

Budworm expected to hit forests in New Brunswick first

JOCELYN TURNER
MIRAMICHI LEADER

Take a close look at a spruce or fir tree and if there are spots of brown on its branches where there should be needles, chances are it's the work of a spruce budworm.

A spruce budworm is an insect that begins its life as larvae before emerging as a moth with a taste for forests in Eastern Canada. While it's in the caterpillar stage, it eats the new foliage of fir and spruce trees.

Drew Carleton, forestry entomologist for the province, said there is an outbreak in Quebec in a forested area covering about 7.1 million hectares – almost the size of the province of New Brunswick. Outbreaks can last up to 10 years.

While the moth is native to the area, about every 35 to 40 years, the population of the insect spirals out of control and creates problems. Carleton said there are a lot of theories as to why this happens, but the exact cause has never been nailed down.

"There's a number of factors that do contribute to why populations will rise and spike so this is a somewhat predictable cycle. We don't really have a good understanding as to why it happens," said Carleton.

"When populations are low, you can barely find them, it's literally a needle in a haystack to find these insects so their impact on the forest ecosystem when densities are very low, is probably very minimal," he said.

Because of the outbreak in Quebec, Carleton said there are concerns the insect may begin to repopulate in New Brunswick, affecting particularly the northern forests.

According to the Healthy Forest Partnership website, the last major outbreak in 1975 resulted in the defoliation of about 3.6 million hectares of N.B. forest.

According to the website, that defoliation cost the provincial economy between \$4.7 billion to \$6.7 billion over 40 years.

It's estimated the devastation also cost the province between 1,500 and 1,900 jobs per year over a 30-year span.

Biologist programmer Emily Owens said in order to help monitor the border and see where the populations of the insect will possibly sprout up, there is a volunteer scientist program called Budworm Tracker, which started in 2015, that encourages citizens in various communities to set up traps to catch moths, which helps with determining population sizes.

"They help us monitor moths as they



Spruce budworm moth PHOTO: SUBMITTED

migrate," said Owens. "So our citizen scientists take a trap, they set it up in their backyard and they check it once a week and then at the end of the fall, they send the data back to us. They actually send the trap to our lab in Fredericton."

Owens, who works for Natural Resources Canada, said the trap is baited with pheromones to attract the male moth. Once a week, the volunteers check the traps and freeze what they've trapped, which is sent back to Owens in the fall.

Last year, the program brought in 28,000 moths from its participants in N.B., Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec. In New Brunswick, there are about 400 volunteers who participate.

"The budworm tracker is a part of a

the Healthy Forest Partnership and what we're doing is keeping a very sharp eye on the province and we're monitoring for any populations of concern," Owens said.

There are certain parts of the province more affected by the insect than others. Right now, both Owens and Carleton said it appears as though the Edmundston, Campbellton, Bathurst and even the Miramichi areas have some spruce budworms in the area.

"So we've actually increased, we work in close collaboration with industry and the provincial government and we've increased our monitoring in those areas just to keep a sharp eye and see what's happening in that area because the outbreak is encroaching on the N.B. border," said Owens.

Referring to the outbreak in Quebec, Owens said northern regions will see the appearance of populations first.

"There will be likely some defoliation

seen between sort of Campbellton and Bathurst maybe even making its way a little bit down towards Miramichi, we could potentially see some defoliation," she said.

So far, based on the numbers and what researchers are seeing, it's not time to panic. Carleton said the province has been prepping for such an outbreak for a long time and keeping a close eye on the situation.

The best thing the public can do is keep themselves informed and one way to do that is by checking out the www.healthforestpartnership.ca website.

"We update [the site] on a regular basis with results of the research, the researchers themselves will put blog posts out as they've hit significant milestones in their work," he said.

"All of the facts and information surrounding what the program is and why we're doing it and how it's going are updated on a regular basis on that website and that's really probably the best spot for the public to go and learn about budworm."

Owens said those who want to be able to help with prevention can always join the Budworm Tracker program.

"The first line of defence in any integrated pest management program is monitoring and detection so we're always looking for fill in gaps where we do not have citizen scientists," Owens said.

"Roughly the central New Brunswick where very few people live but if people love hunting or fishing camps or they go hiking there, we'd love to give them a trap."

More information about Budworm Tracker can be found at www.budworm-tracker.ca.



The Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission board of directors say they want more time to discuss a list of 30 recommendations in new report aimed at improving the role of the province's service commissions.

PHOTO: KRIS MCDAVID/MIRAMICHI LEADER

'There are some recommendations I think people are going to react to'

RSC reacts to consultants' report commissioned by province

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

Members of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission's board of directors are in the process of trying to unpack all of the recommendations spelled out in a recently-released consultants report commissioned by the province.

The report, prepared on behalf of the government by former Service New Brunswick president Michael McKendy and simply entitled "Improving the Regional Service Commissions in New Brunswick," was presented in Miramichi last month during a gathering of the province's 12 RSCs.

Embedded within the 34-page document is a series of 30 recommendations McKendy says are intended to expand the role the commissions play can play in acting as the conduit through which different services are provided to the regions they serve.

The new regional service delivery model was rolled out under the former Progressive Conservative government back in 2013, every municipality and local service district in the province falling under the auspices of one of the 12 commissions.

Up until now, the scope of those organizations has been generally limited to the delivery planning services and solid waste collection.

There have been discussions at the provincial level about expanding their mandate to include areas such as emergency measures planning, regional policing and recreational infrastructure.

The McKendy report, however, dives quite a bit deeper in making the case that the RSCs are positioned well to take on a much larger role helping promote increased regional collaboration in areas like fire protection, climate change adaptation, regional tourism, economic development, bylaw enforcement and more.

Members of the Miramichi RSC, which is made up of the mayors and a handful of local service district representatives from within the body's coverage area, say they're planning to handle the report with care, believing it warrants more study in order to determine what it all means.

"There's a lot of things there to consider, for certain," said Wilson Bell, the executive director of the Miramichi RSC, during a meeting on Tuesday.

"The province has yet to respond to the report as far as what they're going to do with those 30 recommendations, but I expect over the next few months there will be some consultations with the RSCs and the department as to how they're going to proceed."

The study was commissioned by the Department of Environment and Local Government, with McKendy's report landing on the desk of minister Serge Rousselle in late March.

The information gathering process included, according to the report's preamble, meetings and consultations with 300 people connected to the RSCs in some way, roundtable discussions with the minister and department officials, direct interviews with department managers and a series of workshops.

"In their relatively short existence, the regional service commissions have become an important and integral component of local governance in New Brunswick," McKendy noted in his report.

"The series of recommendations

contained in this report are intended to move the bar to the next level for RSCs - the future success and growth of the Regional Service Commissions will depend on the combined efforts and commitments of the Province, member communities as well as the RSCs themselves."

McKendy noted that many of these actions would result in better integration and reduced duplication of services while also facilitating increased cooperation between communities and, likely, mutual cost savings.

In order to facilitate that expanded portfolio, the plan would call for greater collaboration between the commissions and provincial organizations such as the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Opportunities New Brunswick.

The mandate of the RSCs is spelled out in the Regional Service Delivery Act, which would likely need to be updated if a number of these recommendations are eventually implemented.

The report also acknowledges that some of what it is proposing would likely come with some complex challenges that would need to be overcome.

One of the recommendations, which would turn over the administration of New Brunswick's unincorporated local service districts to the RSCs as opposed to the Department of Environment and Local Government.

Miramichi board member John Goodfellow, an outspoken advocate for the rights of rural New Brunswickers, said that there's a lot to digest in the report, especially in determining the impact these measures might have at the local level.

"This is very relevant to LSDs and there is a lot of stuff on there where the details aren't there but it could be very threatening and I plan to push this with the LSDs, but this is something I would like to see studied and commented on," Goodfellow said.

"There are some recommendations I think people are going to react to and rural residents, especially, should be studying this document because most of these recommendations are going to impact LSDs more than anyone."

In Miramichi, meanwhile, the city already handles the delivery of its own police and fire services, along with tourism and economic development, and Mayor Adam Lordon said he likewise needed some time to go over its findings and determine the potential impact.

The commission's board committed to holding a special private meeting sometime in September to discuss the contents of the report more in-depth in order to be as prepared as possible for whenever the province decides to take action on any of this.

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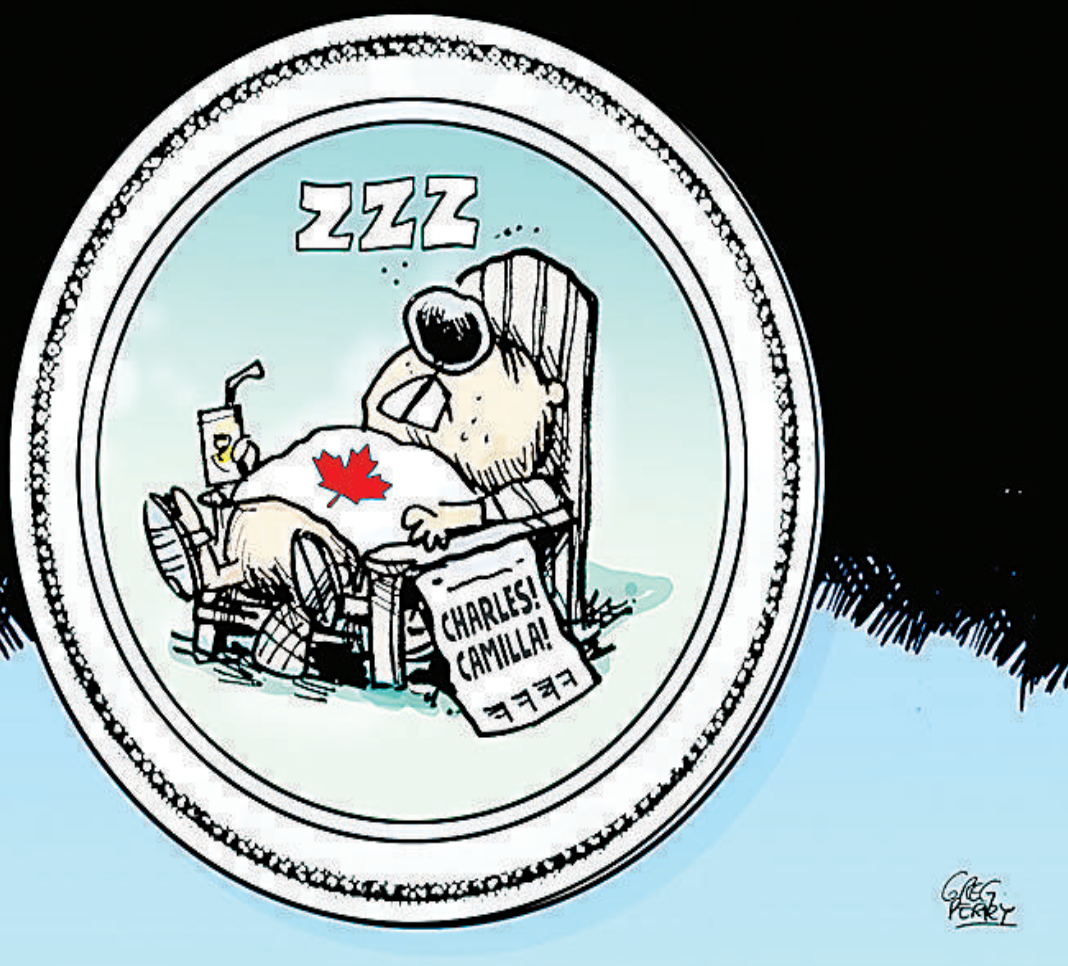
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GREG PERRY

Thoughts about turning 150

MARSHALL BUTTON
COMMENTARY

There's a theory that the first human who will live a thousand years is alive today. That would be a pretty good run. Methuselah didn't make it past 969.

But this isn't about human biotechnology and a dystopian future, it's about age, a look back at Canadian history with an added soupçon of smugness.

Our country recently celebrated a milestone birthday, the 'big one-five-oh.' In the great scheme of things, that's not old for a country. I have friends in France who live in a house that was built in 1325.

Last week, a tepee on Parliament Hill and a longhouse near the New Brunswick Legislature served as reminders of two things. First, there are folks in this country who have a big problem with a place that claims to be only 15 decades old; and secondly, there are still two buildings left in Canada where smoking indoors is allowed.

Where there's smoke, there's fire-works. And what a show we put on from coast-to-coast (and yes, that third coast that we're always reminded to include). Our musical talents shone in the rain from Ottawa to Moncton, and Canadian pride rained down on the sunny prairies, including Alberta.

P.E.I. claims to be 'The Birthplace of Confederation' just because they lured political tourists from Ontario and Québec for the first-ever East Coast Kitchen Party in 1864. They didn't even join Confederation until 1873. They shouldn't be allowed to have their 150th party until 2023.

What's seldom reported about the Confederation story is that the meeting was supposed to be held in Fredericton, but P.E.I.'s Premier John Hamiltion Gray refused to travel to New

Brunswick, probably because it was 1864 BC (Before Costco).

And so New Brunswick was passed over in favour of P.E.I. for host of the first meeting to create Canada. Therefore, we can trace our roots as the drive-thru province back to that momentous historical event.

What's also overlooked about this first gathering is that the original agenda had included a discussion of Maritime Union, but the party-crashers from Uppity Canada railroaded the honourable delegates with promises of train transportation.

Maritime Union was derailed. No doubt we would have benefited from a few Mothers of Confederation. Why were there only Fathers? With apologies to Justin Trudeau, because it was 1864.

Because of the Charlottetown Conference, we lost the chance to form a super East Coast province called WASSUM (We Are Screwed, Send Us Money).

While New Brunswick is often overlooked by the rest of Canada, we can lay claim to being the most Canadian province, and not just because we were among the first to join.

Our French-English split is almost exactly the same as the country as a whole. We're the only officially bilingual province in an officially bilingual country.

We have tall mountains, rolling fields, rocky shores, sandy beaches, dense forests and people chasing the ace.

We also have countless rivers, lakes, beavers, moose, mosquitoes, churches, taverns and hockey rinks. And, most important of all, we have the nation's most Tim Hortons per capita!

I started this column by claiming to be smug about my Canadian-ness. That's an attitude I share with many fellow citizens of the Great

White North, especially as we watch the gong show going on south of the border.

In past years, it wasn't always easy to define what it was to be a Canadian. As the expression went, "We might not know what we are, but we know we're not American."

While it's true that Americans look like us and sometimes sound like us, we're masters of our own house. There are similarities between Canada and the U.S., but there are so many differences.

Like the U.S., we have a television celebrity buffoon named Donald thanks to our national sport of hockey, but we would never vote him in as prime minister.

They had Occupy Wall Street, we have hundreds of empty houses on the North Shore ready to be occupied.

They have the Washington White House, we have the Irving Big Stop.

They have climate change deniers who let their cars run all day, we have Idle No More.

They had three terms of Bush administration, we're lucky to get three days in the bush to hunt moose.

They love their guns and have the right to bear arms, we love summer so we can go bare arms and show off our 'guns.'

They have coloured water with a touch of alcohol. We have beer. They have a political leader who admires Putin, we have an entire nation in love with Poutine.

They have weapons of mass destruction, we have January and February. So, Happy 150 Canada. You don't look a year over 15 decades.

In C-A-N-A-D-A, where we see the Reversing Falls, in Canada we get to see them all!

Marshall Button

is a native of Dalhousie and the playwright/performer behind 'Lucien,' a series of one-person plays. He now lives in Moncton and is a member of the Order of New Brunswick.

New RSC report warrants more study

While there is very clearly room for the roles of New Brunswick's 12 Regional Service Commissions to be expanded as a means of generating greater regional collaboration on different fronts, a recently-released report published on behalf of the province warrants more study, in our view.

The document put together by former Service New Brunswick head Michael McKendry, presented last month to RSC officials during a conference in Miramichi, indeed offers an intriguing vision for the role these bodies could play.

There were 30 recommendations in total that, if implemented, would see the RSCs roles and responsibilities taken well beyond their current mandate of overseeing the delivery of planning and land use services and the collection of solid waste.

Mr. McKendry's report suggests that the RSCs are the ideal vehicle for matters such as the delivery of regional fire, policing, tourism, economic development, recreational infrastructure, emergency planning services and more to flow through.

We agree the time has come for New Brunswick to make the transition to a more regional structure rather than one which is hyper-local, and often sees too many small villages and rural local service districts struggling to pay for vital services.

And given that the RSCs have gotten something of a running start on this exercise, forming relationships with the communities they serve since their formation four years ago, we concur that the commissions makes the most amount of sense to serve as the facilitator.

But would also caution that this can't and won't be taking place overnight because, quite clearly, there is a lot more work to be done in determining how this might all work and getting past just the broad strokes.

There is merit in what is being suggested, to be sure, however it's imperative that the commissions and their member communities have ample time to study what, exactly, this is going to mean.

There are some potential complications that we could see developing out of this, particularly from a city perspective, where we wonder if any increased oversight from the RSC might be viewed as toe-stepping or running interference.

In the case of Miramichi, for example, the city already delivers its own professional police and fire services, as well as its economic development and tourism initiatives in-house.

And if the RSC were to take on a bigger role in tourism, what would that mean for an entity such as the Miramichi River Tourism Association, whose mandate is essentially to promote those experiences at the regional level, a territory that we would point out stretches beyond the bounds of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission.

We were provided with an indication of the vision on the provincial side a few weeks ago, when the government, via Opportunities New Brunswick, offered to supply each RSC with a staffer that would be responsible for helping coordinate regional economic development priorities.

That package came with an opt-out clause of the commission's membership weren't happy with the arrangement, so we're intrigued to see how that plays out, especially since the province is paying for these new positions, which indicates a commitment of not downloading further onto the local level, which funds the RSCs.

We believe strongly that there is room for more collaboration on multiple levels here in the Miramichi region, and anything that helps bring this region together rather than keeping everybody in silos would be a step in the right direction.

But when it comes to this particular report, which was commissioned by the province, it needs to be viewed with a critical eye. On the surface, most of what's being suggested seems to be reasonable, but this is going to take some time to figure out.

Europe: the land of rising energy poverty

MARK MILKE
COMMENTARY

For those fortunate enough to vacation in Europe this summer, that continent is an attractive destination. There is much to explore and admire.

But Europe's lure for tourists shouldn't blind us to the reality of a continent where families are often asked to pay exorbitant amounts for basic needs, including energy. That has led to what is known as "energy poverty." That's where many are not able to afford household power bills, especially in winter but also during summer heat waves.

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The number of Europeans affected by this problem is high. According to the European Union, in its 2015 report on rising energy costs, fully 11 per cent of member states' population – that's 54 million people – already cannot afford their energy bills. The EU further estimates that fully one-quarter of residents or 128 million people (and that includes the existing 54 million) are at risk of being energy-poor. Romania's energy poverty, for example, clocks in at between 40 and 50 per cent of the population. Spain, Portugal, Estonia, Belgium, Malta, Slovakia, Italy, Ireland and even the United Kingdom record energy

news and contain no personal attacks. We will consider opinion articles on any subject. All submissions must be original, should not have been previously published other than in a Brunswick News publication and should be between 700

poverty rates of between 20 and 30 per cent of their populations.

Such energy poverty rates have led to what the EU references as "excessive mortality rates" (i.e. death) in some of the same countries during winter, when some consumers cannot afford to heat their homes. Seventeen of 26 EU member states find the problem so prevalent that they even have energy poverty defined as an explicit concept in law.

The EU blames energy poverty on three factors: the effect of recessions on incomes; energy-inefficient homes; and rising prices. Of the three, one is less amenable to further change: energy efficiency. That's because European homes, apartments and townhouses are already very energy efficient.

As for recessions and incomes, higher energy prices prevent European economies from achieving higher economic growth given that expensive energy restricts the money available for business

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investment. That slows overall economic growth which exacerbates existing sluggish economies and lower incomes.

Oddly, in its 2015 study, the EU ignored one major factor in energy poverty: its own role in killing off affordable power in attempts to meet ambitious carbon dioxide reduction goals in the 1992 Kyoto Protocol. Such objectives have been a staple of both EU and member state policy ever since.

Let's consider the United Kingdom. In the UK, energy poverty is defined as a household where more than 10 per cent of income must be spent to heat the home to maintain an acceptable temperature. Fully one-quarter of British households fit that definition. Who's to blame? In Britain, successive governments pushed out cheaper energy sources such as coal. The country was the first to commit to phasing out coal-fired electricity. Also, as of 2015, the government made it clear that push would continue with

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plans to end all coal-fired power production by 2025.

Problem: As of 2015, coal-fired electricity in the UK still accounted for 20 per cent of all power. Also, the 2025 plan is not realistic without large costs. The Institution of Mechanical Engineers estimated that the country lacks the time, resources and enough people with the right skills to build enough replacement natural gas and nuclear plants by 2025.

As Canadians wander over Europe this summer, they might keep in mind how that continent deliberately moved away from affordable energy over three decades. Thus far, the result has been an increase in energy poverty. The results at home will be the same as Canadian governments adopt similar policies.

Mark Milke

is a columnist, author and policy analyst. This article was first published by Canadians for Affordable Energy.

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Miramichi Leader

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Wednesday

November 1, 2017

Demolition season arrives in city as council authorizes tear-down

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

The city is getting ready to shine up the wrecking ball after awarding a string of contracts for the demolition of nearly a dozen buildings.

Council during Thursday night's regular meeting signed off on the tear-downs of a pair of derelict, vacant homes under its unsightly and dangerous premises bylaws while bundling together eight demolitions on the former Canadian Forces Base Chatham and in the Douglas-town area as part of ongoing water

infrastructure upgrades.

The \$305,000 contract awarded to Delway Enterprises for the base work will, most notably, call for the removal of a pair of decommissioned gunite water towers on the Williston Road and just east on the Rennie Road.

Ridding itself of the water towers is part of the city's plan to overhaul the water distribution system in Douglas-town after the project qualified under the second of the city's two applications to the federal Clean Water and Wastewater program.

The work involves the construction of a 2.4 kilometre transmission line

that will carry water from the at the new, \$900,000 water tower at the top of the Williston Road east along the McKinnon Road and down toward the Rennie Rd. area, as well as the construction of a new pressure-reducing valve station.

Last month, the city tendered a separate \$1.24 million contract to another local company to carry out that end of the project, with the federal government contributing more than half of the overall cost.

On the other side of the river on the former base, meanwhile, city engineer Darren Row confirmed the demolition

package also covers the removal of the gunite reservoirs just off Route 11 along General Manson Way, as well as the adjacent fire pump building and three more buildings located at the corner of General Manson and Fentiman Street, Pollard Boulevard and Maher Avenue and one just off Vancouver Crescent.

The modernization of the waterworks in the CFB Chatham area, which houses the Retirement Miramichi community along with a diverse complement of commercial businesses and

PLEASE SEE → **DEMOLITION, A2**

Miramichi, Kent regions ink economic development pact with ONB

KRIS MCDAVID
MIRAMICHI LEADER

Municipal leaders in the Miramichi region say they're satisfied an offer by Opportunities New Brunswick to supply them with an economic development head-hunter is only coming with the best of intentions.

So after some expressed initial hesitation when the offer first came to them last summer, members of the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission's board of directors sat down with officials from ONB in the city on Monday to sign a formal memorandum of understanding committing both parties to the arrangement.

The move will see ONB – the province's economic development agency – paying for the cost of providing the new staffer with the intention of seeing the region reaping all of the benefits.

Upper Miramichi Mayor Douglas Munn chairs the RSC and says that after learning more about the setup, he's confident that whoever's hired for the position in the coming weeks will be working with the best interest of communities in mind.

Given that his own community has limited resources available to search out new investment, Munn said it's logical to expect the addition of the new staffer at the commission level will help increase their chances of spurring new economic development opportunities while helping fill more

PLEASE SEE → **PACT, A2**

Chief offers \$1,000 bounties on drug dealers

ERNESTO CARRANZA
MIRAMICHI LEADER

A New Brunswick First Nation chief has a warning to any drug dealers in his community: you are not welcome.

Chief Bill Ward, along with band councillors and members of the Metepenagiag First Nation, located near Miramichi, is offering a cash reward for any information that leads to the conviction of drug traffickers in the community.

"What I did was I offered a \$1,000 out for information that would lead to a conviction of one of these drug dealers," he said.

Ward said this initiative isn't about attacking people with addiction.

"We are just trying to help the community and we're going after the supply, not the individual users," said Ward.

Ward said as leaders of the community, the band noticed an issue with drugs, specifically methamphetamine. The cash reward is about deterring the flow of drugs on the reserve by hopefully stopping drug dealers before they come into the community.

When asked what Metepenagiag First Nation is doing to help people with addiction on the reserve, Ward said he didn't want to get into specifics, but did say there are two addiction

PLEASE SEE → **BOUNTY, A2**



Chief Bill Ward of Metepenagiag First Nation is offering a \$1,000 reward to community members who identify drug dealers on the reserve. PHOTO: ERNESTO CARRANZA/MIRAMICHI LEADER



Forestry in New Brunswick
Special advertising section inside

Rotary radio bingo funds spread across Miramichi

JEREMY TREVORS
MIRAMICHI LEADER

When Paula Septon and Anne Woods started the Rotary Club of Chatham's Radio Bingo a little more than a year ago, both hoped it would help the city of Miramichi.

Little did they know it would turn out to be one of the city's top fundraisers.

Radio bingo went live Feb 10, 2016 and since then it's helped raise close to \$200,000 for organizations and groups in the region and Woods said has a large following each week. The only

week there was no bingo was the week of the January 2017 ice storm - but only because the station had no power.

Woods, of the Rotary Club of Chatham and station manager at 99.3 The River, said from day one, the community has been onboard and thanks to this, they have been able to use funds to for the Salvation Army, the oncology department at the Miramichi Regional Hospital, Hospice Miramichi, the Miramichi Community Food Bank and helped build the accessibility park located at Ritchie Wharf, which was

PLEASE SEE → **BINGO, A4**



Paula Septon and Anne Woods of the Rotary Club of Chatham are all prepared for the Rotary Club of Chatham Radio Bingo coming up Wednesday. The radio bingo has been active for a year-and-a-half and has helped raise close to \$200,000.

PHOTO: JEREMY TREVORS/MIRAMICHI LEADER

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news

Chief offers \$1,000 bounties on drug dealers

BOUNTY →A1

counselors available at the health centre ready to offer help, whether it be rehabilitation or methadone treatments.

"We want to start taking care of our own community," said Ward. "We want people who have seen someone dealing drugs to go to a council member and tell them the information so they can take it to the RCMP and then we may be able to get a conviction."

Ward said he has strategized with the staff at the Metepenagiag Health Centre on how to best tackle the drug situation on the reserve.

"We offer addiction services and anything else to help people affected by these drugs, but at the end of the day they have to want to help themselves," said Ward.

Anne Marie Larry, health director for the Natoaganeg Health Centre, said the centre offers a variety of different programs for the Natoaganeg First Nation, which is located about 15 minutes from Metepenagiag First Nation.

"Our main priority is education and prevention for addiction," said Larry. "We do offer several services for people seeking detox or treatment."

The health centre has an addiction worker, resident nurse, two social workers, and a psychotherapist.

Education sessions with doctors and RCMP are also offered and Larry said the health centre is also heavily involved in school and community events and projects like safe grad at Miramichi Valley High School.

"Being proactive is the main thing and targeting school age kids helps the community against addiction," said Larry.

She said the centre is primarily for the Natoaganeg community, but the centre also takes in other people from outside communities suffering from addiction.

"Being proactive is the main thing and targeting school age kids helps the community against addiction."

ANNE MARIE LARRY

The centre's addiction worker is also an aboriginal traditionalist, providing traditional treatment and detox.

"It isn't just up to the health centre to protect our community, or our chief and council, but it is also up to community members as well, that's the only way we are going to get rid of these drugs," she said.

"This is not our culture or our way of life, this is a result of past trauma ... but we are here to make sure that it stops and our young people have a chance to thrive."

Ward said he has seen first hand the effects methamphetamine has on people, and said community members become shells of their former selves and to his knowledge, drugs have mostly affected young adults in their mid 20s to early 30s.

"I understand addiction is a symptom of something else, a trauma in the past, so first we want to help those already affected and at the same time prevent any new addicts in the future," said Ward.

Cpl. Chuck Plaxton, with the Sunny Corner RCMP, said police will deal with tips and information as it comes to them.

"In general terms we're dealing with drug problems when we can and as they come," said Plaxton. "It is always an ongoing thing and as we investigate charges, we make sure to follow up as best we can."

Plaxton said he could not comment specifically on the Metepenagiag First Nation plan to offer rewards for information on drug dealers.

Regions ink economic development pact with ONB

PACT →A1

of the void left behind with the demise of Enterprise Miramichi a few years ago.

"When the Enterprise network went down, it really hurt a lot of small towns like mine, as well as Doaktown and Blackville, because that was our key economic driver," Munn said.

"The partnership we've formed here today, I think, will work very well for the rural areas and the city as well - there could be a project that comes up, part of it could be in the city, part of it could be rural, so this could work from a regional angle."

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Bill Fraser, along with Seniors and Long-term Care Minister Lisa Harris, represented the provincial government in signing the MOU on Monday.

Fraser was in Richibucto in a similar capacity earlier in the day, inking a pact with the Kent Regional Service Commission that will see that organization provided with an economic development professional as well.

ONB officials, for their part, stated a few months ago it was committed to working with municipal stakeholders through the service commissions to try to implement sections of a new economic development model outlined in the Economic Development Growth Plan the Gallant government rolled out last year.

"One of the goals of that plan was to make sure that we have a solid ecosystem in community economic development for each part of the province," said Donald Hammond, ONB's regional director for northern New Brunswick.

"This includes active local and regional economic development discussions, region-specific economic development opportunities development and support services for business growth."

Hammond noted that a better-aligned vision at the regional level will result in a better leveraging of resources that can help stimulate development based on the priorities being articulated from the regions themselves.

In the case of the City of Miramichi, it already maintains its own internal economic development department



Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Bill Fraser and Upper Miramichi Mayor Doug Munn sign a memorandum of understanding between the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission and Opportunities New Brunswick for the hiring of an economic development professional who will work to secure opportunities on behalf of the region. Seniors and Long-term Care Minister Lisa Harris is also shown. PHOTO: KRIS MCDAVID/MIRAMICHI LEADER

staffed by professionals whose job it is to search out new economic development opportunities and market the city to investors.

Mayor Adam Lordon said Monday that while the city has its own agenda for economic development, he said that when it comes to that specific topic, there's no such thing as having too many resources.

He said he's excited about the potential of this as something that can help drive more regional conversation and collaboration on priority files that benefit all Miramichiers.

"This is unique, because it allows us to collaborate with the region and we're at this table as an active and proud part of the regional service commission board now, so

we do think regionally and this is one more opportunity to collaborate," Lordon said.

"We do have our own resources but it's never enough, so this will allow us to identify regional priorities and part of this agreement, it was made very clear to us that we will have an input as a board as to what this resource, what their agenda will be and what their priorities will be."

The organization is expected to see similar agreements formalized with all of the 12 RSCs in the coming weeks.

The new staffer's job description will include meeting with municipal governments and local service district committees, industry groups, chambers of commerce and other local and regional stakeholders on a regular

basis in order to discuss specific economic opportunities.

Employees are expected to be in place by January.

Fraser, for his part, said that forging "strong partnerships" is key to the Gallant government's strategy to grow the economy and said this initiative aligns well with that vision.

"The MOU we are signing today ... formalizes a great partnership between your government and the fantastic local and regional economic development teams in the Miramichi region," Fraser said.

"If we work together we can achieve results for the people of the Miramichi region - and this is just another step forward to having a full-time resource that will be working for our communities."

Demolition season arrives in city as council authorizes tear-down

DEMOLITION →A1

heavy industry, also falls under the scope of the federal program.

That project includes the construction of a new booster station, currently nearing completion, next door to the Lord Beaverbrook Arena below the Chatham water tower, along with the installation of new piping.

"Once the new booster station is commissioned we'll be tearing down those old tanks and four other buildings, so we're [getting rid of] all of those structures and replacing them with one large reservoir and one booster station," Row explained.

"So from an asset management standpoint, it's a great value and it's certainly needed."

As for the city's ongoing battle against eyesore properties, meanwhile, council was able to chip away at the list after authorizing two demolitions as well as the cleanup of two pieces of land Thursday night.

An abandoned home located at 506 McLaughlin Avenue in Newcastle, as well as a vacant residence at 119 McFarlane Avenue in Chatham Head are slated to be razed.

The city also awarded a contract for a company to go and clean up a Loggieville property at 4134 Water Street which saw the house that once stood there gutted by fire this past summer.

Finally, as expected, council also

"So from an asset management standpoint, it's a great value and it's certainly needed."

DARREN ROW

issued a tender to clean up one of its industrial park properties on Dan Cripps St., after retaking ownership of the property from an unidentified developer who had been harnessing the land to store junked-out cars.

The property had been the subject of criticism from councillors and the public since the land was transferred back in 2014 with the hope the new owner would establish a business on the property.

That never materialized, however, with the land expected to go back on the market following the cleanup.

Councillor Shelly Williams said the city finding a way to deal with these derelict properties is something she hears about frequently from taxpayers who identify it as a priority issue.

And despite limited resources and a backlog that seems to get bigger every



All three of these water outdated waterworks buildings on the former CFB Chatham property will be demolished in the coming weeks, along with a number of others in the city, as it moves ahead with a modernization of its systems.

PHOTO: KRIS MCDAVID/MIRAMICHI LEADER

year, Williams said she's pleased with the approach the city has taken on a sensitive issue and the progress that's been made these past few years.

"Unpleasantly premises is always a contentious subject with people in the city," Williams said.

"We still have a good number of [properties to deal with] but we've made some remarkable progress."

The city has a very specific procedure for dealing with properties that are either unsightly or dangerous.

Through the clerk's department, notices to comply are issued to property owners who are found to be in violation of the bylaw and typically they have a maximum of 30 days to address the situation.

More often than not, the target of

any complaints and investigations are buildings that are either vacant or outright abandoned and left to fall into a state of disrepair.

For properties that are deemed dangerous, the city can order the structure to be demolished if the property owner does not adhere to the bylaw, with the property owner responsible for reimbursing the city for the cost.

In the event the city can't recoup the cost, the municipality then has the option of going to the provincial government for the purposes of issuing a tax lien on properties that don't adhere.

As the city clerk, Cathy Goguen has the authority to investigate and, if necessary, initiate action against anyone whose property is deemed unsightly or dangerous.

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