



Labour Market Monitor

Annapolis Valley



October 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

The **Irving Shipyard** in Halifax has won the **\$25-billion contract** to build the navy's next fleet of warships. The deal is one of the largest shipbuilding contracts ever awarded in the world and is expected to have far-reaching effects because it will provide a whole generation of shipworkers with permanent employment and also be a long-term win for businesses in the region because it will attract skilled workers back to the province. A study by the Conference Board of Canada said the combat ship contract would create 11,500 additional jobs in Nova Scotia during the peak of construction in 2020. Both studies said spinoffs would be shared across the province, the region and the country. (The Canadian Press - October 20)

LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction

The future of **Triangle Petroleum Corporation's** gas exploration efforts in its Windsor Block depends on the findings of a provincial review of fracking. The Denver-based company's work near Kennetcook has been put on hold while the provincial government explores the true impact hydraulic fracturing has on the environment. By March 2012, Triangle Petroleum's CEO says the company should have a better idea of how to proceed at the site it has invested \$34 million in. A plan has been submitted to the Department of Energy that commits to \$5 million of expenditure to cover seismic programs to delineate any mature well locations that could be drilled in 2012-14. The company is prepared to clean up and leave if the findings of the review are not in Triangle Petroleum's favour. Triangle Petroleum is engaged in a 10-year drilling lease with the province that expires in 2014. (Hants Journal - October 18)

Utilities

Annapolis County council passed a motion recently to accept second reading of the revised Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) & Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to regulate **wind turbines** in Annapolis County with an amendment stating that the MPS LUB will restrict the installation of mini or small scale units to a maximum of two on any separate parcel of land. The revised bylaw will now be sent to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations for provincial approval. (Annapolis County Spectator - October 18)

Retail Trade

Walmart Canada announced on September 23 it had purchased the lease option on the Greenwood Zellers property from Target, owner of the Zellers brand. It is planning to open a Walmart store in west Kings in 2012. (Kings County Register - October 6)

Kent Co-op in New Minas is shutting down after four decades in business. Members recently approved a board recommendation in favour of dissolving and appointing a liquidator after hearing presentations showing it is \$2 million in debt and has continued to lose between \$4-\$500,000 annually the past few years. The Co-op employs 24 people, including six full-time, between the store and gas bar, who will lose their jobs in six to eight weeks. When the store opened in 1971 there was no competition in the area, now there are about a half a dozen rivals within 1.5 kilometres. A closing date is not yet set. (Kings County Advertiser - October 25)

Hart Stores Inc. announced Oct. 21 it will close 32 of its 92 stores in Eastern Canada - including both locations in Nova Scotia as the result of Hart restructuring operations while under the protection of the Companies Creditors' Arrangement Act. Windsor's location, which has 16 employees, was one of two stores in Nova Scotia that was selected to close its doors due to under-performance. Affected stores will maintain their regular operating hours while the liquidation process continues throughout the holiday season. The official closing date has yet to be announced. (Hants Journal - October 21)

Educational Services

School bus drivers and mechanics have ratified a new contract with their employer, **First Student Canada**, averting a strike that could have impacted thousands of Kings County students. The Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union Local 98 voted "almost unanimously" in favour of the tentative agreement. At \$13.65, the employees currently make almost \$7/hr. less than their counterparts at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board and across the province. The new deal means the majority of the local's members will see an increase of about \$3/hr. bringing the union much closer to the pay their counterparts at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board receive. The contract expires July 31, 2012. (Kings County Advertiser - October 17)

Nova Scotia's education partners recently expressed concern about the potential impact of an **expected \$36 million decrease in funding for education** and have submitted a letter to the premier. (Kings County Advertiser - October 21)

Student numbers at **Acadia University**, released recently by the Associate of Atlantic Universities, indicate the student population is up 6.7 per cent. There are 3,437 students this year, compared to 3,221 a year ago. Undergrad students are up by 7.2 per cent. In Kentville there were 959 students registered at the **Nova Scotia Community College** as of the end of September representing an increase of 14 students from the previous year when 945 students were registered at Kingstec. (Kings County Register - October 20)

Student enrollment in the **Annapolis Valley Regional School Board (AVRSB)** continues to decline. According to figures tabled at the Oct. 5 board meeting, the AVRRSB enrollment as of Sept. 30, 2011 was 14,079 students, a decline of 336 from the actual figure of 14,415 as of Sept. 30, 2010. (Kings County Advertiser - October 18)

Health Care and Social Assistance

Annapolis Valley Health (AVH) is working with doctors and staff at the **Annapolis Community Health Centre (ACHC)** to finalize details in a proposal to host one of the province's first Collaborative Emergency Centres (CEC). This new approach promises to give patients 24-hour access to emergency services and better access to medical appointments. Annapolis Royal is the only site in the district that is being proposed as a CEC. A recent staffing shortage forced the ACHC to close its doors on September 24 and 25. It's hoped this new model will keep the emergency room open and reduce wait times by providing a team approach to patient care. (Annapolis County Spectator - October 6)

Controversial cuts to operating hours at two health care clinics in the Annapolis Valley were implemented on October 3. Annapolis Valley Health (AVH) has reduced daily hours at the **Western Kings Memorial Health Centre (WKMHC)** in Berwick to 5 from 14, and by appointment with a doctor during evenings only. The same hours apply to the **Eastern Kings Memorial Health Centre (EKMHC)** in Wolfville. Cutting the hours at the two clinics is one of the steps taken by AVH to help offset a projected \$3.9 million budget shortfall this year after the province announced a health spending funding freeze at current levels. (Chronicle Herald - October 4)

With the recent changes at the walk-in clinic at **Western Kings Memorial Health Centre (WKMHC)**, Annapolis Valley Health (AVH) recently received news the provincial government has agreed to fund a **nurse practitioner** at the Berwick site. Nurse practitioners are licensed registered nurses who have completed a recognized nurse practitioner education program and successfully passed the Canadian Nurses Association's Canadian Nurse Practitioner Exam. They are qualified to diagnose minor acute health problems, counsel patients of appropriate medical treatments, prescribe appropriate medications and order some diagnostic work, including lab work and x-rays and perform minor surgical procedures. Upon certification they can practice in nurse practitioner clinics, doctors' offices, hospitals, including specialty clinics, long-term care facilities/nursing homes and community health centre. (Kings County Advertiser - October 4)

Dr. Elizabeth King a physician and psychotherapist; and Sally Shaw, a physiotherapist and osteopathic practitioner are now operating two days a week out of a Bridgetown clinic. The **Bridgetown Area Health Clinic** is located at 20 Jeffery St. in Bridgetown; Phone: 902.665.3075. (Annapolis County Spectator - October 20)

The Vaughan Shand Centre, a health and wellness centre in its infancy stages, is set to open soon in the old Hawboldt's building on Cedar Street in Windsor. Dr. Matthias Jaepel, co-owner of Platypus Medical Exercise Therapy & Training Inc. in Halifax, is working hard to create a multidisciplinary centre that incorporates both health and wellness, with a clear community focus. There's room for medical professionals in fields such as nutrition, massage therapy, physiotherapy, natural health services, electrology and fitness. In addition, the top floor of the centre will be open to a variety of community functions. (Hants Journal - October 25)

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Kings County council wants to get the **Cape Split provincial park** project moving. Council has voted to place \$50,000 in reserve for the initiative, including \$25,000 from the trails assistance program reserve for a partnership project with the province to develop a parking lot. (Kings County Register - October 13)

Accommodation and Food Services

McGill's Café is now open in New Minas. The manager, Jeremy Mott, said that the owners are also planning to attach a high-end restaurant to the café. (Kings County Advertiser - October 11)

Public Administration

A **visitor information centre** in downtown Kentville is closing this month and the space is up for rent. The year-round centre opened in the spring of 2010 as a partnership between Kentville, Kings County and Destination South West Nova Association (DSWNA). Representatives of the partners met in May and decided to close the joint project at the end of the season - on October 28. Plans for next season are still up in the air. (Kings County Advertiser - October 11)

The province has approved a **joint policing pilot project** for the Town of Berwick and County of Kings. As part of the project, **RCMP** officers working at the Kingston office will police the town and surrounding areas, joined by officers currently working out of Berwick. The town will reduce its funding from the current five officers to four while the county will provide funding for a fifth officer. Ten officers will be working from the Kingston office to police western Kings County and the town. The 18-month pilot will see the current Berwick RCMP office close on October 24th. All front counter services presently offered by the Berwick RCMP will be relocated to the Kingston RCMP detachment, located at 1684 Maple Street in Kingston and a street-front RCMP office will open at Berwick town hall in the near future. The town has reviewed its policing model five times since 2000 when Berwick replaced its municipal force with the RCMP. (Kings County Register - October 11)

Kentville and the **Police Association of Nova Scotia (PANS)** are heading to arbitration. Outstanding issues include remuneration and language issues. The 17 unionized officers in Kentville have been without a contract since March 31, 2008. The town's police service also has a chief, deputy chief and several non-unionized civilian employees. (Kings County Advertiser - October 19)

***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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