

2 County recipients

Healthy Food Fund

by Jim Morrow

Two recipients of grants from Spirit Nova Scotia's Local Food Fund are from Victoria County. The Fund is the only charitable funding source in the province with a mandate dedicated to healthy local food issues. It provides financial support to community organizations helping strengthen the food system in Nova Scotia.

"We had some wonderful applicants to the program and we are confident that the recipients chosen will help generate awareness and education to help with our mandate of creating a secure, healthy, local food supply for all Nova Scotians," explains Dr. Ralph Martin, Chair of Local Food Nova Scotia and Chair of the Nova Scotia Food Policy Council.

Fifteen exceptional applications were received and six projects were awarded funding.

The Cape North Farmer's Market Co-Op Ltd. serving the North Highlands area of Cape Breton applied to fund five workshops to encourage local food production and received \$1,500.

The Baddeck and Area Community Market in Baddeck received \$1,500 to partner with Middle River School's community garden project to help educate children about the produce they will grow and how to best market their products.

"We will be taking the school's garden project to whole new level," says project coordinator, Kate Oland. "We will be linking the school's garden with other market gardeners who utilize the Community Market in Baddeck."

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Donations to Christmas Wish Drive



In the photo above, students from Middle River Elementary School are donating a cheque for \$399.43 and delivering a big basket of food and toys (the results of donations at their Christmas Concert) to assist the Baddeck Lions Club Annual Christmas Wish Drive as they did last year. Presenting the cheque and food basket to Lion Dan Chiasson on behalf of the Christmas Wish Drive co-chairs Ford Green and Bob Buchanan, are (l-r) Linnea Oland, Bracton Saul and Maggie Berk.

From the office of the Municipal Sustainability Officer

Survey of strengths and challenges

by Jim Morrow

A task force has been assembled to develop a business quality database with information about all facets of economic activity in Victoria County.

The municipality has recognized that there is currently no comprehensive database of business and service activity, challenges, or opportunities in Victoria County. Without a clear picture of the current state of economic activity in Victoria County, any attempts to address the current challenges or opportunities has a high risk of sub-optimal results or outright failure.

To remedy this situation the task force along with the Municipal Economic Sustainability Officer, Nona MacDermid have started the process of developing a survey to gather the necessary data to better understand the economic realities in the County.

Early in the New Year a survey will be mailed, emailed, twittered and available on multiple websites for residents of Victoria County to fill out and return to the municipality.

"The Task Force has already put together the basis of the survey. It will be tweaked in the days to come and should be ready for distribution by early January," Ms. MacDermid said.

Residents are encouraged to participate in filling out a survey and returning it to the Municipality.

"The survey is a direct result of the priorities established through the community planning meetings held in December 2009 and September 2010, and we have some great incentives to get residents to return the surveys by the end of January.

"Businesses, individuals and organiza-

tions can use the survey to tell us about their current situation and specific growth opportunities and obstacles that they see in their businesses and careers. We also invite people to offer suggestions about how we could assist them in addressing their situations. Using the information we receive, we can develop tools and programs matched to individual and organizational development needs." Ms. MacDermid explained.

A future phase of this on-line database will ideally include the ability for business and service organizations to update their own status, contact information, and product/service particulars.

The Task Force also could see the possibility of a virtual online Victoria County shopping centre where Victoria County products and services could be easily accessed online.

Improvements in District Health

Policies and procedures showing positive results

by Jim Morrow

At a recent Victoria County Council Meeting, Cape Breton District Health Authority's Chief Executive Officer John Malcom told Council new information will show that the District's Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR) has continued to improve.

When the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) report was released in early December the ratio was shown to have moved from 140 in 2005-06, to 99 in 2009-10.

The HSMR is a ratio that compares actual deaths in District hospitals with expected deaths. The comparison is

based on a national ratio or number of 100 and involves various hospitals from across the country.

"The improvement is a reflection of the work we have been doing," says District CEO John Malcom.

"When we looked at the initial HSMR report results back in 2004-05, we realized that the high number was in part due to the fact that we had many palliative patients dying in hospital. In many cases we were not addressing end of life care and talking openly enough with patients, even though it may have been the last time they were being

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Long Term Value Strategy

Lobster Report has fishermen talking

by Jim Morrow

Lobster Fishermen are pondering the implications of a report prepared for the Lobster Council of Canada on the Long Term Value Strategy for the Canadian Lobster Industry.

The LFA27 (Lobster Fishing Area 27) includes all of Victoria County and Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

A Management Board was established by a group of dedicated lobster fishermen in response to problems in the lobster fishery. They have hired Veronika Brzeski as project manager.

LFA27 Management Board, which is in regular communication with Geoff

Irvine, the Executive Director of the Lobster Council of Canada, has asked him to write a very short summary for the benefit of its members.

Ms. Brzeski said, "Mr. Irvine travelled to this area for our general meeting in September and has expressed the intent to meet with the board in January. The Board not only has a seat on the Council but has also been asked to participate in a working group. Though the recommendations are overwhelming, in terms of potential changes in the marketing of our lobster, we are confident the Board will be an active partici-

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