



Labour Market Monitor

North Shore, Nova Scotia



September 2011

The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report providing a summary of labour market news events for the North Shore Region .

The North Shore Region includes Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Guysborough and Pictou Counties.

GENERAL EVENTS

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting

The Nova Scotia government has a seven-point, \$15 million plan to employ about 500 forestry workers affected by the shutdown of **NewPage's** paper manufacturing plant in Port Hawkesbury. The plan includes maintaining and expanding the province's silviculture program for 2011/2012. This will provide work for about 300 existing silviculture workers and for other contractors who will transition to silviculture. Wood will be stockpiled for use at the NewPage biomass co-generation facility keeping harvesters and truckers working. Forest roads used by NewPage will also be maintained in the area. A core woodlands team from NewPage will be employed to train self-employed workers in good forestry practices and appropriate use of Crown land. Small loan business guarantees from the province will be increased to 90% from 75%. The province will also pay for a world-market specialist to study the newsprint and high-gloss paper markets to determine the viability of NewPage's product in global markets. (*Antigonish Casket, September 14*)

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction

St. Brendan's Exploration Ltd. based in Calgary has leased oil and gas exploration rights for three onshore land blocks in Cumberland County (Malagash, Trumanville) and Pictou County (Scotsburn). The lease includes a commitment of \$10.4 million in exploration costs over three years covering exploration, seismic testing and drilling tests. Production cannot occur without further approvals. St. Brendan's currently has a New Glasgow office where the project will be based. (*Various Sources, September 14*)

Encana's Deep Panuke offshore natural gas project may not be producing gas by the end of 2011 as planned. **Single Buoy Moorings**, who own and operate the project's production platform, announced a delay in the completion date of their portion of the project. SBM will need more time to prepare the platform for first gas citing a potential date of the second quarter of 2012. (*Antigonish Casket, September 14*)

Construction

Site preparation work has begun on a \$1.2-million **strip mall** next to Pharmasave on Robert Angus Drive in Amherst. Construction of the 10,000-square foot building that will house health-related businesses could begin later in the fall or early next year. **Maritech Construction** of Amherst has been hired as the contractor for the project. (*Amherst Daily News, September 30*)

Manufacturing

Ligni Bel Ltd., Scotsburn, laid off 40 sawmill workers. The employer is blaming a shortage of wood due to the shutdown of the NewPage papermill in Port Hawkesbury. NewPage supplied Ligni Bel with wood for lumber production and Ligni sent wood chips to NewPage for its paper production. Ligni Bel is now trying to arrange another supply of logs including buying directly from private woodlot owners. The company no longer has enough raw material to support two shifts at the sawmill resulting in the layoff. About forty workers are still employed but production has been cut in half. (*Various Sources, September 14*)

Retail Trade

MacQuarrie's Pharmasave in Biblehill will be expanding from 3500 to about 10,000 square feet. They will relocate to a larger unit of the Pricechopper plaza on Pictou Road by early next year. The mall is owned by Gardiner Properties Ltd., of New Brunswick. This development will compliment the three phase expansion of the neighbouring Lexinton Park mini home complex. (*Truro Daily News, September 22*)

Coast Tire is currently constructing a larger building at its Stellarton Road location in Pictou County. The tire and auto repair company needs more space to allow servicing of heavier trucks, cube vans and other large vehicles. Construction is expected to take about five months; meanwhile, Coast Tire is temporarily located on Bridge Avenue, New Glasgow. (*The News, September 27*)

Office-Xperts in Amherst is closing their retail store due to a lack of sales but Stenek, the head office and distribution centre, on Tantramar Crescent will remain open. Two of the three jobs at the retail store will be eliminated while the other job will be re-located to the head office. (*Amherst Daily News, September 6*)

The **Pay A Dollar Store** in the Amherst Centre Mall is closing for good. The business is advertising a sale for their final days to clear out everything in the store. (*Amherst Daily News, September 29*)

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

An Ontario court issued an order authorizing Grant Thornton Limited, the receiver of **Blockbuster Canada Co.**, to begin the closure process for Blockbuster Canada Co.'s remaining 253 retail stores, including one in Truro, and related operations. A final closing date for all stores was not released. U.S.-based Blockbuster purchased the assets of the Canadian company from bankruptcy in April and continues to operate 1,500 Blockbuster stores in the States. Those stores will remain open and are unaffected by the Canadian receivership proceedings and store closings. (*Truro Daily News, September 7*)

Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services

Truro Sanitation Ltd.(TSL), has been sold to the Ontario company Miller Waste. TSL, located in the Truro Industrial Park, was owned by the Casey Group of Companies. All indications are that the 20 employees will remain and the new owners will run things much the same way they are being run now. The sale also includes Truro Sanitation's sister company, **PBS Waste Services Ltd.**, the largest waste hauler in Cumberland County. The deal also involves the transfer of ownership of more than 30 pieces of sanitation equipment (including trucks) and two construction and demolition landfill sites. (*Truro Daily News, September 1*)

Educational Services

The **Nova Scotia Agricultural College**, in Bible Hill, will receive more than \$850,000 for research on long-term nitrogen management in Atlantic Canada from the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program. The project will employ three full-time researchers, as well as some twelve support staff. The research will explore ways for farmers to apply nitrogen more efficiently while maintaining and increasing yields. As a result, producers will have better soil fertility, reduced nitrous oxide emissions, and a decrease in other environmental impacts, such as water contamination. (*Truro Daily News, September 13*)

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

The **Curves fitness centre** in Bible Hill has closed recently apparently due to a lack of business overall. Information on numbers prior to the shutdown was around 100 members. The centre's manager says arrangements are being made to provide membership refunds. (*Truro Daily News, September 27*)

Accommodation and Food Services

Local **Subway** franchisee, Greg Burrows, is planning to build a new restaurant at the Albion Power Centre in Pictou County. The Subway store will seat 50 to 60 people along with a drive-thru and will be located close to the new Pictou County Wellness Centre. Negotiations for a land parcel in the Stellarton business park are currently underway with building completion planned for the fall 2012. (*The News, September 28*)

Other Services (except Public Administration)

Dave's Service Centre in Debert is closing their gas pumps. While the owners say their business does enjoy the loyalty of many local customers, they also believe their full-serve pump prices are not competitive with lower self-serve pump prices in nearby Truro. (*Truro Daily News, September 28*)

Public Administration

The intersection of Church and Albion Street in Amherst will soon be reconstructed after the town awarded a \$392,000 tender to **Maritech Construction**. The only hold up could be the closing of the town of Amherst's purchase of the former Petro Canada garage from Suncor Energy. If the project is held up too long and can't be completed by November 20, construction could be delayed until 2012. (*Amherst Daily News, September 28*)

Note: *In preparing this document, the authors have 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 the department.*

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