

C@P cuts travel and meeting costs



(From left to right) Municipal Partner Representative, Tom Wilson, Director of Recreation & Tourism, Municipality of Victoria County & Project Co-ordinator, "Broadband Solutions for Rural Development"; Provincial Partner Representative, Nancy Flam, Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia Project Director; Annette MacKenzie, Researcher/Trainer, VCCAPS Community Communication Project; Donna MacDonald, Project Coordinator, VCCAPS Community Communication Project; and Corrina Peterson, VCCAPS Regional Working Group Coordinator.

by Donna MacDonald

Victoria County is virtually 99% connected with high-speed, making us the most connected rural county in Canada. The Victoria County CAP Sites Association's (VCCAPS) is taking advantage of this connectivity by introducing its newest project - Online Meetings. Since our blue flyer, *Using the Internet to Communicate* was mailed out to residents in November, this project is generating lots of interest from community groups across the county.

VCCAPS, with project funding support from our partners, the Nova Scotia Economic and Rural Development, and the Victoria County Recreation & Tourism Department, is offering free training in the use of our online meeting software to enthusiastic community group members in Victoria County. VCCAPS Board member, Pauline Fournier states, "This project arose from a need identified during a Planning for High Speed Future Workshop for Victoria County held in May, 2009, as part of the Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia initiative. It's proving to be an excellent tool for connecting communities."

Veronika Brzeski, Project Manager for the Lobster Fishery Advisory Board (LFA 27) in Victoria County, is using the software and tells us, "This programme is very user friendly. The advantage of WEBex is that you can start with simple meetings with presentations and discussions and, as you learn more, can progress to a more refined use of the technology. In fact, it was very well received by a group of computer-shy users."

Online conferencing involving up to 25 people connects rural communities to each other. Another use is Webinars, which are online seminars delivered to many more participants, and helps overcome the rural urban divide.

Using online meeting software is a cost-effective, efficient and productive

way to keep members of community groups connected to each other, especially with the challenges Mother Nature presents us with over the winter months. Immediate benefits to using this software are increased meeting attendance, decreased travel costs and more effective use of time. It is easy sharing documents, Power Point presentations, pictures and video files.

To participate in an online meeting you need a computer, high-speed Internet connection, speakers and microphone or a set of earphones with microphone attached. The project offers free training and user support to help your community group get set up to use the online meeting software until February 25, 2011, which marks the end of funding for this project. Free use of the software itself continues for a full year from now, until December 2011.

To help groups get started right away, VCCAPS is offering free headsets with microphones for those who need them so groups can take advantage of an online meeting experience quickly. Our deadline for setting up new users - February 25th, 2011 - is fast approaching, so take this opportunity, now, to join in an online meeting. As an added feature your name will be entered in a draw for a High Definition Web Camera.

Please contact us to get your community group involved with online meetings by phone: 1-902-295-1347 (messages will be returned each day) or Email: office@vccaps.com. For more information on the project visit our blog <http://vccaps123.wordpress.com> or website www.vccaps.com

VCCAPS is a member of the Nova Scotia C@P Program and helps manage projects and support funds available to the C@P sites through an Industry Canada initiative. C@P sites throughout the county assist communities and visitors with Internet access, as well as access to information and IT training needs.

District 6

Employment opportunities continue to be major concern

by Larry Dauphinee
Councillor District #6

Once again, as a community, we approach the end of another year. A great time to reflect on the past year and think about our possibilities in the upcoming year. 2010 provided a number of success stories in District #6 and Victoria County.

Our new Household Waste Service was implemented successfully. The County purchased four new waste management vehicles and ensured that jobs from this service remained in Victoria County. I am pleased to say that I have heard only positive comments about this service and our staff. Preliminary figures show that from a financial standpoint this decision was beneficial to the County.

As a Council we are very dedicated to working on Economic Development in our County. A major advancement on implementing our economic development plan was the hiring of our new Economic Sustainability Officer. Council will be working closely with Ms. MacDermid to implement and advance our economic plan.

Corson Bridge in Ingonish Harbour continued to be a hot subject during 2010. Department of Transportation had many projects and emergencies

competing for funds in Nova Scotia this year, but with a lot of persistence, phone calls and cooperation with our MLA we were able to ensure this project remained a priority. It was great to see construction begin this Fall on our new bridge.

2011 will once again have many challenges. Employment will once again be a major concern. We were very fortunate to have construction projects in our area this year providing approximately 30 direct jobs and many indirect. Local Fishers have told me they saw minor improvements in the Fishery this year and hopefully this trend will improve in 2011. Tourism continues to be a concern in our area and changes to key establishments like the Keltic Lodge have had a tremendous impact on the Tourism Sector. Council and I, will be meeting with the Minister of Tourism on January 18th to discuss the future of the Keltic Lodge and its impact on Victoria County.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Victoria County Municipal Staff and the Residents of District Six for their support and cooperation in 2010. To all residents of Victoria County I hope 2011 is a very happy, safe and prosperous year!

*Best Wishes to All for a
Happy & Prosperous New Year*



Keith MacCuspik
Councillor • District 2

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