



Northern Nova Scotia Labour Market Monitor

~July 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

Although employment levels in Northern Nova Scotia were higher in July compared to a year earlier, a slightly larger influx of workers into the labour market resulted in a small increase in the number of unemployed workers in the area and a 0.3 point increase in the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for Northern Nova Scotia for July 2011 was 8.8%.

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

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

Labour Market News by Industry

Business Building and Other Support Services

PEI's **Advantage Communications** has announced it is opening its fifth call centre location in Atlantic Canada, in Amherst. The company, which is set to begin recruitment immediately, has plans to open in August 2011 and will hire up to 50 people in the next few months. Officials note the strategic alliance between Advantage Communications and EastLink as having contributed to the company's ability to grow. Advantage Communications will provide customer and technical support services. Advantage has call centres in Summerside, Charlottetown, Souris and Dieppe, N.B. *Amherst Daily News, July 14, 2011*

Construction

EllisDon Corp. of Halifax has been awarded the \$22.9 million contract to build the inmate housing expansion at the medium security federal prison in Springhill. Construction on the 192-unit expansion is expected to begin by early August 2011. The two-storey structure will house two 96-bed units, increasing the inmate population from 400 to 600 inmates. The project will take about 18 months to complete. A team of four or five people from EllisDon will oversee the project which will create some 120 to 150 construction jobs at its peak. A spokesperson for the Springhill facility said the prison will need more correctional officers and support and clerical staff, but couldn't say how many. *Various Sources, July 6, 2011*

Amherst town council recently approved a motion to award a tender to **Maritech Construction Inc.** of Amherst for the redesign of Victoria Square. The project is part of the Centre First - Downtown Amherst Action Strategy. Of the two bids received, Maritech

Northern NS	July	
	2010	2011
Region: 220		
Labour Force (000)	79.9	81.1
Employed (000)	73.1	74.1
Full Time	61.1	61.2
Part Time	12.0	12.9
Unemployed (000)	6.8	7.1
Participation Rate (%)	61.4	62.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.5	8.8

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

was the lowest bid coming in at \$1,050,000 plus HST. Work has begun and should be complete by the November 1, 2011 deadline that the town has in place. The town also awarded a tender to **Crandall Engineering** for the design and detailed construction drawings of the two gateway intersections into the downtown. The tender is for the preliminary design to improve the intersections of Church and Albion streets, and LaPlanche and Lawrence streets. Crandall Engineering's bid was for \$35,950 plus HST. *Amherst Daily News, July 16, 2011*

Annex Investments Limited will build a new 4,500 square foot commercial facility on a former Shell service station lot at 181 Willow Street in Truro. The single storey building will house the federal government's **Service Canada** employment office that is currently located in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board building on Lorne Street. Construction will begin as soon and the opening date for the new building is slated for December 1st, 2011. *Various Sources, July 22, 2011*

Education Services

The **Nova Scotia Community College - Cumberland Campus** will be relocating into the former Teletech building in Town Square on South Albion Street in Amherst. The satellite campus has been looking for a new larger facility for an expanded course load for some time. Plans are underway for the building to be open for students in the fall of 2011. *Amherst Daily News, July 6, 2011*

Healthcare

FutureWorx recently graduated 17 continuing care assistants from its community-based training program in Antigonish. The ten month program worked with local employers and participants to train workers for front line care in the community. *Antigonish Casket, July 13, 2011*

The **Pictou County Health Authority** is reducing administration costs at the management level, as the province has approved 2011-12 budgets with no funding increase. Retirements and resignations of twelve staff over two years are being used to re-organize management functions. This is the first

time in ten years that Nova Scotia's nine Health Authorities have not received an increase in funding. *Pictou Advocate, July 13, 2011*

Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA) is dealing with a reduced budget of \$1.1 million due to no increase in provincial health funding for the 2011-12 fiscal year. GASHA, like all health districts, must reduce its management costs to 5% of its budget. Through retirement and attrition GASHA has cut five full-time management positions, so far. Increased revenues, a reduction in administrative expenses and other measures are planned with layoffs being the last option to be considered. One of the biggest challenges for this health authority is the ongoing issue of people in hospital who are waiting for nursing home placements. *Guysborough Journal, July 20, 2011*

R.K. MacDonald Nursing Home, Antigonish officially opened 28 new beds June 16, 2011. The Cobblestone and Thistle-down Cottages are designed to provide residents with care and support in a homier environment. It also allows couples to live together in a nursing home environment. Private rooms, shared living areas, green space and gardens are part of Nova Scotia's new design standards for long-term care. The addition will provide employment for 34 employees. R.K. MacDonald now has a 137 bed capacity. *Pictou Advocate, July 13, 2011*

Nova Scotia has converted 43 respite care beds to long-term care beds in nursing homes across the province. With a forty-four percent utilization rate for respite beds, the **Department of Health and Wellness** determined a portion of these spaces would be better used as long-term spots. There is a waiting list for long-term care beds in Nova Scotia. Thirty-five respite beds are still available to provide planned, temporary breaks for caregivers. *The News, July 13, 2011*

The Nova Scotia government's **Pharmacare** program is capping generic drug prices at 45% of the brand name cost effective July 2011. A tentative agreement on the cap and dispensing fees for pharmacists has been reached. The province's Pharmacare programs, which cost \$300 million last year, include Seniors' and Family Pharmacare, Diabetes Assistance Program, Drug Assistance for Cancer Patients, Pharmacare benefits through the Department of Community Services, and Pharmacare benefits

to residents of long-term care facilities younger than 65. *Various Sources, July 02, 2011*

Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas

Single Buoy Moorings (SBM) is currently overseeing the preparation of the offshore platform (production field centre) for **EnCana's** Deep Panuke project off Goldboro, Guysborough County. Currently, SBM has 82 staff in Nova Scotia including 70 offshore workers, of which 37 are Nova Scotian. Twelve onshore workers are also from Nova Scotia. Some of these workers were also involved in preparing the platform for transport from Abu Dhabi to Mulgrave, Nova Scotia. SBM will also operate the offshore platform at the Deep Panuke site which is planned to have first gas in late 2012. *Guysborough Journal, July 13, 2011*

Public Administration

The Nova Scotia **Department of Justice** is looking to complete the tendering process for a new 100-cell provincial jail in the near future. Construction of a \$30 million facility in Pictou County is scheduled to begin in the fall 2011. Meanwhile, **EllisDon Corporation** was awarded a \$22.9 million contract to build two new housing units at the medium-security federal penitentiary in Springhill, increasing its capacity by fifty-percent. *Pictou Advocate, July 20, 2011*

Real Estate

First Mutual Properties has received approval from New Glasgow town council to construct a \$5 million residential and commercial structure around the East River Road/Summer Street area. The four-storey building will offer about 33 enhanced senior apartments and 10,500 feet of commercial or retail space on the first floor. First Mutual owns five properties in the area but three will require rezoning from residential to commercial. The agreement includes upgrades to water and sewer in the area by the Town of New Glasgow. Construction is planned for the spring 2012. *The News, July 19, 2011*

A large residential development was recently approved by Truro's town council. **Meech Holdings Limited** plans to build an 80-unit residential development, consisting of single

detached, semi-detached and three-unit townhouse-style dwellings near Upham Drive and Industrial Avenue. They hope to have the initial construction of the first condos starting in the fall and complete for the spring of 2012. The company purchased the 40-acre property last summer with the intent of such a housing development. A public road would also be constructed through the development extending Upham Drive and connecting with a proposed road that would extend from Curtis Drive near the Ramar subdivision. *Truro Daily News, July 5, 2011*

Trade

Big Lots is taking ownership of 89 **Liquidation World** stores which includes retail stores in Amherst and Truro. The company already has some 1,400 Big Lots stores in 49 states. The business will be operated under the ownership of the American retail company Big Lots. The company name will stand as Big Lots Canada, although the Canadian stores will continue to operate under the Liquidation World (or LW) name for some time. As the product lines change over, with merchandise that currently is only available south of the border, initial indications are that they may hire more staff though no numbers have been confirmed. *Various Sources, July 22, 2011*

The **Wonder Food Store** in Guysborough shut down on July 8, 2011. The current owners have owned the Main Street convenience and coffee shop for seven years. Sunday shopping, expansion of hours by other businesses, and a declining population are all cited as reasons for the closure. The owners are offering the land and building for sale but not as a business. The store has existed in some form for well over a century. *Guysborough Journal, July 13, 2011*

Craig's Grocery and Take-Out on the Sunrise Trail in Northport will be closing in October 2011. The closure is largely due to delays in the building of the Northport Bridge which has slowed down their customer traffic. The store employs five people through the summer, and their hours have already been cut back. The current owners have operated the grocery store for seven years and had built the store up from seasonal employment to a year-round business. *Amherst Daily, July 15, 2011*

Transportation and Warehousing

Mahe Melford International Terminal is still planning the construction of a modern container terminal and logistics park at Melford, Guysborough County. Company officials presented their plans to a number of communities in Guysborough, Antigonish and Pictou County recently. Maher Terminals, now a major partner in the Melford project, developed the Prince Rupert terminal in British Columbia four years ago. That port is now booming with 2700 full-time jobs and \$150 million in wages annually. The Melford project seeks to create the same success on the East Coast of Canada where mega-ships and increased container traffic through the Suez Canal will be welcomed at Melford's deep, ice-free port. A rail agreement must be in place before work can begin on the terminal. Maher currently works with CN Rail for its Prince Rupert operations. *Guysborough Journal, July 13, 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.

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