



Labour Market Monitor

North Shore, Nova Scotia



December 2011

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

GENERAL EVENTS

The provincial government has committed to a **\$610M plan** for infrastructure and capital projects in the 2012-13 fiscal year. Spending will include \$281M for highways; \$158M on buildings; \$88M in capital grants; \$57M on information technology; \$13M on equipment and \$13M to buy land. (*Chronicle Herald - December 9*)

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Utilities

The Municipality of Pictou County issued a tender for qualified professionals to design, build and install a **wind-energy project in the county**. It closes on December 16, 2012. The Municipality recently registered for the province's Community Feed-In Tariff (COMFIT) program, which guarantees a set rate for small energy producers. If approval is granted by the Department of Energy, two small wind farms will be built - one with three wind turbines in Merigomish and the other with two turbines outside Pictou. Wind Prospect of Halifax is the developer of the proposed wind farms. (*The News - December 1*)

Manufacturing

DSTN Trenton, a subsidiary of Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering, has a contract to build 30 windmill blades in the first three months of 2012. Training has been on-going for workers, as they prepare themselves and the plant to manufacture the blades. However, the new blade and tower manufacturing plant does not currently have any additional orders. About 160 workers are currently employed at DSTN and they are nearing the end of work on two wind tower orders for Atlantic wind farms. Forty additional workers, who had been hired to help meet deadlines, have been laid off. (*The News - December 7*)

Wholesale Trade

The **Home Hardware warehouse and distribution centre** in Debert had its environmental assessment approved to move forward with a major expansion. The expansion will add 230,000 square feet to the 360,000 square-foot facility. The company currently owns about 40 acres of land, which starts at the south entrance to Lancaster Crescent from Plains Road. They plan to buy the additional property that includes the land fronting on Plains Road between the two ends of Lancaster Crescent. A company spokesman says the expansion will provide extra jobs, however, they couldn't say how many. The company has some 215 full-time employees and an additional 50 to 60 in the summer. There were a number of terms and conditions to the approval. Full conditions and terms are available through the Department of Environment's website, at <http://gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/>. (*Truro Daily News - December 8*)

Retail Trade

Sobeys Inc., based in Stellarton, Nova Scotia, will **buy 250 Shell gas stations** in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. The deal is expected to close in March 2012. The purchase price is estimated to be around \$300M. Two local Pictou County stations are part of the deal -- the Westville Road Shell and the Sunrise Trail location. (*Pictou Advocate - December 28*)

Hollis Ford is in the midst of a 9,700 square foot expansion to the Truro dealership. The work is expected to be completed in mid-February of 2012. (*Truro Daily News - December 23*)

A.J. Walker & Son Ltd., an anchor hardware store in downtown Truro for 120 years, announced recently it will close for good February 29, 2012. Its service centre closed in October of 2011. The store's assets have been sold to Arnold Hagen, owner of Harris Home Hardware Building Centre in Valley. On March 1, Hagen will temporarily operate a second Harris Home Hardware store out of the Walkers location until a new facility opens in the old Co-op building on Willow Street in April. (*Various Sources - December 30*)

Suckling and Chase is a florist business that closed on December 29, 2011. The owner had begun planning for the closure in April 2011 after operating for some 16 years. During that time the business had between 4 and 10 people on staff. The original business got its start with Harry Chase in 1880 at 546 Prince St. He combined efforts with his cousin John Suckling, who had been operating Truro Nurseries since 1876, to create Suckling and Chase. (*Truro Daily News - December 29*)

Southern Accents closed its doors at the end of December 2011. The home decor shop has been in business for twenty-five years in downtown Antigonish. Several employees have been laid off. (*Antigonish Casket - December 28*)

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

A Stellarton **property developer has reduced the number of living units** he will build from a maximum of 30 to 13 units. The change was in response to the Town's requirements for the larger development, including sidewalks, emergency roads and paving. The developer will construct three one-storey buildings with four or

five units in each. Construction is planned for the spring of 2012 and completion by October of the same year. (*The News - December 13*)

Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services

Virtual Agent Services (VAS) of 17 Lawrence Street in Amherst is **preparing for an expansion in business and staffing**. The business, which began a branch office in Amherst in August of this year, has just received up to \$1.2M in payroll rebates from the province, through Nova Scotia Business Inc., to create some 170 jobs over the next five years. The company currently has some 30 employees in its Amherst location and plan to increase to 80 by the summer of 2012. They hope to continue increasing staff as business develops. VAS is one of the largest hospitality outsourcers in North America and the Amherst location will handle reservations for Dallas-based La Quinta Inns and Suites. (*Amherst Daily News - December 13*)

Educational Services

The province's **Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Department** has issued a call for expressions of interest to pre-qualify design-build teams for the design and construction of three schools, including **West Highlands Elementary School** in Amherst. The tender closes on January 19, 2012. The province has committed \$6.6M for 2012 to begin construction of the school that is expected to be completed for the opening of classes in September 2013. The remaining money for the school will be in the 2012-13 capital plan. Money in the capital budget was also included for renovations to Springhill Junior Senior High School and River Hebert District High School. (*Amherst Daily News - December 28*)

Health Care and Social Assistance

The province will hire a **midwifery** practice specialist to organize and smooth out operational issues for midwives working in Nova Scotia hospitals in an attempt to improve the service offering. Currently, three Health Districts have seven full-time midwifery positions with three allocated to the IWK/Capital Health District and two each to South Shore District Health Authority (SSDHA) and Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA). A second attendant program at all three hospitals will also be set-up. The Capital Health District will also be hiring two midwives to ensure they have a full complement for patients who choose this option. (*Guysborough Journal - December 7*)

A **new preschool childcare centre** will open at 9 Albion Street in Amherst in January of 2012. The Amherst Montessori School will teach children aged three to five in disciplines such as practical life, language and mathematics. The school will use the Montessori teaching methods as another childcare option for families with owner and instructor Viktoriya Semenova. (*Amherst Daily News - December 19*)

The Pictou County Health Authority (**PCHA**) is **changing its meal system** at the Aberdeen and Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospitals. The hospitals will serve patients mostly pre-prepared meals that will be reheated in special ovens, which will soon be installed. This change also affects the Northumberland Veterans Wing at the

Sutherland Harris. The Health Authority maintains the meals are of the same or better nutritional value and will still be delivered to patients. Cost savings will come from purchasing in bulk and not replacing staff for vacations or sick leave, as less preparation time is needed. No layoffs are expected as a result of the change, which will be complete by early 2012. (*The News - December 15*)

The MacLeod Group will soon take ownership of two new buildings, one each in the towns of Trenton and Pictou. The new long-term facilities will **replace the current Shiretown Nursing Home** currently operating in Pictou. Trenton will house 36 residents, while the Pictou location will accommodate 53 people. Shiretown follows the Eden model of continuing care and the new buildings are better suited to this model. Current residents of the Shiretown Nursing Home will be relocated early in 2012. (*Pictou Advocate - December 14*)

Accommodation and Food Services

Ryan Duffy's is a new restaurant that has recently replaced the former Neenamo's establishment above the Split Crow pub on 515 Prince Street in Truro. (*Truro Daily News - December 13*)

Mamatsu has opened at 205 Provost Street, New Glasgow. The restaurant is offering Asian Cuisine and can be reached at (902) 755-6601. (*The News - December 1*)

Liscombe Lodge Resort located in Guysborough County will receive some upgrades for the 2012 tourism season. The Lodge is one of three resorts owned by the provincial government and operated by New Castle Hotels and Resorts. The province will spend \$3.1M on the three properties. (*Guysborough Journal - December 28*)

The **Pictou Lodge Resort** is redesigning its kitchen after fire destroyed their existing facility in the summer of this year. The new larger kitchen will have two levels, including a bakery, and will increase the number of guests that food service can be provided for on special occasion bookings. Local contractors will carry out the work and completion is set for March 2012. (*Pictou Advocate - December 28*)

Public Administration

Approximately \$600K has been allotted towards **revitalizing park spaces in Truro**. The money comes from the Downtown Truro Partnership, Town of Truro, the province and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. The second phase of revitalizing Truro's public park spaces is currently underway and completion is planned for the spring. (*Truro Daily News - December 15*)

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.

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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>