



Labour Market Monitor

Annapolis Valley



September 2011

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

The Annapolis Valley Region includes Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties.

GENERAL EVENTS

Minimum wage earners in Nova Scotia will get \$10 an hour, an increase of 3.6 percent from the \$9.65 they currently receive. After the increase on October 1st, future hikes will occur in April, beginning in 2012, indexing the minimum wage to the low income cut off, a figure set by Statistics Canada where people are devoting a significantly larger than average percentage of their income to the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. Increases will be based on the national Consumer Price Index from the previous calendar year. Increasing the rate annually, based on inflation, will directly impact more than 36,000 Nova Scotians, who make close to the minimum wage. The minimum wage for inexperienced workers, with less than three months experience in the field they were hired, will rise to \$9.50. (Kentville Advertiser - September 29)

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting

Owners, John McLarty and Lisa Law, have been working since last fall to convert their Port Williams property into a new winery and vineyard - **Eaglestone Vineyard**. The proposed winery wishes to have a small retail area to sell Eaglestone wine on-site. and is currently awaiting approval from a plebiscite being held on Sept. 20 which is required for that to occur. (Kentville Advertiser - September 13)

Utilities

Kings County council has approved a letter of support for the Town of Berwick's quest to procure federal and provincial funding for a **wastewater treatment plant upgrade** which is expected to cost about \$2 million. The

work is needed to accommodate the poultry processing operation slated to begin production in the former Larsen's plant in the summer of 2012. (Kings County Register - September 22)

Construction

A Halifax-area developer's proposal for 38 new **apartment units in Wolfville** has been turned down. Town council unanimously rejected the controversial project, which would have gone next to the same developer's 41-unit building at 146 Gaspereau Ave., after a recent public hearing. (Kentville Advertiser - September 27)

Valley Waste Resource Management is building a new office building under construction at the Eastern Management Centre in the Kentville Industrial Park. Roscoe Construction has been awarded the \$1.4 million contract to build the facility, which will be completed by March. They are taking part in a pilot program to divert construction waste from the landfill, with a goal of 75 percent for the project which is a showcase of green construction poised to be one of the most energy efficient offices in Canada. The new Valley Waste building will lead the way in demonstrating super-insulation, high-efficiency mechanical and lighting systems as well as low water consumption. The building will highlight salvaged and recycled-content materials. (Kentville Advertiser - September 27)

Kent Field Estates Ltd. has started to build two apartment buildings on the Gladys Porter Drive Property in Kentville with the first two story building expected to be ready in April 2012 and the second in September. It is part of a two-phase project that will see more buildings added to the North of the site. Construction on those is anticipated to start in the middle of next summer and when completed will add 48 units on the property. The project is worth about \$4 Million and is providing work for two valley businesses including **Burhoe Construction (1982) Inc.** and **Equilibrium Engineering**. (Kentville Advertiser - September 20)

Retail Trade

The fate of the Hart Store in Windsor is up in the air. It has been reported that the Montreal-based **Hart Stores Inc.**, which operates 92 retail outlets across Eastern Canada, may close 12 stores in response to a \$56.1 million debt owed to creditors, and declining sales. Hart Stores Inc. reported a 15 percent decrease in sales at the end of July. (Hants Journal - September 29)

All **Block Buster** locations in Nova Scotia are closing including the New Minas Location which employed approximately 10 people. (Kentville Advertiser - September 20)

Transportation and Warehousing

Bus service for 7,850 Kings County students could be disrupted in October if drivers vote to strike. Wages remain a key issue to be resolved and the union said drivers, who bus **Annapolis Valley Regional School Board** students in Kings County, are the lowest paid in the province. Drivers employed by **First Student Canada** make almost \$7 less an hour than drivers employed by the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. A strike could happen before the end of October. There has never been a bus strike in the Annapolis Valley board's history. The bus drivers joined the union almost two years ago and have been negotiating their first collective agreement with First Student Canada for more than a year. (Kentville Advertiser - September 27)

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

EagleSpirit Marketing Inc., an Annapolis Valley aboriginal company based out of New Minas has won a \$1.4 million contract to supply a supercomputer to a federal research lab. The contract, which was open to aboriginal businesses, involves providing computer hardware and software for Natural Resource Canada's CANMET Materials Technology Laboratory in addition to installation, commissioning, training and systems support. The company was founded in 1999 by president Frank Springle and has nine employees in its four offices, which includes operations in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. (Chronicle Herald - September 21)

Health Care and Social Assistance

A group fighting cutbacks at the **walk-in health clinic in Berwick** wants implementation of the cutbacks delayed, at least until a nurse practitioner is hired and a collaborative-care practice is established. **Annapolis Valley Health (AVH)** has applied for funding to hire a nurse practitioner to staff the clinic, but it needs approval from the province. AVH has proposed cutting the clinic hours to 4 hours/day from 14, with visits only by appointment in the evening, as part of its plan to make up for a \$3.9 million shortfall in funding. The reduction in hours is scheduled to take effect on Oct. 1. Other cost-cutting measures in the Valley include scaling back operations at Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville this summer, trimming 33 full-time equivalent jobs, reducing staff travel costs, cutting back on overtime and reviewing all areas of operations to make them more efficient. (Chronicle Herald - September 20)

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Camp Brigadoon, after years of planning and months of construction is finally fulfilling the dream founder Dave McKeage had of a place where children living with chronic illness and their families could enjoy a recreational camp. www.brigadoonvillage.org (Kentville Advertiser - September 27)

Accommodation and Food Services

Kentucky Fried Chicken in Windsor closed its doors on September 11. (Hants Journal - September 15)

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.

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

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

For information on Labour Force Trends, please visit Statistics Canada's website at www.statcan.gc.ca