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Victoria County's Own News & Entertainment Journal

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February 7, 2010 to February 13, 2011

Victoria County, Cape Breton

## Age-friendly communities

# Making life better

Baddeck

Bruce Morrison, Warden of the Municipality of Victoria County, welcomes the announcement of funding to establish the creation of Age-Friendly Communities (AFC).

On January 24, 2010 the Minister responsible for the Department of Seniors, Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse, announced funding for seven municipal units, including Victoria County under the Age-Friendly Communities Program to conduct strategic planning.

Warden Morrison, along with Deputy Warden Fraser Patterson, and Councillor Larry Dauphinee are members of a local advisory committee. Patterson is also Chair of a provincial AFC committee that was formed as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the province of Nova Scotia.

Victoria County had a presentation in the summer of 2010 from the Department of Seniors, Community Development Coordinator, Jacqueline Campbell and at that time decided to apply for funding to begin the process of making Victoria County more age-friendly. With the funding announced by the Department and matching funds from the County, research and planning will begin with support from Mount St. Vincent's Nova Scotia Center on Aging.

"We're reaching seniors where they live and supporting activities that

*see Age-friendly, page three*

## This could be the re-start of something good



The last time the groomer at Ski Cape Smokey made an appearance was 2007. Inspectors too have been seen on site, ensuring the poma lift is ready to take skiers up the slope. Preparations for the February 4th opening of the iconic hill were made by dedicated volunteers who recognize the intrinsic value of the recreation facility. There is an attempt to get the lodge and kitchen facilities working again as well although the long hiatus in their activity at the facility may necessitate more work and subsequent inspections for them to be fully functional. Well done folks. Keep up the good work!

## Draft presented to Council

# Fire service study needs feedback

by Jim Morrow

Marathon Human Resources Consulting Group Ltd. won the contract to do a Fire Service Study for Victoria County and presented their preliminary report to Municipal Council on January 24th.

Mandated to examine all aspects of the fire services, Marathon looked at the current service levels provided; the areas of the County which are covered; the number of calls per department; the cost of the service rendered; the number of firefighters and their training opportunities; recruitment and fundraising; insurance; and other issues for the departments and the Municipality.

Marathon met with the Victoria County Fire Chiefs Association and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO),

visited each department and analyzed data in relation to accepted standards where possible.

The preliminary report and its recommendations were shared with the Fire Chiefs and Council. The results of those meetings will be used to develop the final recommendations.

Marathon found that individual fire departments operate with a high level of independence. The fire response in the County is shaped by diverse geography, low population density and varying degrees of volunteer participation. Marathon also found that departments have different equipment, response capacity and dispatch arrangements, nor are there common records for call volumes or training.

As the Municipality provides sig-

nificant financial support for the operating costs of the 12 volunteer fire departments in the County, Marathon recommends that cost savings could be achieved through the introduction of group purchasing for such things as insurance and capital expenditures by considering the County as a whole.

Marathon also suggests that the levels of fire training could be improved as well as the use of a common dispatcher and improving the record keeping among departments.

Marathon's draft recommendations on communications include obtaining one dispatch centre for all departments, developing dispatch protocols to share resources and improving the documentation of calls for record purposes. They

*see Improvements, page three*

## Public hearing

# Baddeck water rates will rise to cover costs

by Jim Morrow

Rate shock will strike water users in the Village of Baddeck starting next year.

A public hearing by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) scheduled for April 19, 2011, will hear comments from the public on the Village of Baddeck's application to amend its schedule of rates and charges for water and water services.

The rate changes are required for a number of reasons. Chairman of the Village Commission, Eddie Keeling said, "There hasn't been a review of our rates by the UARB since 1998. We

have a lot of catching up to do. And we are in the process of putting in a new water system to replace the surface water we are presently getting from Peter's Brook."

The new water system will utilize ground water from drilled wells in Big Baddeck.

Erin Bradley, who sits on the Village's Water Committee, said the Village has found excellent water in a drilled well on Crown Land and will be drilling a supplementary well later this month.

The new well field will require new

*see Increased, page two*

## Room levy now in effect

# Money will be used for destination marketing

by Jim Morrow

Accommodation operators in Victoria County who have 10 or more rooms are now obligated to pay a 2% levy on the value of each room night sold. The money will be collected by the Municipality.

The new tax came into affect on January 1st, 2011.

Accommodations operations with the 10 or more room designation in Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Richmond County and Port Hawkesbury are also participating in the room levy.

Inverness County, so far, has opted not to incorporate the levy.

Municipalities are involved as they have the legal jurisdiction to make the by-law required and to collect the levy. The Municipalities will in turn pass the room levy monies collected to Destination Cape Breton. These funds will then be matched by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) and are to be used only for destination marketing.

Chief Administrative Officer for Victoria County, Sandy Hudson, said the Municipality will be sending out a package of information to accommodation operators who meet the requirements. The package will include a registration

*see Levy, page three*