



Northern Nova Scotia Labour Market Monitor

~March 2011~



This is an overview of the Northern Region which includes Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Guysborough and Pictou Counties. The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report focusing on labour market information produced by local Labour Market Information Analysts.

Labour Force Trends

The labour market improved in Northern Nova Scotia in March. Employment increased by 2,100 on a year over year basis, reflecting an increase in full time work of 3,000 that offset a decline in part time work. The labour force expanded by 1,300 over the same period. With employment increasing faster than the labour force, the level of unemployment and the unemployment rate fell in the area. The unemployment rate now stands at 11.6 percent, down from 12.8 percent in March 2010.

For more information, please visit the Statistics Canada website at:

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfs05b-eng.htm>

Northern NS	Mar	
	2010	2011
Region: 220		
Labour Force (000)	75.2	76.5
Employed (000)	65.6	67.7
Full Time	52.5	55.5
Part Time	13.1	12.2
Unemployed (000)	9.6	8.9
Participation Rate (%)	57.7	58.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	12.8	11.6

Data is 3 month moving average from the Labour Force Survey - Statistics Canada

Labour Market News by Industry

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Antigonish will receive federal funding of \$500,000 towards the **Antigonish Town & County Recreation Association** field project. The \$2.8 million recreation facility will include an artificial soccer field, baseball diamond and an eight-lane running track. The provincial government has committed \$500,000 and the remaining funds will come from the municipalities, school board and community. *Antigonish Casket, March 2, 2011*

Construction is underway across from the **Glooscap Heritage Centre** in Millbrook where the **new theatre company** will be located in the former Capricorn restaurant. The first performance is expected to take place in January 2012. The theatre group will be adapting Glooscap legends to perform original Aboriginal theatre productions at first, but once the space is created the opportunity for other performances will be wide open. For more information, go to www.glooscapheritagecentre.com *Truro Daily News, March 2, 2011*

Business, Building and Other Support Services

Minacs will be providing **Canada Post** with call centre services including those currently offered by the **National Philatelic Centre** in Antigonish. Employees were notified in March 2010 that Canada Post would be contracting out most of its call centre work to a third-party provider. Permanent employees at the Philatelic Centre will keep their jobs until they leave or retire but eventually their duties will be moved completely to Minacs. *Antigonish Casket, March 09, 2011*

Construction

Cumberland Paving and Cumberland Aggregates have been purchased by Ontario roadbuilding giant **Miller Group**. Sources say it will be business as usual bringing employees back for the construction season and the company's new owners are committed to maintaining Cumberland Paving's 60 or so employees, while the company's president will be remaining with the company in an advisory capacity. *Amherst Daily News, March 22, 2011*

Education Services

The **Chignecto-Central Regional School Board** is moving ahead with plans to amalgamate two elementary schools. School board members recently voted unanimously to close Bible Hill Central and Bible Hill East Court Road elementary schools. Students from the schools, which currently only have about 150 students each, will be amalgamated in a new Grade Primary to 4 school that is expected to open in 2015. *Truro Daily News, March 11, 2011*

Chignecto-Central School Board will cut twelve consultant positions, ten at the end of the 2010-11 school year and two within 3 years. Positions include two literacy mentors, a virtual school consultant, an assessment consultant, two French programming positions, two technology jobs and three Reading Recovery teachers. Nova Scotia boards have been instructed by the government to cut the number of consultants by half over three years. *The News, March 11, 2011*

The **Chignecto- Central School Board** and 630 employees represented by the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union reached a new collective agreement. The two year contract includes a 1% wage increase plus an increase in the cost share of benefits from fifty-five to sixty-five percent. Employees include administrative assistants, payroll clerks, IT support specialists, librarians and library specialists. *The News, March 2, 2011*

Finance and Insurance

The Boards of the **East Coast and Heritage Credit Unions** have agreed to amalgamate the two organizations. Together they have 300,000

members, manage \$310 million in assets and 20 branches. All branches will remain open and no lay-offs are expected. Members vote on the proposal in March 2011. *Guysborough Journal, March 16, 2011*

Manufacturing

The province of Nova Scotia will provide **LED Roadway Lighting Ltd.** with a \$10-million loan guarantee from the Industrial Expansion Fund. LED Roadway Lighting's founder Charles Cartmill will also invest another \$3.2 million in the company. With the province's support, they will be able to capitalize on their current contracts, and continue to further their expansion plans. LED Roadway Lighting manufacturers innovative streetlight fixtures that use 60 per cent less energy than traditional fixtures. With a manufacturing facility in Amherst, and research and development and executive offices in Halifax, the company employs more than 100 people and expects to more than triple that by 2014. *Truro Daily News, March 31, 2011*

Pictou County pulp mill **Northern Pulp** has been sold to **Paper Excellence Canada Corp.** of Vancouver. Northern has about 230 employees and another 400 in forest contract workers; no staff reductions are expected at this time. Paper Excellence is owned by private Asian investors, who have also purchased three mills in western Canada over the last three years. Both management and the union from Northern Pulp see it as a positive change due to increased technical and financial resources it did not have as a stand alone company along with increased access to Asian markets. *The News, March 31, 2011*

About 70 people are considering their futures after management of **Kent Homes** has informed employees the plant is closed indefinitely. Employees were given the information recently during a meeting at the home manufacturing plant in Debert. The operation has been shut down since November, which has traditionally occurred. But with a weak housing market, an official with the Irving-owned company said it currently can't reopen the plant. Management could not forecast when the company would be able to secure the needed orders required to resume operation at the plant and there has been no announcement of a permanent closure at the plant. *Truro Daily News, March 10, 2011*

North Nova Seafoods is seeking approval for 50 foreign workers at their Caribou fish plant for the 2011 season. They process lobster in May and June, plus, herring in August. Last season, North Nova hired eleven foreign workers after being unable to find enough local workers. The plant has the capacity to employ up to 125 people, however, last year they operated at seventy-five percent of capacity due to lack of workers. *The News, March 29, 2011*

The future of Pictou County's **Maritime Steel** remains unresolved as the accepted bid of \$2.9 million by Abbas Jafarnia, a former metallurgical engineer at the foundry, was given an extension to meet conditions of the sale. Jafarnia is awaiting word from the Nova Scotia government on a loan application and has until May 2011 to meet conditions. He also wants a waiver for any environmental liabilities. A second lower bid from locally owned 3-D Auto Parts of \$1.2 million has been put on hold. 3-D planned to operate from the current location for a year while they built a new facility in a less residential area of the county. Jafarnia plans on staying in the current facility and focusing on production of parts for oil and mining with 100 workers back to work within a year and up to 200 employees in the second phase of his plan. *Pictou Advocate, March 9, 2011*

Public Administration

Statistics Canada will hire sixty-five people in Pictou County to work on Census 2011 this spring. Five supervisors will be hired and trained; they will help select sixty enumerators. Applications are available at the Town of New Glasgow, Stellarton and Pictou websites. Applicants must be able to commit to 20 hours of work per week and be able to travel. *The News, March 19, 2011*

The **federal government** is going to rebuild the **seawall** protecting **Advocate Harbour** which is vital to the community and the local fishing and tourism industries. The announcement did not include a price tag, but it's believed the cost will be about \$2 million. The proposed fix includes the placement of armour rocks, a timber crib and ramps for beach access. The commitment comes a year after the Canadian Coast Guard and ACOA funded a study into the work required to stabilize the natural seawall. The second phase of that study is currently underway and

the repair work will be based on that geotechnical analysis. *The Springhill Record - March 5, 2011*

The **provincial government** is going to pay about one third of the \$100,000 cost of a feasibility study for a proposed **highway interchange project** on Highway 102 in Hilden. The interchange project would include new roads built to provide more access into the Truro Industrial Park and the Truro Power Centre. *Truro Daily News, March 3, 2011*

The **Department of Community Services** (DCS) has reduced its business hours in Guysborough County. The Chedabucto Centre office is closed to walk-ins on Mondays and Fridays. Case workers will use these days to travel to other communities and clients who are unable to access the office due to financial and transportation challenges. DCS say the move was in response to a decline in case loads and service needs in the area. The number of child welfare cases has declined by eighty-one percent and income assistance by eighteen percent in the last two years. *Guysborough Journal, March 02, 2011*

The **Antigonish Guysborough Black Development Association** will help 10 new participants with career planning and skill development with \$99,000 in funding from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. The funding is part of the department's "Works for You" program, which supports projects across the province to help unemployed and low-skilled Nova Scotians prepare to find and maintain work. The department also announced support for 18 other programs across the province. *Guysborough Journal, March 30, 2011*

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

The Town of Pictou has approved the development of a 20-unit apartment building. Halifax developer Jacob Tanner Developments Inc. will renovate the former Stella Maris Convent on Dennon Street to create bachelor, one-and two bedroom apartments. The property owner says he will use local contractors to extensively renovate the interior. The exterior will be refreshed as the building is designated by the town as a heritage property. *Pictou Advocate, March 23, 2011*

Utilities

Sprott Power of Toronto has purchased the assets of the Amherst wind project from Spanish company **Acciona**. It expects to begin work on the 30-megawatt wind farm on the Tantramar Marsh once all the consents have been transferred. The company plans to erect 15 turbines on the marsh with each turbine being about 90 metres in height. Acciona Wind Energy Canada Inc. was expected to be well under way by now on its proposed 43-turbine wind farm but permitting delays, the economic recession and the need for further bird studies have led to setbacks in the project. Acciona was granted a certificate of determination from New Brunswick's Department of Environment last January which basically gives the company approval for the project as long as certain regulatory conditions are met first. *Various Sources, March 25, 2011*

Note: In preparing this document, Service Canada has taken care to provide clients with labour market information from reliable sources that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Service Canada.

*For more information contact your local Labour Market Information Analyst
for Cumberland, Colchester:
ken.mills@servicecanada.gc.ca or
for Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough:
diane.tibbo@servicecanada.gc.ca
Or visit our website at:
www.labourmarketinformation.ca*