

## Telephone line thefts

# Calling for phone service

By Jim Morrow

Residents along the St. Ann's Loop of the Cabot Trail are fed up with the on-again off-again telephone service they are receiving.

A six kilometer section of Cabot trail was upgraded last year and the phone lines had to be dug up and replaced. However, weather conditions and winter snows did not allow for the lines to be re-buried.

Running along the ditches and over driveways, the phone lines are easy pickings for copper thieves.

When the lines are stolen the phone service can be out for two or three days at a time.

"This is extremely difficult for tourism operators," said Bed and Breakfast owner Ron Gow, "especially in a weak season like the one we are experiencing this year.

"But of greater concern is the health and safety issue the loss of phone service creates," he said.

Fire and ambulance services cannot be reached, seniors have no access to outside communications and there is very little cell phone service in the area.

A public meeting held at South Haven on July 20th had Bell Aliant representatives in attendance who promised the lines would be buried within three weeks.

Bell Aliant said they are working with the RCMP to apprehend the thieves, but Mr. Gow said the culprits

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## 3 Peaks Challenge draws more hikers



72 hikers representing 18 teams were poised at the start of the 2nd Annual Cape Breton Highlands 3 Peaks Challenge, on July 16th to hike three mountains in one day. Patterned after the UK's 3 Peaks Challenge, this team event involves hiking 3 peaks - Franey, Roberts Mountain and Acadien - in one day, averaging between 2-3 hours for each peak plus driving from Ingonish to Cheticamp. This event is hosted and organized by the Hike the Highlands Festival Society with assistance from Parks Canada's Cape Breton Highlands National Park and Les Amis du Plein Air.

## District Health Authority CEO

# Addressing the issue of health care professional recruitment

By Jim Morrow

Chief Executive Officer for the Cape Breton District Health Authority John Malcom, came to Victoria County Council on Monday, July 18th in response to a letter he received from Council in May.

The letter had been prompted by a presentation to Council by two County doctors who reviewed the various obstacles which confront them in delivering front line medicine to a rural population and suggested that Victoria County may have a role to play in securing medical services into the future.

Both doctors and Council are concerned, among other issues, with the Health District's efforts in recruiting new physicians to replace the local doc-

tors at both Victoria County Memorial Hospital in Baddeck and Buchanan Memorial Hospital in Neil's Harbour.

The local doctors are all reaching or have reached retirement age and each hospital's ability to function is dependent on two physicians at each facility.

Mr. Malcom opened his response with some good news, in that a young husband and wife team of doctors have agreed to work out the Baddeck area. "Their combined effort will replace one position at Victoria County Memorial Hospital," Mr. Malcom told Council.

"The district's number one priority is to eradicate the c-difficile outbreak but its second priority is to expand the Baddeck Hospital to include a community health centre. We are preparing a

proposal for the Department of Health for such a capital expansion project," he said.

Buchanan Memorial Hospital already has a community health centre which eliminates the need for physicians to carry out their practice in another location other than the hospital.

This situation is especially helpful for recruitment as incoming physicians do not need to worry about the costs of or need for office space.

Mr. Malcom said the District Health Authority is committed to the expansion in Baddeck and will go ahead with construction covering the initial costs. However the community will have to absorb 25% of the costs over time.

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## Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Association

# Recreation park receives funding

by Jim Morrow

The Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Association has been awarded \$16,650 to develop a community recreation park, through the Recreation Facility Development Program.

The Neil's Harbour/New Haven project is part of the province's \$349,650 to help improve and upgrade recreation facilities in the Cape Breton region.

"Supporting organizations and recreation facilities encourages Nova Scotians to lead healthier, more physically active lives and is another way that government provides better health care for families," said Department of Health and Wellness ministerial assistant Gary

Ramey. "We are providing \$2.47-million for more than 70 projects across the province that will help families have fun, while getting fit."

District #7 Municipal Councillor, David Donovan, explained that the project is the result of community consultations and that the money will be used to build a recreation pad for basketball, skate boarding and in the winter an ice surface for skating. There are also plans for a walking track around what is now not much more than a parking lot beside the NH/NH Volunteer Fire Department's fire hall. The Fire Department has also donated the land for the recreation pad

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## Aging infrastructure

# Power outages are costly for business

By Jim Morrow

A failed insulator outside of Ingonish in Cape Breton Highlands National Park caused a wide spread power outage North of Smokey on the evening of July 9th.

To gain access N.S. Power had to contact Parks Canada and then use all terrain vehicles to get to the site. The outage continued all through the night and tourism operators, restaurant owners and small businesses could not serve their customers in the morning.

The Victoria Fisheries Cooperative in New Haven lost product because of the power failure.

The Victoria Fisheries Cooperative

manager, Osborne Burke, estimates they lost in excess of \$50,000 of product due to the outage.

Mr. Burke believes the service presently being provided by N.S. Power is no better than can be expected in a third world country.

"This is not the fault of the workers. Our local linemen are doing the best they can with the infrastructure they have to work with," Mr. Burke told *The Victoria Standard*.

"We have a lot of aging infrastructure and the power corporation is not putting any money into upgrades," he said.

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