



Labour Market Monitor

Southern



December 2011

The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report providing a summary of labour market news and events for the Southern Economic Region of Nova Scotia. The Southern Region includes Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Queens and Lunenburg counties.

GENERAL EVENTS

An **Atlantic Provinces Economic Council report** in mid-December stated that Atlantic Canada added nearly four times as many low paying jobs as high-wage jobs over the last decade. Retail sector growth and call centre expansion accounted for most of the low-wage jobs, which the economic think-tank defined as paying less than \$40K a year, and public sector hiring was the driver for high-wage jobs. Meanwhile, Nova Scotia's inflation rate was 3.7% in November with double-digit increases in both food and gasoline. This combination could erode consumer buying power and decrease the standard of living in the province over time. (*Chronicle Herald - December 21*)

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Construction

The provincial government is funding an estimated **\$2M for a patient elevator** specific to emergency room transfers at the South Shore Regional Hospital. The new elevator is expected to be operational by April 2013. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 1*)

Manufacturing

The provincial government announced a **multi-year \$50M agreement with Bowater Mersey Paper Co Ltd.**, owned by Resolute Forest Products, in early December. The arrangement comprises \$25M for a capital loan for a project to improve energy consumption and competitiveness of the mill, \$23.7M for the purchase of 25,000 acres of land from the mill, and \$1.5M for workforce retraining. The agreement should also mean that the many local sawmills will continue to have a market for wood chips, including Bowater's Oakhill Mill, located in Lunenburg County. (*Queens County Advance - December 6*)

Retail Trade

Cookville's **Canadian Tire is undergoing a \$500K renovation**. The majority of the work will take place in January and February and more than 30 people, mostly fixture builders and warehouse staff, will be hired as a result of the renovation. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 1*)

Sagors' Bookstore, Bridgewater's original bookstore, announced that it was closing at the end of the year, The independent business was established in 1972 but has seen sales diminish to on-line distributors and larger chain stores. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 7*)

Educational Services

An innovative **new skilled trades program** is up and running in Parkview, Lunenburg County's largest high school. Skilled Trades 10 and Construction Trades 11 allow students to get a feel for various trades that they may wish to pursue in post-secondary education. The South Shore Regional School Board stated that the new program is expected to be opened board-wide in 2012-13. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 21*)

Health Care and Social Assistance

The **Shelburne Medical Centre will receive an upgrade** thanks to funding in excess of \$500K. The provincial government provided \$236K in funding, adding to the \$200K that the municipality has reserved and a \$100K contribution from the Roseway Hospital Foundation, to add new technology and a medical records system that new doctors are being trained on. (*Shelburne County Coastguard - December 13*)

Midwifery services are to expand in Nova Scotia with the hiring of a midwifery practice specialist to address clinical, organizational and operational challenges at model sites, including Bridgewater. Additionally, a second attendant position will be created to increase capacity and make the service- more readily available. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 13*)

The **addition of two**, out of the four, **nurse practitioners** to the Bridgewater area is positive news for health care in Lunenburg County. One practitioner will work with a group of long-term-care facilities and the other within a general practice. Two more positions are also posted, with South Shore Health stating that there is a critical lack of physicians in Bridgewater but the new hires are expected to alleviate some of the health care pressures. (*Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin - December 13*)

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Liverpool's \$21.6M recreation facility opened in December, with a full sized hockey arena with seating for 1,000, a fully equipped fitness studio, community room and youth centre. Nova Scotia Power's parent company, Emera Inc., donated \$500K to the facility, to become the title sponsor. As such, the facility is now known as the Queens Place Emera Centre. (*Queens County Advance - December 20*)

Accommodation and Food Services

The Nova Scotia provincial government announced **funding for southwestern Nova Scotia** in mid-December that included \$1M for the Yarmouth's Rodd Grand Hotel and Convention Centre, \$142K to support a regional economic council and \$250K for next year's World Junior A Hockey Challenge that Yarmouth is hosting. The president and CEO of Rodd Hotels and Resorts stated that the funding will help protect the hotel's 50 jobs by keeping it open and able to host large events. Half of the funding will cover operating losses that have expanded in the two years without a ferry service to Maine, with the rest used to upgrade the hotel's windows, electrical systems and roof. (*Yarmouth County Vanguard - December 20*)

The Nova Scotia provincial government announced a **\$3.1M investment in their three Signature Resorts**, including the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa, ensuring they remain open in 2012. The funding will be used to upgrade beds, furniture, televisions, fridges and carpets at the resorts. All three resorts are managed by New Castle Hotels and Resorts of Connecticut. Profits in all three resorts have declined over the last nine years with the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa generating profits for seven years before reporting losses of \$211,938 in 2010 and \$328,419 in the current fiscal year, which ends March 31. (*Digby County Courier - December 20*)

Public Administration

The Yarmouth **Mariners Centre will undergo a \$1.9M enhancement** that includes heated storage, a multi-purpose room, new trade show equipment and a video scoreboard for the main arena. ACOA contributed \$1M, the provincial government contributed \$500K, with \$200K each from the Town and Municipality of Yarmouth. (*Yarmouth County Vanguard - December 6*)

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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