people are harvesting migratory birds without following federal regulations. However, habitat loss is a huge threat to migrating birds. Migratory birds depend on suitable breeding and wintering grounds and stopover sites, where they can rest



Woman, wearing a large feathered hat and boa, posing for a portrait. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

and feed along their migratory routes. The loss of any sites used by the birds during their annual life cycle could have a dramatic impact on their chances of survival.

Where we have invested in healthy habitats, birds are doing well. And healthy birds mean healthy forests, wetlands, grasslands, shorelines and oceans. By conserving habitat, we conserve our landscapes and the economies and ways of life that depend on them. From farmers and ranchers to outdoor recreationists and children, we all benefit when

birds thrive.

Today, as a result of a treaty 100 years ago, governments, NGOs and partners across the U.S. and Canada continue to work together to protect migratory birds. Every year, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and other partner NGOs participate in the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) funding program and secure significant habitat for migratory species. And funding from the NAWCA program is matched by donations from Canadians and Americans to deliver significant results we can walk on (and birds can nest on).

To date, NCC has secured 350,000 acres (142,000 hectares) of habitat for migratory birds and other wetland species under NAWCA.

Want to help? Get involved!

Check out opportunities to view migratory birds with your friends and family. Help them understand why birds matter.

Each fall, millions and millions of birds migrate from northern breeding grounds in Canada to their southern wintering sites.

Although they're all across Canada, here are a few good sites, east of Ontario, to see them as they fuel up for the journey:

Quebec: Pointe de Saint-Vallier, situated on the south shore of Saint Lawrence River, is located in one of the largest migratory corridor for birds in North

America and offers refuge to many bird species. Several species of duck visit the place, as well as many greater snow geese, which feed on the batture during fall and spring migrations.

New Brunswick: The Tabusintac Lagoon and Estuary is an excellent place to see waterfowl, while the Upper Bay of Fundy is a hotspot for shorebirds.

Nova Scotia: Brier Island is one of the farthest reaches of Nova Scotia. It boasts ecologically rich wetland and coastal habitats, which support an extremely high population of nesting gulls.

Prince Edward Island: Holman's Island near Summerside is dubbed a "Hotel for Birds." In peak season, up to 2,000 Canada geese and 1,000 Atlantic brants migrate to the area.

Newfoundland and Labrador: The Grand Codroy Valley Estuary is an exceptional place to see thousands of geese and waterfowl during fall migration. Visitors can feast their eyes on migrating young seabirds and waterfowl such as harlequin ducks at offshore and coastal areas such as Cape St. Mary's and Witley Bay.

Consider giving to NCC to participate in migratory bird habitat conservation!

Kathryn Folkl

is National manager of North American Partnerships and manager of the Nature Conservancy of Canada's participation in the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) program.

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news

City on board with RSC plans to build new materials handling centre

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

An old idea that has just recently picked up steam once again is moving slowly toward an eventual realization after the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission's largest financial contributor cemented its support.

Miramichi city council has voted unanimously in favour of submitting a funding application on behalf of the RSC with the goal of netting the organization some of the money needed to carry out a feasibility study that will make the case for the development of the region's first ever materials handling facility.

This is a concept that's been in the works for a number of years, one that would provide residents within the Miramichi region with a permanent, year-round location to drop off their household hazardous goods, old appliances, electronics and other items that would otherwise be taking up room in the garage without this kind of option.

The RSC's management and board of directors began to look more closely at the idea over the last two years after noticing the heavy demand for that kind of service.

The commission, which oversees the delivery of solid waste collection and planning services to most of Northumberland County, organizes a handful of special collection events annually that are attended by hundreds of people.

Completing the feasibility study is an important step if and when the RSC eventually applies to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund for funding to help make the centre a reality.

The FCM fund is being tapped into to help cover a portion of the cost, somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000, to allow the commission to develop the feasibility study.

In order to apply, according to the guidelines of the program, the application needs to be submitted by an actual municipality or, in this case with the approval of Miramichi council, a partnership between the city and the RSC.

City clerk Cathy Goguen pointed out in a management report that the city supporting the application wouldn't result in it paying out any new money. The RSC harnesses funding from all of the municipalities it serves, as well as the local service districts, and funding to conduct the study would be taking



Wilson Bell, the executive director of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission during a recent board meeting. The City of Miramichi is helping the commission submit an application that will help it work toward establishing the region's first materials handling facility. PHOTO: MIRAMICHI LEADER ARCHIVE

out of its annual operating budget or through reserves.

"In both cases, the funding is made through the contributions of the municipalities and LSDs to the operation of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission," Goguen said. "The feasibility study will determine if a permanent facility is viable in the region."

Once completed, that study will lay out details such as the volume of materials the facility would be expected to handle, determining the best location, building designs, the initial capital cost, the number of jobs required and an annual operating cost.

The collection centre would also be capable of receiving deliveries of scrap

metal, yard waste and debris from home renovations, construction and demolition projects.

Wilson Bell, the executive director of the RSC, said last summer the concept makes sense on a number of levels.

Not only would it likely create a few permanent positions while enhancing the level of customer service while helping discourage people from taking part in illegal dumping, he said it represents the next logical step toward ensuring the Miramichi region continues on a path toward becoming more environmentally sustainable.

"It's come up a couple of different times, and anyone who has ever participated in one of our events knows there

is a huge demand for that service," Bell said in a previous interview. "But one of the common things we hear at our event is 'this is great, but I wish there was a permanent place that I could do this'."

The volunteer-led depot collections for household hazardous waste and e-waste generally attract around 450 vehicles who drop off in excess of 18 metric-tonnes of goods at each one.

It costs the commission around \$15,000 to organize just one of those collections.

Bell has also pointed out that by having the handling centre in place, it would also help alleviate some of the strain on the Red Pine landfill in

Allardville, which takes in refuse from all over the Miramichi, Chaleur and Acadian Peninsula regions.

With this building, he said materials that would be otherwise buried in a landfill or potentially disposed of illegally would now be disposed of in the proper manner or recycled.

The RSC has taken some major steps toward bringing the Miramichi out of the dark ages in terms of waste disposal, with the most noticeable step being the introduction of mandatory residential curbside recycling a little over a year ago.

That measure has helped cut drastically into what were some of New Brunswick's poorest rates of landfill diversion.

Marissa Shephard appears in provincial court on charge of assaulting correctional officer

ERNESTO CARRANZA
MIRAMICHI LEADER

A Moncton woman is accused of assaulting a correctional officer at a Miramichi facility. Marissa June Shephard, 21, appeared in custody in Miramichi provincial court before Judge Geri Mahoney on Monday. She is charged with assault involving a correctional officer at the New Brunswick Women's Correctional Centre, in Miramichi, on July 28. Shephard appeared flanked by two court sheriffs, wearing a white T-shirt, grey sweatpants with her curly dark brown hair hanging at shoulder length. Shephard, whose hands were cuffed and ankles were shackled, did not speak during the brief appearance. Defence lawyer Simon Wood requested to have her election and plea adjourned to give her an opportunity to go over the file's disclosure with her lawyer, Gilles Lemieux, who's based out of Saint-Antoine. Mahoney agreed and set over the case to Nov. 28 at 9:30 a.m. in Miramichi provincial court. Shephard is in custody awaiting trial on first-degree murder and arson charges relating to the Dec. 17 death of Baylee Wylie, 18, in Moncton. Shephard's preliminary inquiry is set for the Court of Queen's Bench in Moncton for the spring of 2017. Tyler Dominique Noel, 19, of Moncton, is in custody and faces the same charges in Wylie's death with his next appearance in court set for the fall of 2017. Devin Morningstar,



Marissa June Shephard appeared in Miramichi provincial court on Monday on charges of assaulting a correctional officer. PHOTO: TIMES AND TRANSCRIPT ARCHIVES

19, of Moncton, was convicted on Nov. 10 of first-degree murder and arson in Wylie's death, a sentence that carries an automatic term of life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years. Sentencing will take place Jan. 11.

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Community members are hoping to extend Miramichi Pride events

JOCELYN TURNER
MIRAMICHI LEADER

Everyone needs a little more love and understanding.

That's what Miramichi's Kylie Stewart, 22, hopes she and other members of the local LGBTQ community will get by expanding Pride events locally. "Last July (2016) was my first time

going to Pride. ... It's been around for [a few] years, but I hadn't gone to it before," said Stewart. "It's relatively small and I would say it's a much older crowd but it's very welcoming and unique because it's not what you would see if you went to Halifax or Toronto."

Pride events typically include marches, a festival atmosphere and other

events. They're held for the LGBTQ community and celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture and pride associated with it.

The one-day Miramichi event includes a dinner followed by a dance party along the river aboard the Max Aitken, and wrapping up with an after party at the Mercantile Room at Bistro 140. It's strictly an adult event, aside

from the flag raising ceremony which is held the day before.

While Stewart said it's nice that the community does have some sort of celebration for Pride, she said it needs to grow.

"I feel like one day is just not cutting it. I feel like this community isn't

PLEASE SEE → PRIDE, A8

Greater Miramichi RSC passes 2017 budget

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

The Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission's member communities are going to be paying quite a bit less this year to receive services, thanks to some major savings on the solid waste side of the commission's \$2.14 million budget for 2017.

The RSC's board of directors gathered in Miramichi Tuesday night, where they unanimously signed off on the organization's operating and capital budgets for the upcoming year.

Collectively, the four municipalities who supply the RSC with the lion's share of its funding, as well as the number of different local service districts that fall within its coverage area, will witness a 15.30 per cent drop in the total amount they will need to set aside to help pay for things like planning services and solid waste collection next year, for an overall savings of about \$221,000.

For the city of Miramichi, which is the heaviest supplier of funding to the RSC every year and has butted heads with the commission's planning wing over the course of the last year, it will save around \$103,000 over what it had to set aside in 2016, with its contribution due to drop to \$650,885 from \$753,845.

Wilson Bell, the executive director of the RSC, said those deep discounts can be attributed to a couple of major factors.

One of them is a major reduction in the recycling fees paid to have materials processed at the Red Pine landfill in Allardville, which will be waived in 2017 after sitting at \$54 per metric tonne this year.

The introduction of mandatory curbside recycling to every single household in the commission's coverage area, launched a little over a year ago, has also helped free up some financial wiggle room, Bell said, by allowing the group to do away with the old stationary depot program which was expensive to operate.

In all, Bell said the commission has put in a lot of effort to find savings

PLEASE SEE → BUDGET, A2

Serving the brave



Wendy Cripps, the front end manager for Sobeys in Douglastown, serves dessert to veterans on Tuesday afternoon inside the grocery store during the seventh annual veterans lunch. See inside for more photos and miramichileader.com PHOTO: JEREMY TREVORS/MIRAMICHI LEADER

MADD chapter sets up in Northumberland County

JEREMY TREVORS
MIRAMICHI LEADER

For the first time in the Miramichi Region, Northumberland County will have a Mothers Against Drunk Driving chapter.

The Kent chapter of MADD has extended itself to become MADD Kent-Northumberland and will serve to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving.

Charline Manuel, chapter president and resident of Baie-Sainte-Anne, was more than happy to see the chapter expand, which will have its official launch on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 p.m. before the start of the Miramichi Timberwolves home game at the Miramichi Civic Centre.

It will also serve as the official launch of Project Red Ribbon which runs from Nov. 1 to Jan. 3, a campaign from MADD Canada to raise awareness of drinking and driving and its consequences.

"I think it's really important to raise awareness," Manuel said, speaking in French. "I know we can't stop all of it,

but if we can save the life of one or two people ... awareness is important."

Every year, MADD Canada honours a person who was killed or injured in an accident caused by a drunk driver. This year, MADD Kent-Northumberland will honour D.J. Hancock, an 18 year-old hockey player from Ontario who died in August of 2014 after his car was struck by a drunk driver, when he was attending a tryout for the Sudbury Nickel Barons of the Northern Ontario Hockey League.

Northumberland County is no stranger to the effects of drunk driving, something Manuel knows first hand.

In November of 2002, Manuel was struck by a drunk driver while walking in Baie-Sainte-Anne. Manuel was knocked out when she was struck by the vehicle, which proved to save her life.

"I was pronounced dead at the scene by one of the police officers who first attended the scene because they couldn't find a pulse," Manuel said during a 2010 interview.

She was rushed to Miramichi Regional Hospital and was then transferred to Moncton, where a medical team was



Charline Manuel of Baie-Sainte-Anne, seen here in 2010, is the president of the MADD Kent-Northumberland chapter. PHOTO: MIRAMICHI LEADER ARCHIVE

able to save her life. Since then, she's gone through more than 30 surgeries and more than 15 of them were on her ankle alone. She lost the use of her left

arm for nearly a year due to nerve damage.

PLEASE SEE → MADD, A2

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news



A look at the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission offices on Water Street. The commission's board of directors approved the organization's budget for 2017 during a meeting Tuesday, Nov. 15. PHOTO: KRIS MCDAVID/MIRAMICHI LEADER

Greater Miramichi RSC passes 2017 budget

BUDGET →A1

where possible, in recognition of the fact that the entire entity is subsidized by taxpayers. Four years after the province legislated New Brunswick's 12 RSCs into existence, Bell noted in Miramichi's case, service costs have decreased by 31.53 per cent across the board.

"When you look at where we were in that first budget in 2013 and where we are today, there have been some pretty significant savings," Bell said. "Obviously the recycling fee changes this year combined with some other things, that's how we were able to get to where we are today."

Miramichi city, for instance, was paying just under \$940,000 million for services during the RSC's first year, however their financial responsibilities have been trimmed by nearly \$300,000 in the years since.

The same trend is true for the villages of Doaktown, Blackville and the Rural Community of Upper Miramichi, which have seen their commitments fall by 43 per cent, 42 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively. For the LSDs, residents are collectively paying 30 per cent less than they did back in 2013.

Those rural unincorporated areas will provide \$463,048 to the commission next year, compared to \$57,730 for Upper Miramichi, \$26,491 for Blackville and \$25,507 for Doaktown.

In terms of expenditures, Bell noted there aren't many changes in this year's budget compared to last year's.

On the solid waste side, which makes up roughly 61 per cent of the commission's annual operating budget, tipping fees for regular garbage

deliveries at Red Pine will rise by \$4.50 per tonne, for a total of \$80.90 per tonne in 2017.

As the largest producer of solid waste, for instance, with about 4,884.57 tonnes of garbage being sent to the landfill in 2015-16, Miramichi will pay the heaviest fees for the service, projected to be around \$395,000, or about 46.6 per cent of the overall share.

The drastic reduction in recycling fees, however, and the loss of the costly, inefficient blue depot program has more than levelled things out, Bell said.

"[The fee reduction] was kind of out of the blue, to a certain degree," he said. "I think the rationale was that there was a facility elsewhere in the region that was accepting them at the same price, or close to it, so they wanted to ensure they were obviously being competitive and at the same time it really helps promote the curbside program because we're going to save some serious money if we divert more."

The commission is also continuing to explore the possibility of building a permanent materials handling centre for household hazardous waste, electronics and construction materials.

Bell pointed out that if the RSC decides to commit to that project next year, the organization would be looking to draw funding through outside sources or possibly dipping into its operating reserve.

On the planning side of the equation, meanwhile, the RSC is setting some money aside in order to hold a series of public information sessions aimed specifically at developers and contractors who may have questions about how to access services or about

the planning process itself.

The situation has been in the public eye in recent months, with the city in the process of evaluating its relationship with the commission's planning services office and whether or not it wants to venture out on its own. Concerns about the amount of red tape builders have to go through to get their projects to the approval stage and receive a permit reached city council's desk on a couple of occasions over the last year-plus.

The planning services budget will also include room for the purchase of handheld devices that will allow planning staff more flexibility in collecting data out in the field. The commission is also looking to prepare a regional study on recreational infrastructure in order to leverage funding through a provincial program.

The 2017 budget will not include resources for the long-discussed hiring of a bylaw enforcement officer who would be shared between the RSC's member municipalities, something Bell said the board could discuss again down the road.

Cost of planning services for each community is determined based on their respective tax base. Based on those figures, Miramichi will pay 2.41 per cent more than it did this year, or about \$414,138.

The RSC operates with a staff of just 12 and will not be adding any new positions in 2017. Bell, who has been the executive director since the organization's inception, also serves in the capacity of director of planning services.

Individual municipal councils will be responsible for approving their financial contributions through their own budget approval processes.

Body text Body text

Correction

Due to an editing error, the headline on the editorial published in the Wednesday, Nov. 16 edition of the Miramichi Leader on page A7 incorrectly read "Feds shouldn't hesitate to create new pay centre," instead of "Feds shouldn't hesitate to create new pay centre jobs." We regret the error.

Inmate assaulted at Renous penitentiary

MIRAMICHI LEADER

An inmate at the region's federal penitentiary has been assaulted.

In a release, Nicole Gaudet, assistant warden of the Atlantic Institution in Renous, said at about 9:50 p.m. on Nov. 12.

"The injured inmate was immediately evaluated by staff members and transported to an outside hospital to receive treatment," Gaudet said.

The Blackville detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and staff from the maximum security federal institution are presently investigating the incident.

"The assailants have been identified and the appropriate actions have been taken," she said. "The safety and security of institutions, their staff and the public remains the highest priority in the operations of the federal correctional system."

As well, Gaudet said to improve practices aimed at preventing this type of incident, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) will review the circumstances of the incident and take the appropriate measures.



The Atlantic Institution is located in Renous PHOTO: MIRAMICHI LEADER ARCHIVE

MADD chapter sets up

MADD →A1

Manuel said what helped her the most through that difficult time was her family and her strong personal will.

"I was strong," she said. "When I was in Moncton the doctor would always give me the thumbs up every time he would see me because he knew I was working hard."

In total, Manuel was in hospitals in Moncton and Miramichi for 76 days.

"The first two years were very difficult," she said, who has been involved with MADD since 2005.

Paul Fiander, the chief of police for the Miramichi Police Force, and Brian Cummings, deputy chief of the Miramichi Police Force, have come on as board members for the new MADD Northumberland chapter. There has been a Teens Against Drunk Driving chapter in Miramichi for a number of years, co-ordinated with the Miramichi Police Force, the New Brunswick Community College Miramichi campus and James M. Hill Memorial High School.

Fiander said they met up twice with Manuel in October after she said the MADD Kent chapter expressed interest in expanding to Miramichi.

"I think it is extremely important for the Miramichi region to have a chapter of MADD," Fiander said. "It's their mission to stop impaired driving and to support persons who become victims of impaired driving related incidents. Each year, MADD Canada offers services to over 20,000 victims and survivors across Canada."

In Miramichi, a total of 45 people have been arrested in 2016 for impaired driving, both drug and alcohol related.

In 2015, the region saw 75 people arrested, 2014 saw 47 people, 2013 saw 53 and 2012 saw 75.

"Our police force constantly encourage the public to report anyone they may suspect that is operating a vehicle while impaired. We are happy to report that the public is doing a great job in reporting this," Fiander said. "Sometimes the driver is found to be impaired by alcohol or drugs and sometimes it is a case of driver inattention, fatigue or some other reason."

Fiander said his police force has been working with the TADD groups at NBCC and James M. Hill over the last number of years and it has been a very positive experience for both the students, staff, officers and community members.

"We now look forward to working with the MADD group," Fiander said. "Thousands of individuals, corporations, foundations and other groups across Canada have joined this effort. Plans are underway to have several information check stops set up with participation from our officers and both members of the MADD and TADD group."

Manuel said especially with the holiday season around the corner, it's always important to raise awareness around this time of the year.

"It's a reminder for people to not drink and drive... we always lose people around the holiday season. In Canada, we lose four people a day because of drinking and driving, it's really important," Manuel said, who still suffers in pain from her accident.

Manuel will be there on Saturday for the launch, and players for the Timberwolves will wear MADD Canada ribbons on their helmets throughout the campaign.

"There will be a few of us from the chapter there. We will do a ribbon cutting ceremony, a ceremonial puck drop and we'll be there at a booth giving away ribbons," Manuel said. "Especially with the holiday season right around the corner, I hope people don't drink and drive, instead get a designated driver or find an alternate route home."

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