

Candidates on youth, seniors and environment

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of. Our party pledges to attract more doctors and nurses, ensure all communities have proper internet and cell phone coverage, keep rural post offices from closing and provide a generous tax credit for volunteer fire fighters. Personally I think there should be greater weight of consideration given to recreation projects in rural areas. The ideal solution to attract more youth and get more to stay is to provide the services that Canadians in urban areas take for granted.

NDP, Cathy MacLeod: A key priority for the NDP is addressing the needs of municipalities in terms of cutting small business taxes and removing the sales tax from home heating. The NDP believes in the stewardship of the environment - a critical component to the vision of the strategy for Victoria County. The NDP's initiative for seniors bodes well for our aging populations.

Victoria County's Economic Development Strategy recognizes its future depends on taking advantage of the natural environment, community assets, and human spirit.

A New Democratic government will take steps to strengthen and expand Victoria County and rural Canada. Key to this are the following steps;

- We will implement a matching grant for Canadian museums, historic buildings and heritage lighthouses;
- We will introduce tax incentives to ensure the restoration and preservation of historic buildings;
- We will strengthen public broadcasting with long-term stable funding for CBC, Radio-Canada and other public broadcasters, including capacity to deliver superior regional production and internet services;
- We will work with provinces to provide easily accessible business risk management programs for farmers that cost less;
- We will work to ensure the sustainability of Canada's agriculture by encouraging young farmers to take up farming and by supporting current farmers with enhanced skill training, mentorship programs and ensuring that arable land is more widely available;
- We will support a volunteer firefighters' tax credit for those who perform 200 hours a year or more service on behalf of their communities;
- We will establish a Hero's Benefit to recognize the contributions of firefighters and police officers who die in the line of duty. The fund will pay a benefit of \$300,000 to the families of fallen firefighters and officers.

Green Party, Chris Milburn: We can't push people to stay in rural areas if there is no reason to live there. Rural out-migration is not only a problem in Cape Breton, but all over Canada (and elsewhere!).

We have to be careful not to measure success in dealing with rural issues just by population stabilization. Attracting yuppies and retirees to rural areas, if all they do is get into their cars every day and drive into the city, doesn't create vibrant, self-sustaining rural communities. It just creates traffic.

Traditionally rural areas were supported by farming, fishing, wood cutting, etc. Changes with mechanization, modernization, transportation, as well as the destruction of fish stocks, loss of forest, etc has put an end to a large proportion of these jobs. Current farm policy in Canada has made farming less and less of a viable career to the point where farmers are on the endangered list. Poor policy on dragging and fish quotas has ruined many segments of the fishery. The support of high-impact, low-added-value forestry has meant we have minimal jobs produced in that industry.

The Green Party has policies in all these areas that actually make sense in the

long term, and would help to once again make rural areas real places to live, with real jobs, schools, shops, etc.

Conservative, Cecil Clarke: As your Member of Parliament, I will lead an economic development strategy for youth retention and attraction working with the provincial and municipal governments and our development agencies. In addition, I believe targeted and specific initiatives such as a next generation investment through Parks Canada in the Bell Museum, the Highlands Links and the Cabot Trail will firmly commit the federal presence in Victoria County. Governments working with business operators and community leaders can, and will, enable job creation and growth by making long term investments that today's youth will be able to plan careers around, to establish roots and raise a family. Parks Canada's presence needs to be strengthened and enhanced as a cornerstone to new development within the tourism sector. The icon Keltic Lodge has long been an employer for area residents and students. By working in partnership with the Province the Keltic's long term presence can leverage opportunities for young entrepreneurs to take over properties and businesses with the assurance of a bankable investment and marketing strategy. As MP, I will make more strides to address the challenge of access to capital, banking and marketing supports that will enable young entrepreneurs to choose Victoria County as a better place to live, raise a family and to do business. The conservative budget will provide increased incentives for young doctors and nurses to locate in rural areas. This is a great way for Victoria County youth to target a health career knowing there are supports to remain home and to contribute towards some of our citizens greatest needs, quality health care. Additionally, youth need to know they have a MP who understands the need for expanded cell and broadband service. As MP, I will identify the gaps and work with the province and service providers to close those gaps. This will ensure that business is not impeded by geography. In addition, youth will know that a rural location does not limit their having a global reach to do business or simply stay up to date with friends and colleagues.

Question 2. *Our municipality is home to one of the highest percentage of seniors per capita in Canada. How is your party going to recognize this aging demographic and support their needs?*

Liberal, Mark Eyking: A Liberal government will protect society's most vulnerable with a \$700-million annual boost to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), more than double the \$300 million proposed by the Conservatives. It represents \$650 a year for all seniors on the GIS not just the lowest income. We also want to attract doctors and nurses to rural areas so health care is available. Seniors also want to stay in their own homes so we are offering generous tax breaks for family care givers through tax incentives and extended EI leave. We also want to provide a green renovation tax credit that will be a great benefit to the older housing stock found in Victoria County. The credit is valued up to \$13,500 and will help seniors stay in their own homes.

NDP, Kathy MacLeod: The needs of seniors are of paramount importance to the New Democratic Party. How can we, as a country, continue to neglect this vital segment of our society that has contributed so much to help build Canada? Just when they should be able to sit back and enjoy the fruits of their labour, seniors find themselves struggling at every turn just to survive. On the doorsteps, I hear their stories and I understand their disillusionment. They deserve better.

Jack Layton pressed Harper to invest

\$700 million to increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement to lift every senior out of poverty. Layton introduced key motions in this Parliament calling for annual reviews of seniors' income needs, for a Senior Ministry so older Canadians' needs get higher priority, and to expand CPP/EI coverage to those caring for family members at home.

Jack Layton introduced legislation securing workplace pensions by moving unfunded pension liabilities to the front of the line of creditors to be paid out when employers go bankrupt. Workers deserve to be treated with this kind of respect.

The New Democrats have developed a national strategy to care for our aging population, with practical ideas to help with housing, prescription, drugs, home care, long term care and palliative care. Through the tenacity of the New Democrats, tens of thousands of Canadians were alerted to the fact that they were not receiving the proper public pension amounts to which they were entitled.

The NDP Seniors Charter secured all-party support in 2006, enshrining every Canadian senior's right to a secure income, adequate housing and quality care. The time is now to give the New Democrats the mandate to govern this great country and secure a place in it for each and every one of us.

Green Party, Chris Milburn: The Green Party of Canada has specific programs to secure pensions, and to address the specific needs of seniors mental and physical health. Throughout North America, there has been a trend for seniors to move towards compact communities near town centres. This type of development is supported through Green Party policy and allows the creation of a built environment that is easier for seniors to navigate, reducing social isolation and supporting physical activity and mental well-being.

Conservative Cecil Clarke: In addition to the conservative investments to attract more doctors and nurses to rural areas, the budget will top-up benefits to the Guaranteed Income Supplement. \$600 more a year for eligible singles and \$840 more a year for couples. For the 10 years I served as an MLA I enjoyed a great track record of investing in seniors and pensioners clubs, programs and services. As your MP I will build on this success and extend my working efforts to deliver for Victoria County within Sydney-Victoria. The Conservatives delivered income splitting for seniors which has made a huge difference for many couples, saving them money for other personal needs. The Conservatives are doubling the Pension Income Credit to \$2,000 and increasing the Age Credit amount by \$2,000. This is in addition to increasing the age limit for RRSP-to-RRIF conversion to 71 from 69. Also, the Conservatives are establishing the landmark Tax-Free Savings Account, which is particularly beneficial for seniors. Victoria County needs a MP that will work with the provincial and municipal governments to address issues affecting seniors and I am steadfast in my support. This may reach from accessibility grants for public and community facilities to age-positive employment initiatives for seniors who choose to continue to work.

3) *Next to our people, our environment is our most important asset. The Bras d'Or Lake, the Cape Breton Highlands and the Cabot Trail are all significant aspects of what keeps our economy moving vis a vis our visitors returning.*

How is your party ensuring our environment will not be threatened by unsustainable resource extraction practices?

Liberal Mark Eyking: Climate change only accelerates degradation and slows restoration in ecosystems that have already been weakened by excessive resource extraction and pollution. To begin

with, we need a national freshwater strategy. Our water is a national treasure. It's also a national responsibility. We have to reconfirm our commitment to the older growth forests in Northern Cape Breton. Personally I support full environmental reviews for extraction projects and strong monitoring. I am also very concerned with the practice of hydraulic fracturing and blasting projects designed for coal extraction.

NDP Kathy MacLeod: The NDP prioritizes clean energy. It respects the environment. It has as part of its platform the goal of creating new sectors of green technology, conservation, and renewable energy with practical ideas to jumpstart Canada's transition to a new energy economy. The NDP will provide for a clean energy future - sustainable, reliable, and affordable. We can no longer continue the abuse and the destruction of our natural resources - the brakes go on now!

Ignatieff's Liberals rubber-stamped Conservative legislation to gut the review process for energy projects and waste \$60-billion on tax cuts for oil companies and other big polluters. Greenhouse gas emissions rose 25% over 1990 levels under Liberal governments - one of the worst records in the industrialized world.

Currently, Harper rewards big polluters by handing over responsibility for energy project environmental assessments to the industry-dominated National Energy Board! How can this be allowed? Who is listening?

Jack Layton's New Democrats passed the Climate Change Accountability Act in the House of Commons, adopting a road map to reduce climate-changing emissions. With the emphasis on an innovative Green-Collar Jobs Plan, the NDP has developed a plan to spark Canada's transition to a green energy economy.

It is exactly what we need. Sustainability is critical in order to ensure that our environment continues to thrive. We must use our resources wisely and gently. Cape Breton Island deserves nothing less.

Green Party, Chris Milburn: I think it goes without saying that the Green Party has the most sensible long-term policies for maintaining the integrity and viability of our forests, our water, air, and soil. The *raison d'être* of the party is that we not only want to make society happy and healthy for people now, but also for future generations. Progressively depleting our natural world leaves our children and grandchildren an "ecological debt" which is impossible for them to repay, and may severely degrade their standards of living, and quality of life. We have to stop stealing from our grandkids.

Conservative, Cecil Clarke: I have always supported the Bras d'Or Lakes Biosphere initiative and as MP will work with the community stakeholders to foster and implement positive change on the Lakes. There has been mining within Victoria County for gypsum which had been a local employer as well as other resources. With today's legislation and regulations there are strong, sound stewardship measures to address public concerns and issues while at the same time permitting appropriate development if it meets the economic and environmental needs within the region. The Government of Canada has a role and obligation to monitor and protect the environment. As MP I will carry on the accountability and responsibility to do so. Building on positive advancements in green energy and access to clean power from the Lower Churchill project through the subsea cable to Cape Breton will reduce the need for traditional energy sources. Building on the positive impact of the Wreck Cove generating station and possible wind energy projects will provide a new, cleaner and greener path forward while creating jobs and opportunities here at home.