



Labour Market Monitor

Northern



November 2011

The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report providing a summary of labour market news and events for the Northern Region of Nova Scotia. The Northern Region includes Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Guysborough and Pictou Counties.

GENERAL EVENTS

TD Economics has revised its own forecast for the **Nova Scotia economy** because of the \$25B shipbuilding contract awarded to Irving Shipbuilding Inc., Halifax. TD predicts a 1.6% increase in GDP growth for 2012 and job gains of 6,300, an increase of 0.2 % and 900 respectively. The effect will be even greater in 2013, with a 0.5% increase in GDP growth over its previous estimate of 2.1 %. (Chronicle Herald, November 7)

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction

Alva Construction Limited plans to expand its Georgeville, Antigonish County quarry from 4 to 54 hectares. Alva has applied for environmental approval from the provincial government. The Georgeville quarry has almost reached its expansion limit. With environmental approval Alva will be able to produce 450,000 tonnes of rock per year over an expected life span of 50 years. (The Antigonish Casket, November 16)

Single Buoy Moorings Inc. is getting closer to **first gas at the Deep Panuke** natural gas project based off Goldboro, Guysborough County. There are about 118 people currently preparing the offshore platform for production in June 2012, and they are in the final stages of hook-up and commissioning. Once production begins, employment is expected to decline. However, royalties to the province will begin to flow in. (Chronicle Herald, November 25)

Erdene Resource Development Corp. is preparing an environmental impact study for their proposed new quarry in Guysborough County. The **Black Point Quarry** would span 280 hectares and have facilities to process granite, crushed stone, sand and gravel. A marine terminal to transport these products to international markets is also planned. (Guysborough Journal, November 30)

Utilities

Gold Coast Wind Field Inc. of Guysborough has joined with Bay Wind Field Inc. of Annapolis Royal. This will allow Gold Coast to participate in the Community Feed-In Tariff program offered by the provincial government. Nova Scotia has a feed-in tariff program for locally-based renewable electricity projects. To be eligible, the projects must be community owned and connected at the distribution level (i.e., typically under 6 MW). (Chronicle Herald, November 21)

The province is accepting proposals for the **next round of green energy proposals** from independent producers this month. Nova Scotia's renewable energy plan requires Nova Scotia Power to buy 300 gigawatts of electricity from independent producers starting January 1, 2015. Project size is limited to 80 megawatts, developers may bid more than once but they will not be awarded more than one project. The program administrator has already received some proposals and expects a good response with most bidders being wind developers. (Chronicle Herald, November 21)

Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines the awarding of contracts and employment for the proposed **Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project**. The \$6.2B dollar project includes a generating facility and two transmission links. Nova Scotia companies can bid on the 180-km sub sea link from Newfoundland to Lingan, Nova Scotia. This portion is priced at \$1.2B with work expected to start in 2014 and completed in 2017. (Guysborough Journal, November 30)

Construction

Nova Construction Company Limited, Antigonish was awarded the **\$1.1M contract to install sewer, storm and water lines** at the site for the new Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, Pictou County. The completion date for this phase is set for March 2012. A tender for the main contract for building the 100-cell jail is to be issued in February. Seven pre-qualified bidders are allowed to bid on this phase - Aecon Atlantic (Halifax), Bird Construction Company, Dora Construction Limited, Marco Maritimes Limited, Maxim Construction Inc, PCL Constructors Canada Inc and Pomerleau Inc. The opening of the prison is set for 2014. (The News, November 26)

Manufacturing

The Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Pulp Mill in Pictou County **laid off fifty contracting companies and truckers** who supply chips to the mill for one week. Wood chips were accepted during the mill's recent shutdown resulting in an oversupply. The company had its annual maintenance shutdown in October, plus, completed some environmental upgrades. The work took longer than the eight days scheduled but the kraft pulp mill is now back in production. To save costs, management decided to stop buying chips temporarily until current supply is reduced, resulting in the temporary layoffs. The Ligni Bel Ltd sawmill in Pictou County was also affected because Northern Pulp Nova Scotia buys wood chips from the sawmill. The Ligni Bel Ltd sawmill has shut-down for two weeks, laying off about twenty-five workers while they wait for Northern Pulp to resume chip buying. (Chronicle Herald, November 4)

The new owner of Maritime Steel & Foundry Ltd in New Glasgow **plans to re-start the plant in December**. The foundry has been closed since it was forced into bankruptcy in December 2010. Abbas Jafarnia, purchased the plant in August 2011. The company has several orders and enough maintenance has been completed to re-open on a small scale. Currently, fewer than twenty people work at the plant carrying out maintenance and

more employees will be needed to fill larger orders in the future, if this initial start up is successful. (The News, November 9)

LED Roadway Lighting Ltd. (LRL) of Amherst and Halifax has acquired the intellectual property and other assets of Streetlight Intelligence Inc. (SLQ) of Victoria, B.C. With this acquisition, LRL becomes the first company in Canada to combine energy-efficient high pressure sodium (HPS) and light-emitting diode (LED) street lighting with smart wireless technology. Recognizing the outstanding contributions of many of SLQ's employees, LRL has extended employment offers to key individuals at SLQ and plans on retaining one of the current manufacturing and storage facilities in Victoria. (Amherst Daily News, November 22)

Retail Trade

Zellers Inc will be closing its store in Amherst June 23, 2012. Target has given its tenant, Zellers, a June deadline to leave its location in the Amherst Centre Mall, which is owned by Crombie REIT. Although the number of staff that will be affected has not been released, Zellers stores typically have about 100 employees. (Amherst Daily News, November 25)

Information and Cultural Industries

A **local technology start-up company, Znanja**, has created software that converts documents and presentations into e-Learning courses. The New Glasgow business was recently named a top-two finalist in the I3 Technology Start-up Competition. Znanja and its owners are hoping to capitalize on Adobe Systems decision to stop development of Flash, which is now used for most e-Learning. (The News, November 23)

Educational Services

The **Department of Education's** 2012-13 capital plan has committed funds to build a new school to replace West Highlands Elementary in Amherst. The project will cost \$6.6M and construction will begin in 2012. As well, River Hebert District High is slated for renovations amounting to \$3M while Springhill Junior-Senior High will see a \$1.9M renovation project. (Amherst Daily News, November 24)

Health Care and Social Assistance

We Care Home Health Services has recently opened a new office at 18 Duke Street in Truro. The company expects to employ as many as 35 people, including home support workers and continuing care assistants. We Care Home Health Services is a leading national provider of in-home care and support services with over 50 locations across Canada and employes over 3,000 homecare staff. (Truro Daily News, November 29)

Accommodation and Food Services

The **Dairy Queen** restaurant located in New Glasgow will be relocating and will include an Orange Julius component. A second Dairy Queen location on Westville Road will also add an Orange Julius outlet. The owner of both fast food restaurants has not confirmed where the new location will be but it will coincide with the parent company's effort to market the DQ Grill and Chill brand. (Pictou Advocate, November 30)

Public Administration

The **Province of Nova Scotia** has announced that it will spend \$500,000 to complete an engineering study to assess and design a replacement for the aboiteau on the LaPlanche River in the Amherst area. Study results are expected by the end of 2012. (Amherst Daily News, November 22)

Truro Farmers' Market is receiving \$179,000 from the Innovative Communities Fund Investment from Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA). The province will contribute \$100,000, along with the town of Truro's donation of \$98,100. The farmers market has \$100,000 themselves and will receive some \$10,000 from Colchester Regional Development Agency. All funds will go towards upgrading the former Truro fire hall for use as a year-round farmers' market. Work is expected to take place in the next few months, with completion expected in the spring. (Truro Daily News, November 20)

The **Tantramar Theatre** organization has been told by the **Town of Amherst** to vacate the Dominion Public Building by May 2012 to make way for the new home of the town hall. The town purchased the property as part of the Centre First Downtown Action Strategy 2010 report. The estimated cost of the renovation is about \$750,000. Approximately \$235,000 has been committed in the current year's capital budget for heat, ventilation, air conditioning upgrades and other improvements that will allow usage of the top floor and basement in the next few months. The larger project, including renovating the main floor into a reception area, council chamber and offices, will begin next spring and will cost about \$500,000. Plans for where the Tantramar Theatre will relocate to have not been decided. (Amherst Daily News, November 1)

The **Oxford Fire Department** announced plans for the finalized design of its \$750,000 fire hall which will be completed in 2013. The funding will be shared between the **Town of Oxford** (\$600,000) and the Oxford Fire Department, which is raising \$150,000 as their contribution. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2013. (The Oxford Journal, November 22)

The federal and provincial government announced funding for Phase 2 **expansion of the Age of Sail Heritage Centre**. The federal contribution for the museum is \$130,000 while \$75,000 will come from the provincial Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The expansion will be completed in the spring of 2012. (The Citizen-Record, November 24)

The **Town of Canso and the Municipality of the District of Guysborough** have signed an agreement dealing with future funding between the town, municipality and the province. The province will cover Canso's infrastructure deficit, if the two municipal units amalgamate. The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSURB) has scheduled hearings for the merger of the two units in December 2011. Over a five-year period, the province will provide \$6.2M to the Municipality of Guysborough to offset Canso's infrastructure deficit. Also, if the merger is approved by the NSURB, Canso's electrical utility will be sold and proceeds will go towards the infrastructure needs of what will be District eight under the Municipality. (Guysborough Journal, November 23)

Note: In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information 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 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Prepared by: Labour Market Information (LMI) Division, Nova Scotia

For further information, please contact the LMI team at: lmi-imt@workingincanada.gc.ca

For information on the Labour Force Survey, please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at:
<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfss05b-eng.htm>