

Volunteer awards

Nominations close on March 25th

Special

Volunteer Week will be celebrated across Canada this year from April 10-16, 2011. Victoria County will be participating in its 29th year of recognizing volunteers and community groups for their outstanding achievements and contributions to their community. Volunteers nominated will be recognized at a public ceremony on Thursday, April 14th at Gaelic College, St. Ann's.

2011 Volunteer Recognition Award
 Community organizations are allowed to nominate one outstanding volunteer per organization. A volunteer's nomination is based on their outstanding volunteer work from February 2010 to February 2011.

2011 Youth Volunteer Award - This award recognizes the outstanding achievements of youth volunteers in Victoria County. Schools, youth groups and community organizations have the opportunity to nominate an outstanding volunteer in their community.

2011 Community Achievement Award - This award is for community organizations who have improved the quality of life in their community such as a new program or activity, a new facility or venue or improvements to an existing facility. Deadline for all nomination forms is March, 25, 2011.

Nomination forms can be filled out online - www.victoriacounty.com or downloaded & faxed in to 295-1864. For more information please contact the Recreation & Tourism Department at 295-3664 or e-mail tom.wilson@countyvictoria.ns.ca.

Well trained and tested



Unlike most drivers, school bus drivers are required to be recertified every five years. School bus drivers must do a written test, signs test and road test to maintain their licences. Shown are Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board's Trainer/Examiner Brian MacEachern (L) with bus driver Bruce Fraser from Bay St. Lawrence during a pre-trip inspection.

County Business Challenge Survey

Respondents light but data excellent

by Jim Morrow

The Victoria County Business Challenge Surveys are being analyzed. Sustainability Officer, Nona MacDermid has identified some of the key discussion points which she wishes to bring before Municipal Council.

The survey which was developed and delivered in mid-late January, was mailed to all homes and businesses in Victoria County and was available online at the County's website as well as emailed to participants in Strategic Planning forums and to list managers as well as being available on the Bookmobile.

"Unfortunately," Ms. MacDermid said, "Our response rate was low. Although we will try to engage more people every time we use surveys in the future, this survey received some excellent responses that provide feedback we

can use to build a good action plan. We agreed that the people who responded are probably representative of the larger community."

One of the projected outcomes of the survey was to establish a virtual Victoria County Mall but the business response was not sufficient to create one. However, Ms. MacDermid said, "We can use the information provided to start the enhanced Victoria County Directory. I will be looking for other mechanisms to gather the business listing as we proceed."

Ms. MacDermid identified some common responses that could lead to programmes aimed at business and career development. She saw potential for workshops on business organization, strategic planning, succession planning, marketing and media, career transition planning, mentoring, and exporting.

One of the greatest successes of the survey was that 17 business owners agreed to have a Business Retention and Expansion officer from the Cape Breton Regional Development Agency come out to do a field visit and look for ways to help the business grow.

"We originally targeted 5-10 meetings and we nearly doubled the top end of that target," Ms MacDermid said.

The survey identified some interesting opportunities in that 78% to 87% of the business respondents saw opportunities to develop existing or new business activity.

There were a few complaints (2 people were particularly unhappy with the entire survey), but approximately 4-5 people emailed to say that their circumstance didn't seem to fit the survey or they found some aspect confusing.

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Community @ccess Program

County C@P sites consider their future

by Jim Morrow

Victoria County Cap Sites Association (VCCAPS) held a Future Directions Workshop on February 24th at the Gaelic College in St Ann's.

With C@P sites in the communities of Bay St. Lawrence, Iona, Middle River, the libraries in Ingonish and Baddeck, Boularderie and Indian Brook, the organization services most parts of the County. They allow residents the opportunity to familiarize themselves with computers and high speed internet as well as offer training and cyber camps for children.

As Victoria County is one of the

most connected communities in North America, tourists also utilize the C@P sites to send and receive their e-mails and generally keep in touch with home or business while they are away.

However, usage has fallen off at the C@P sites in recent months and VCCAPS held the workshop to determine what the future of these sites might be.

Facilitated by Catherine Ann Fuller, Development Officer for Nova Scotia Economic Development and Tourism, the participants looked at what they do best as well as determining what their

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Keltic Lodge

Challenges to keep icon alive and well

by Jim Morrow

The stately and venerable centerpiece of Victoria County's many and varied accommodations, the Keltic Lodge in Ingonish, is but one of three provincially owned resorts. Along with Liscombe Lodge and Digby Pines, Keltic Lodge and Spa is in the last year of a four year management agreement with New Castle Hotels and Resorts.

The Province issued a tender for management services for these properties in December of 2010. Four expressions of interest were received. New Castle Hotels and Resorts has re-offered, while Pacrim Hospitality, Unit-

ed Gulf Developments and Cape Breton Resorts also have expressed interest.

Nova Scotia Economic Development Minister, Percy Paris said that staff are analyzing the responses and are considering a wide range of options that could include selling the resorts.

Keltic Lodge has one large difference from the other properties in that the Province does not own the land on which it sits. The land is owned by the federal government. This poses a unique situation for the Province. It finds itself in a partnership with the federal government which also owns and

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