



# Labour Market Monitor

Annapolis Valley



November 2011

The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report providing a summary of labour market news and events for the Annapolis Valley Region of Nova Scotia. The Annapolis Valley Region includes Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties.

## GENERAL EVENTS

The Government of Nova Scotia revealed the three general themes for its newly announced **workforce strategy**. These include: increasing learning in the workplace, helping people connect with jobs and growing the workforce. The strategy is meant to address the troubling statistic that the working-age population of the province is expected to decline by 47,000 people over the next 10 years. The plan includes no new funding, but distributes money announced in the jobsHere plan. For instance, \$2.5M will go to expand apprenticeship programs in the province while \$50K will go to the Parents as Career Coaches program. (Metro News – November 23)

## LABOUR MARKET NEWS BY INDUSTRY

### Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting

Nova Scotia **apple growers** estimate this year's crop to be 2.2 million bushels despite the poor weather conditions that threatened to result in a poor growing season. The rain and cold weather and the hail that fell in June and August did not do a lot of overall damage to Annapolis Valley orchards, and the President of Scotian Gold Cooperative Limited reported that the company's fresh fruit volume was down just a bit. This year's provincial crop has an estimated farm gate value of \$14 million. (Atlantic Farm Focus - November 9)

**FarmNEXT** will replace the New Entrants to Agriculture program, which has been offered for 10 years. The program is intended to support new farmers by helping reduce the financial burden of their loans. New farmers may be eligible for up to \$30,000 in loan relief when starting a farm business or up to \$20,000 in loan relief when buying an established farm business. Applications for FarmNEXT will be accepted starting April 1 and will be administered through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board. (Truro Daily news - November 28)

### Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction

**Fundy Gypsum Company's** Chicago-based parent company, USG Corp. has opted to permanently close the gypsum plant, with a loading facility in Hantsport and quarries in West Hants, due to a longstanding decline in demand for wallboard in the United States. That news will put the skeleton crew of 7 still working there on the

unemployment line and dashes the hopes of the 45 people who worked there until February 2011, when they were handed lay off notices as the plant was downgraded to idle status. Challenging market conditions have equated to a roughly 75% decline in demand from when wallboard use was at its peak. Fundy Gypsum contributed about 40 per cent of Hantsport's tax revenue which translated into \$750,000 annually. (Hants Journal - November 15)

## Utilities

**Minas Basin Pulp and Power Co. Ltd.** is downsizing to remain competitive in a struggling industry. Thirteen full-time positions were terminated, effective Nov. 2, as a cost-cutting measure that reduced Minas Basin's workforce by nearly 8%. The cuts were made in various departments with the long-term sustainability of the company in mind to counter the high costs of operation currently being encountered and poor overall conditions within the pulp and paper industry in North America. The layoffs will not impact Minas Basin's renewable energy projects that make the company a strong competitor in the wind and tidal energy industries. The mill will continue to use recycled materials, rather than trees, to make paper products. It is the only mill in the Maritimes to produce 100% recycled paper. Minas Basin last handed salaried staff layoff notices in 2008. (Hants Journal - November 10)

## Construction

West Hants council approved a development agreement with **Atrium Villas Development Incorporated** to build an active adult townhouse complex. The development, to be maintained by a condominium corporation, would be a gated community featuring grouped dwellings and local commercial use on the Windsor Back Road, Three Mile Plains. The proposed development would feature sixteen 4-unit buildings, three 16-unit buildings and one 48-unit main building for a total of 160 residential units and would be developed in phases. [www.atriumvillas.ca](http://www.atriumvillas.ca) (Hants Journal - November 17)

**Premium Properties Limited** is planning to redevelop the former Windsor Elms nursing home site at 590 King Street into a new apartment complex for seniors with some additional commercial space. The main component includes 65 apartment units with about 50 of those designated as affordable housing. The development agreement is currently under review. (Hants Journal - November 29)

The **new civic and recreation centre** in New Minas is expected to be completed next summer (2012) with construction currently well underway. The construction contract was valued at \$3.1 million and, once the new centre is outfitted, is expected to cost a total of \$4.2 million. The complex will include a gymnasium, auditorium, office space, fully-equipped kitchen, service club rooms, five day camp rooms and a room with computer access for seniors. (Kings County Advertiser - November 29)

## Manufacturing

**CKF Inc.** and **Scotia Recycling Ltd.** are partnering with **Tim Hortons** on a recently announced Cup to Tray program that has been in the works for more than two years. The program, developed in Nova Scotia, has Scotia Recycling Ltd. collecting used cups from the 156 Tim Hortons locations in the province and delivering the recyclable paper materials to CKF. At CKF, the cups will be mixed with recycled newspaper and made into take-out trays. The program, announced Oct. 20 will help CKF's Hantsport site maintain its workforce of 300. (Hants Journal - November 3)

## Retail Trade

The closing of the Kent Co-op should not be the end of **co-operative grocery stores** in the Valley according to a group working towards creating a consumer/producer co-operative food market, possibly in Port Williams, with a goal of building relationships between producers and consumers. The group is planning to meet with interested suppliers through December and call a public meeting for January. For more information, see the group's Facebook page or email committedtolocal@yahoo.com (Kings County Advertiser - November 28)

## Educational Services

Three jobs at the Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) **Applied Geomatics Research Group** in Middleton were recently eliminated as part of the NSCC's restructuring of its applied research component. (Annapolis County Spectator - November 29)

## Health Care and Social Assistance

The **Annapolis Community Health Centre** in Annapolis Royal will become Nova Scotia's fifth **Collaborative Emergency Centre (CEC)** but it will not begin operation until later this fiscal year. Annapolis Valley Health will be working with the community and the Department of Health and Wellness to develop the best possible CEC for the Annapolis Royal catchment area of about 10,000 people. A collaborative emergency centre brings together emergency departments and local family practices - working as a team - to provide health care. Night-time care would be provided by a team which could include nurses and paramedics who would work with the oversight of specially trained emergency room physicians. (Annapolis County Spectator - November 24)

The 2,500 **nurses** who work for Nova Scotia's largest health authority have won an arbitration award against their employer that will add millions of dollars to the province's health budget. The Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union reported the nurses who work for the **Capital District Health Authority** have been awarded a 7.1 per cent wage increase over a three-year period, retroactive to Nov. 1, 2009. The three-year agreement ends on Oct. 31, 2012. It provides wage increases of 1 per cent for the first two years, and gives a 3.5 per cent increase effective Nov. 1, 2011, and a 1.6 per cent increase effective May 1, 2012. (CBC - November 2)

## Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

The **Annapolis Valley Trail System**, a \$5-million project 15 years in the making, was officially opened Oct. 26 in three counties. The Valley-wide rails-to-trails project, which involved input from hundreds of volunteers, began in earnest in the late-1990s on former Dominion Atlantic Railway lands. It is now a 200-kilometre long network of smaller trails connecting Kings with parts of Annapolis and Digby counties. (Kings County Advertiser - November 1)

## Other Services (except Public Administration)

The **Western Kings Board of Trade** voted unanimously to dissolve and proceed with amalgamating with the **Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce**. The **Central Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce**, which represents businesses from Aylesford to Middleton, has also recently voted to dissolve and is proceeding with a similar request to amalgamate with the Eastern Kings Chamber. (Kings County Register - November 24)

## Public Administration

**Grand Pré** could receive \$2.5 million in provincial funding if the nomination proposal to become a UNESCO world heritage site is successful. The province announced it is setting up a contingent trust to ensure funds would be available to manage the Grand Pré World Heritage Site. The trust would help a Grand Pré World Heritage Site Stewardship Board operate the site, provide interpretation, heritage protection and support promotional campaigns and research activities. A decision on the designation is expected in July.

(Kings County Register - November 17)

The **Town of Berwick** has cut another senior staff position as a way to cope with its budget crunch. After deciding earlier in the year not to fill the chief administrative officer (CAO) position, the town recently discontinued the position of director of recreation and community development. The town's current budget problems stem from the closure of Larsens this past spring and a change to the joint policing project with Kings County, now underway, that will only realize half the \$250,000 savings town council had anticipated.

(Kings County Register - 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.*

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**For information on the Labour Force Survey,** please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)