

# MUNICIPAL VOICE

The Magazine for the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

SUMMER 2019

## Business Challenges in 2019 How Can We Support and Grow Businesses in Nova Scotia

page 8

## Rick Hansen Inspires Delegates at the NSFM Spring Conference

page 10

## Leading the Fight Against Energy Poverty

page 16



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# Columns & Features

- 5 **President's Message**  
*Councillor Wayne Mason, Halifax Regional Municipality*
- 7 **Chief Executive Officer's Message**  
*Juanita Spencer*
- 6 **Business Challenges in 2019**  
**How Can We Support and Grow Businesses in Nova Scotia**  
*Contributed by Jonathan McClelland, Cumberland Business Connector*
- 10 **Rick Hansen Inspires Delegates at the NSFM Spring Conference**  
*Contributed by Judy Webber, NSFM Event Planner/Financial Officer*
- 12 **Your Sustainability Coordinator is Not an Island:**  
*Contributed by Samantha Peverill, QUEST NS*
- 16 **Leading the Fight Against Energy Poverty**  
*Contributed by:*
- 20 **Nova Scotia Power Reaches 30% Renewable Energy Milestone**  
*Contributed by Nova Scotia Power*

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## President's Message

### Councillor Wayne Mason, Halifax Regional Municipality

NSFM's staff and board have been hard at work to reposition the federation to better speak on behalf of our members, getting the provincial government to make needed changes to law and policy.

NSFM is not alone in this effort. I recently spoke to the ministers of local government for Canada's provinces and territories, as did Bill Karsten, President of FCM. I wanted to share with you the kind of messages I was asked to deliver on behalf of all of our colleagues at the other provincial and territorial associations, who had met the day before FCM started in Quebec City this spring. What follows is a lightly edited version of my speaker's notes.

Before I get into a brief summary of the PTAs' shared concerns, I want to talk a bit about NSFM, what PTAs do and how we work together and with FCM.

NSFM's vision is a Nova Scotia with effective local government and strong, sustainable communities. All 50 municipal governments in Nova Scotia are member units, and all 379 municipal elected officials are voting delegates. In our case, rural, town and regional municipalities are all members.

It is my great privilege to serve as the 112th president of NSFM. As the president of a PTA, I am a member of FCM's board, along with other provincial and big-city representatives.

Several times a year we convene the FCM board to work on issues of national importance. NSFM also participates in the PTA president's meetings, as well as supporting the Atlantic Mayors Congress to look at municipal issues from a regional perspective.

*Be they hurricanes,  
drought, floods or fires,  
new weather extremes  
concern us all, from coast  
to coast to coast.*

I think it is critical to understand that all the PTAs are a part of the process that generates FCM policy and advocacy, and we strongly support the work that Bill, Brock and the FCM team undertake on our behalf on the national stage.

President Karsten said that we "face a long list of 21st century challeng-

es". As I mentioned, on May 31 the presidents of the PTAs met in Quebec City, the day before the FCM annual conference, and shared information concerning the fiscal health of municipal governments across the country.

The associations are in strong agreement on the need for all provincial and territorial governments to expedite access to available federal revenues for cannabis; the provinces of Quebec and Ontario are the only ones with any sharing arrangements in place. In addition, the associations called on the federal government to move beyond its current two-year approach and make revenue related to cannabis a permanent source of revenue for municipal governments.

The PTAs need to see significant progress on both matters. Why do we need to see progress? "Why are they always here, cap in hand?" you must be asking yourself.

Briefly, municipalities are on the front line of service delivery to the citizens we all represent. Municipalities are faced with new costs for preparedness, resiliency and emergency response because of climate change.

Municipalities are burdened with increased cost of service delivery, foremost of which are policing and increasing regulatory requirements around water and wastewater treatment.

Municipalities continue to work to recapitalize or replace decades-old infrastructure that was almost all paid for in the first place with significant federal and provincial financial support.

These challenges are not theoretical. While we were meeting in Quebec City, Lynn Napier-Buckley, President of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, got a text message saying that the wildfires in Northern Alberta had caused the Steen River rail bridge to burn. The loss of this critical rail link came on top of a week or more of highway closures due to the unusually intense fires, and I think we can all see this as a concrete example of the short- and long-term economic and social impacts that we are now facing. Be they hurricanes, drought, floods or fires, new weather extremes concern us all, from coast to coast to coast.

Again, as Bill said, we are focused on finding better ways to deliver results

for the people we serve, and predictable, long-term funding allows municipalities to plan large and long-term projects with confidence.

I will add that we want to be with you in Ottawa and in the MPs constituency offices, making the case as allies, together, for what our communities really need from the federal government.

So, we are here today to work with you. We all want to see these things addressed in our communities, ridings, districts, wards or constituency. It really is a great step to have the FCM and PTAs represented at this table, so we can all get down to work and determine how best that we can, together, build stronger communities.



## Chief Executive Officer's Message

### Juanita Spencer

It has been a busy spring for the team at Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM). We met with members across the province to discuss their priorities at our five regional meetings, we held our annual spring conference in Truro with over 140 of our members, we responded to several pieces of new legislation and I have continued with my CEO Roadshow, making my way around Nova Scotia into member board-rooms and council chambers.

Engaging more with our members is part of the new direction NSFM is taking. To be the voice of municipalities means being guided by their knowledge and experiences. NSFM operates with a vision for effective local government and strong, sustainable communities. It is only by working alongside our members that we can achieve that.

Consistent feedback throughout all our meetings is that members want NSFM to focus efforts and resources to more effectively advance priority issues. Between 2014 and 2016, members told us that they wanted us to be more strategic, and focus on a small number of key issues. In 2016, we updated our resolutions policy accordingly, with a focus being placed on matters that would make the biggest difference to the largest number of Nova Scotian municipalities. For three years we have worked with this policy to put forward a limited number of resolu-

tions, with five going forward in 2016, six in 2017 and five again in 2018.

Consultations at our regional meetings this spring told us that our members are supportive of this new approach. In fact, our members were nearly unanimous in telling us that they support the idea of keeping the same key issues, year over year, until they are resolved. We will bring this forward for a vote at our annual general meeting in November. For this year, NSFM will continue to follow our normal process of accepting possible new resolutions from members and councils, researching the issues and presenting these to members during our September resolutions meetings in advance of the AGM.

This year's annual spring conference, held May 8–10, was a huge success. Deemed by many as the best we've ever held, we were pleased to have been joined by representatives from all three elected parties: Minister Karen Casey from the governing Liberal party, Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin from the Progressive Conservatives and Lisa Roberts from the NDP addressed the standing-room-only crowd. We were also fortunate to have the Man in Motion himself, Rick Hansen, deliver a timely and inspiring message as Nova Scotia's municipalities work to comply with new accessibility legis-

lation. A special thank you to our member hosts, the Town of Truro and the County of Colchester, for a fun and memorable social evening.

Work for our fall conference and AGM in Halifax is already well underway. Information about our program and registration details will come out in the fall, but we invite you to mark November 5–8 on your calendars for what is sure to be an exciting, informative and must-attend event!

On behalf of the NSFM team, we wish you a wonderful summer. We welcome your feedback and suggestions at any time.



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# Business Challenges in 2019

## How Can We Support and Grow Businesses in Nova Scotia

*Contributed by Jonathan McClelland, Cumberland Business Connector*

Running a business is not for the faint of heart. Some challenges include the need to keep ahead of the competition, source financing, execute on expansions, and build a solid team. Many challenges are outside of businesses' control. These include political instability in export markets and market access, changing policy requirements from government, and disruptive new technologies that can quickly make existing equipment or software obsolete.

As the Cumberland Business Connector and Regional Enterprise Networks visit business owners, we are consistently hearing about one common problem. This problem is a lack of workers. Many companies are having to turn down work due to the lack of workers. This challenge is common from Yarmouth to Amherst to Sydney. It is very different from challenges faced by Nova Scotia twenty to thirty years ago. Different challenges require different responses.

From the 1960s through to the 1990s, Nova Scotia had a large number of young workers available and willing to work. Economic development work focused on attracting companies to Nova Scotia. All levels of government committed resources. Industrial Parks were developed, transportation infrastructure was upgraded, financing and training were provided.

The underlying causes of our declining workforce today includes: the out-migration of youth, decreased immigration for a few decades (except for the very recent past), and an aging workforce. Out-migration of youth has been ongoing since the time of Confederation. However, a smaller average family size since the baby boom generation means that any out-migration results in a shrinking workforce in Nova Scotia.

Since the 1600s, many immigrants came to Nova Scotia out of a desire for economic advancement, other came to escape war or poverty. These immigrants built homes and businesses and contributed to economic growth across the province. The reduction in immigration to Nova Scotia over the past thirty or forty years has meant

that our workforce hasn't been able to count on immigration to spur growth.

Smaller families, out-migration, and low numbers of immigrants have resulted in an aging workforce. We are now entering the first wave of retirements of the baby boom generation. In Cumberland County today, there are more than twice as many people in their 60s than in their 20s.

To address the critical labour shortage requires multiple initiatives. These initiatives centre on labour force development and growth, as well as ways to improve business productivity. The province of Nova Scotia has shown leadership in focusing on attracting and retaining immigrants and is having increasing success both in attraction and retention.

Similarly, in Cumberland County, there are a number of initiatives under way. The Cumberland Business Connector is working with employers, the Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia, the YREACH program, and other partners to make it easier for recent immigrants to find a job and move to Cumberland County.

We are also working with the Nova Scotia Community College and High Schools to raise awareness of the number and variety of jobs that are available locally. We want to retain more youth and provide meaningful careers within their community.

The Cumberland Business Connector is partnering with the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity (TCPEP), the Department of Community Services, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and Nova Scotia Works. The objective is to identify and remove barriers to the disengaged workforce in Cumberland and Colchester Counties and increase their participation in the workforce.

*continued on page 19*

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# Rick Hansen Inspires Delegates at the NSFM Spring Conference

*Contributed by Judy Webber, NSFM Event Planner/Financial Officer*

Delegates attending the NSFM Spring Conference in Truro, NS had the absolute pleasure of hearing the Man in Motion himself, Rick Hansen, share his own story and the inspiration he's found in others. Rick believes it is not what happens to you, but what you do with it that counts. With the Rick Hansen Foundation, Rick and his team raise awareness about accessibility, inclusion and the potential of people with disabilities. Rick's presentation inspired the delegates to identify barriers in their environment, and see that everyone has the ability to make a difference.

We are very proud that three of our member municipalities received the Rick Hansen Difference Maker Awards at the event: the Town of Wolfville for the adoption of the first comprehensive municipal accessibility plan in Nova Scotia, the Municipality of the County of Inverness for

the development of a completely accessible beach, and Halifax for designating the Cogswell re-devel-

opment project as a Rick Hansen Gold Zone. It is the largest re-development project in Atlantic Canada,



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The event boasted a number of very successful sessions and learning opportunities for our elected and appointed officials, receiving the highest evaluation ratings from delegates in years. As members, you told us what was important to you and we listened. While we can't tackle every interesting subject put forward at just one event, we intend to incorporate the topics you raised in the future.

Martin Ward, Q.C. from Halifax outlined best practices for in-camera sessions — always a hot topic with our municipal councils. Tara Wickwire and Kristi Strowbridge from National Public Relations shared tips and tricks for navigating social media.

Delegates heard about collaborative municipal success stories from the Town of Amherst, County of Cumberland and Town of Oxford sharing strategies on successful doctor recruitment. The counties of Colchester and Cumberland outlined their exciting Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark initiative. Both are prime examples of the things municipalities can achieve when they work together!

The Town of Windsor and District of West Hants panel gave a very candid and honest presentation on the work of the coordinating committee on Bill 55, outlining how they came to the decision to consolidate, key tasks and processes associated with the project and how the committee is working through these things together as a team.

Representatives from the Centre for Climate Services and the Clean Foundation outlined new climate change resources, best practices and innovation solutions for NS mu-

nicipalities and exploring options for advancing municipal climate change initiatives.

Delegates had the option to learn about what the national housing strategy means for Nova Scotia from Nancy MacLellan, CEO of Housing Nova Scotia, or to see what strides LPPANS is making in siting public buildings, presented by Nathan Rogers and Tristan Cleveland.

In keeping with our new direction, for the first time we had three political parties represented at the event to address the delegates: the Liberal Party by Minister Karen Casey, the Progressive Conservative Party by MLA Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, and the NDP by MLA Lisa Roberts. We will be inviting the leaders of all four parties to the fall convention, so be sure not to miss it!

Much appreciation to the Municipality of the County of Colchester and Town of Truro for hosting the event!

Special thanks go out to the planning committee (Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, County of Colchester; Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville; Councillor George MacDonald, CBRM; Warden Timothy Habinski, County of Annapolis) for their leadership in creating such a great program.

The Federation's fall conference will be held November 5–8 at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax. The theme this year is "Leading the Change", and we hope to see you all there! The professional development and networking opportunities you acquire at these events can prove invaluable to you and your constituents. Watch for registration information to be available early in September!



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# Your Sustainability Coordinator is Not an Island:

## An Overview of the Development of Nova Scotia's Municipal Energy Learning Group

Contributed by Samantha Peverill, QUEST NS

### Introduction

Municipal governments are responsible for both a huge amount and variety of aspects of the proper functioning of a community. Although energy planning and generation has not historically been counted in that list of responsibilities, it is being included more and more. There are several excellent reasons for this inclusion, from top-down and bottom-up pressures related to carbon emissions, to the opportunity to supplement municipal revenues through municipally owned energy generation.

From both a mitigation and adaptation perspective, communities are on the front lines of climate change. They are feeling the effects firsthand and they have a huge opportunity for energy-use reductions. As of 2016, communities in the Atlantic provinces were responsible for 60% of energy use and 58% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (NRCAN, 2019). Included in this statistic is the energy usage of residents to heat and cool their homes and buildings, fuel for transportation and municipal necessities such as street lighting, waste, water and wastewater processing, etc. Excluded is industrial and manufacturing facilities, and freight transportation via means such as marine, train and truck.

From an anecdotal perspective, I have also observed another important resource in communities, especially in smaller areas: it is the passion for their place, and it should not be underestimated as a driving

force for change. Residents want to live in healthy, affordable and prosperous communities and, when given options, they often know the solutions that work best in their local region. Not only that, they are willing to put their own energy into enacting these solutions.

### Municipal Context and Challenges

Municipalities in the Atlantic region face many challenges. They are responsible for a wide variety of community services, and population decline is eating away at the tax base that supports these capital and operational expenditures. As of 2016, municipal governments owned nearly 60% of the infrastructure in Canada but relied on federal and provincial funding to support their repair and maintenance (Gonthier et al., 2016). It is difficult to be innovative when your roads need to be repaired and your citizens are still waiting for internet connection.

Climate change is threatening municipal infrastructure with warmer, wetter and wilder weather than roads, culverts, bridges, buildings and shoreline infrastructure were built for. Canadian municipalities play a key role in climate change adaptation as part of municipal planning, including through incorporating adaptation considerations in land-use and infrastructure decision-making, and encouraging action at the local level (*Measuring Progress on Adaptation and Climate Resilience: Recommendations to the Government of Canada, 2018*).

In light of this need for action, the majority of Atlantic municipalities lack the necessary staff capacity and expert knowledge to plot their path forward. A recent survey that QUEST administered as the Atlantic Regional Climate Advisors for the Partners for Climate Protection Program gave a picture of the situation in the communities.

When asked about the challenges that have stalled their community energy or climate change actions, lack of finance and lack of staff capacity were the most cited issues, followed closely by a lack of clarity regarding the next steps. To illustrate the staff-capacity gap, 56% of respondents said they had no staff capacity dedicated to energy planning whatsoever. On the positive side, 13% had a full-time resource.

### Municipal Energy Learning Group (MELG) Background

In 2015, the Nova Scotia QUEST network met frequently in Halifax with its members, including the electric and natural gas utilities, Efficiency Nova Scotia, provincial government departments, other NGOs like the Ecology Action Centre and Clean Foundation, consultants like Stantec and CBCL and academic representatives from the local universities and Nova Scotia Community College. Although communities were a central topic of discussion, the voice of municipal governments was notably missing. In another QUEST region, several working groups were in operation, including a municipal working group.

Correspondence with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) revealed a gap in municipal support for sustainability since the closure of the Municipal Sustainability Office, and some history on well-received past working groups related to the Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs).

With the financial support of the NS departments of Energy and Mines, Municipal Affairs and Environment, and the expertise of the NSFM, QUEST NS launched the Municipal Energy Learning Group in June 2016. The terms of reference for the group decreed it would consist of municipal staff members of any interested municipality, with others welcome at the group's discretion. The group determined that six meetings a year was ideal, and that they would be hosted all over the province to allow for hands-on learning and to alternate driving distances. QUEST NS, as a facilitator, recognized the importance of face-to-face meetings for building partnerships. At the onset, meetings were held for a half-day to include presentations and a roundtable of updates. In an attempt to include those who were unable to attend in person, a conference-call line or webinar link was set up.

The focus of the group would be on capacity building through presentations, study tours and peer-to-peer sharing, especially focused on successes. It was an institution to streamline the process of R&D, "rob and duplicate", an important tactic for efficiency when many municipalities are trying to overcome similar barriers. There is no need for anyone to reinvent the wheel, and co-operation is paramount.

Armed with the knowledge that they are strongly impacted by climate change, municipalities have influence over a large percentage of Canada's GHG emissions but lack the capital and staff capacity to plan and act. How can we harness the collective knowledge without over-

burdening members? How do we help them bridge the intention-action gap?

It was essential to speak to the issues that are top of mind for community leaders. Economic development was an excellent starting point. A recent APEC report stated that Atlantic Canadian municipalities "need to run more lean, and fight the urban migration through place making and clean growth." With Ef-

iciency Nova Scotia, especially the Onsite Energy Managers (OEMs) embedded in communities, there are powerful case studies showing the business case of energy upgrades and the growth of energy efficiency as an industry that employs over 100 people. Early meetings focused on projects like Energize Bridgewater, the Ellershouse wind project and the work of the OEMs to celebrate successes that had a financial win inherent.

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The original group was small, but mighty. Only two members were full-time sustainability staff and the balance held a variety of titles from town planner to director of finance.

## Observations

The focus on success stories was well received by the group members and, over time, attendees were noticeably inspired by the updates of their peers. On the contrary, a review of the engagement details from the webinar or call-in option showed a surprising lack of focus on the part of those at a distance.

As time went on and the facilitator invited feedback, it became apparent that the community representatives wanted more time to talk among themselves. This time was frequently referred to as “unstructured time”. It was also difficult to discuss the updates in depth with the amount of time allocated. The roundtable portion of meetings was often the first time members heard of a certain project or policy and, naturally, they had questions and were interested in having discussions.

## Discussion

QUEST has struggled to show the tangible outcomes of much of our work. It is incredibly difficult to measure the outcomes of an endeavor, when the aim is capacity building and creating connections. However, each year that MELG has operated, the group has grown. The mailing list and the attendance have grown both in absolute number, and in the diversity of organization type, number of municipalities represented and job titles. Through yearly formal working group surveys and informal conversation, the group is considered valuable by the members, the Government of Nova Scotia and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The author believes there are a few simple explanations for the success of this group. They are simple to explain, but not necessarily simple to create. The first is trust. QUEST is viewed as a non-threatening entity, with a mission to help communities become Smart Energy communities.

Another related success factor is the relationships built through face-to-face interactions. Relationships built in a more informal and open forum enable participants to ask more loosely formed questions. By this, I mean it is more acceptable to *not be an expert*. Members feel at ease asking for more explanation, examples and details. People are more comfortable saying “I don’t know”.

I think this is particularly important when it comes to areas of rapid technological change, and complex social behaviour change and engagement on very important community values. This is ESPECIALLY so when the municipal players do not have the “luxury” of becoming experts, climate change or community energy planning being a small part of their job description, or not included whatsoever.

Another success factor that was unveiled was the importance of encouragement. During the roundtable portion of each meeting, there is an expectation that each person speaks. Often municipal staff are so embedded in their projects or programs that they present it as someone unworthy of note. In this, the role of an informed facilitator is important. In my role I strive to continually inform myself on topics related to community energy planning. This allows for the facilitator of MELG to act as a key contact, providing background information and creating connections between relevant players. With that information as a foundation, I am assertive during group discussions to prompt others to share the expertise and experience that I know they have, even though they don’t think it is valuable. Sometimes it is joked that we are a support network, rather than a working group, building up the confidence of municipal staff by assuring them that they are on the right path.

Hands-on learning has proven to be an efficient way of learning about innovative projects when visiting communities. More and more research shows that individuals have different ways of learning — visual,



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oratory, reading. Study tours appeal especially to visual learners, and also give an opportunity to resolve questions with experts while in front of certain machinery.

Although, originally, the group's inclination toward "building on success" was simply the preference of the QUEST facilitator, more science-based rationale for this approach was collected over time. For example, neuroscientist Tali Sharot's book *The Influential Mind* (Zimmermann, 2018) laid out evidence that humans are inclined towards action when they are presented with a positive state or reward. Alternatively, negative information or threats cause the freeze or flight reactions, causing inaction or distancing from the problem. Zimmermann also sheds light on the importance of "immediacy", which is lacking as a motivation to act on the threat that climate change poses.

In terms of barriers to attendance, staff time is more often cited as the restricting factor than funds to attend. Despite frequent mention of the travel stipend that we had secured, no requests for this funding have been made.

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# Leading the Fight Against Energy Poverty

*The Town of Bridgewater is a recognized municipal leader in sustainable thinking – now it's taking aim at energy poverty and looking to help the community's most vulnerable*

Mayor David Mitchell described May 14, 2019 as perhaps the most significant day in the 120-year history of the Town of Bridgewater.

That was the day the community, its residents, businesses and supporters learned that Bridgewater had

— after being a top-five finalist in 2018 — won Infrastructure Canada's \$5 million Smart Cities Challenge prize for 2019.

“There are no words to describe how we're feeling today — our staff and our entire

community have worked so hard to develop a real and achievable plan to reduce energy

poverty in Bridgewater” said the mayor, following the announcement. “What makes this so amazing is that it’s a plan that can be used as a template by every other community in the country to tackle energy poverty at its roots.”

### ***The root of the challenge***

The town’s Smart Cities Challenge application focused on Bridgewater’s growing need for affordable, clean and reliable energy, which is out of reach for many of its residents. Estimates show that around 38% of Bridgewater households are unable to meet their basic energy and transportation needs, with a combination of old, leaky homes and high energy/transportation costs factoring in. The town aims to solve this issue at a community and household level by creating access to affordable energy through solutions such as home-upgrade programs, and by improving access to local transit.

In March 2019, the community submitted a comprehensive proposal for an Energy Poverty Reduction Program designed to lift residents out of energy poverty, starting by reducing the rate 20% by 2025. Mayor Mitchell noted the town is confident that its innovative community approach to energy efficiency will have an impact that can be adopted by communities across Nova Scotia and Canada.

By putting emerging technologies to work, he says, new community services can be created that ensure underserved populations are the first beneficiaries of Bridgewater’s transition to a sustainable and clean energy future. It’s also anticipated that the Smart Cities project will have a substantial and sustained positive economic

impact on the community by stimulating investment in the town’s housing and energy sectors.

“From start to finish, community partners and residents helped to create a vision and plan for action to reduce energy poverty in Bridgewater”, Mayor Mitchell added. “We’re excited to continue working with our community partners, and now comes the task of rolling up our sleeves and taking this project forward from concept to implementation — and we couldn’t be happier to have



the support of Infrastructure Canada and Smart Cities Canada in tackling the challenge that’s ahead of us.”

### ***What does winning the Smart Cities Challenge mean for Bridgewater’s residents?***

Simply put, the Smart Cities prize will be used to lift many of Bridgewater’s residents out of energy poverty. Here’s how:

- Making homes more energy efficient

We will hire a team of experts who will help residents and property owners make their homes highly energy efficient. This could include adding insulation, smart thermostats, heat pumps and solar panels. The experts will also help residents and property owners find grant funding or loans to pay for these upgrades.

The team will take care of getting the work done by hiring good contractors and making sure that the work is done well, paying attention to older homes and apartment buildings, and the needs of lower-income residents.





- Helping residents own and sell renewable energy

We're not just talking solar panels on rooftops, but also "solar farms" within which residents will be able to own solar panels that will provide them with income.

- Setting up an energy-management information system

This will help homeowners and businesses across the community plan energy upgrades, and make sure that they save energy and money as promised.

- Setting up a local energy investment program

This will allow residents and businesses to make financial investments in the community's energy projects, and earn income from those investments.

- Improving community services

We'll be working to connect residents who experience energy poverty with the community services (financial assistance, health, education,

social services, etc.) they need with less hassle and red tape.

***What does the Energy Poverty Reduction Program mean for Bridgewater residents?***

The program will be available to all Bridgewater residents, regardless of income. Through the program residents can:

- have more control over their energy costs, leaving more money to spend on what's most important;
- even-out monthly energy costs, so they can more easily make a budget for those payments;
- learn about new ways to save energy and reduce costs, and share tips with other residents;
- have a safer, healthier and more comfortable home through better heating and cooling, and improved indoor air quality;
- have safer and more affordable rental homes or apartments due to direct town work with landlords to make property improvements;

- have more affordable and accessible transportation options in the community;
- find more training and job opportunities in the skilled-trade and clean-technology sectors; and
- reach out to a real person to help navigate through any community services needed — this service is nonjudgmental and confidential.

**When can Bridgewater residents start using the program?**

If people who own their home would like to explore affordable energy upgrades today, our Clean Energy Financing program can already help with that! Check out [www.cleanenergyfinancing.ca](http://www.cleanenergyfinancing.ca) or call (844) 727-7818 (toll-free). Efficiency Nova Scotia also offers programs and rebates for homes, apartment buildings and businesses via [www.efficiencyns.ca](http://www.efficiencyns.ca) or (877) 999-6035 (toll-free).

The full Energy Poverty Reduction Program will take more time to set up properly — we will likely start taking applications in 2020 or 2021. That’s a long wait for peo-

*continued from page 8*

The North NS Connector is another regional collaboration. This initiative has a full-time employee, Matthew Berrigen who is working with the Pictou REN, TCPEP, and the Cumberland Business Connector. This initiative is closely modeled on the Halifax Connector program. It connects recent graduates, international students, and immigrants with established professionals and business owners in Pictou, Colchester, and Cumberland Counties. These connections will lead to increased employment and reduced job vacancies.

Increased productivity growth is a key focus of Nova Scotia Business Inc., the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, as well as organizations such as Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium. When REN or Connector staff meet with business owners, it provides opportunity to share specific initiative from these industry associations and Government Departments that are relevant to specific needs.

These types of collaboration and partnerships are being undertaken from Sydney to Yarmouth. The Regional Enterprise Networks are leading unique initiatives to meet their regions’ needs. The value that we bring to businesses is that we can build bridges between the silos of various government departments, industry associations, and individual businesses.

ple who need this help today, but help is already available in the form of community support, emergency fuel funds, free home-energy upgrades and other solutions. The town is already working with community partners to better connect residents to these existing services.

More Information:

To learn more about the Smart Cities Challenge and Bridgewater’s path to winning the \$5 million Smart Cities prize, you can visit [www.bridgewater.ca/SmartCities](http://www.bridgewater.ca/SmartCities).

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# Nova Scotia Power Reaches 30% Renewable Energy Milestone

*Contributed by Nova Scotia Power*

On a windy, rainy morning, Paul Dandurand sometimes can't help smiling to himself.

"My kids don't like it, but a day with lots of wind and rain is great for generating renewable energy," says Dandurand, Nova Scotia Power's Plant Manager of Hydro and Wind.

"Sometimes, over half the province is being powered by wind and water, and that feels pretty good – even if it

means my wife and I have to work a little harder to get our daughters bundled up and off to school."

Nova Scotia Power reached a new renewable energy milestone in 2018, serving 30% of Nova Scotia's electricity needs with renewable energy generated by NSP and independent producers. That's more than triple where Nova Scotia was on renewable energy just a decade before.

Dandurand's job takes him to some of the most picturesque places in Nova Scotia, checking in on hydro dams and turbines, like the Mersey system in Queens County or Wreck Cove in the Cape Breton highlands, as well as wind farms in locations like Digby Neck and Nuttby Mountain.

"Living in the city, you sometimes don't think about where your electricity is coming from," Dandurand says. "But when you get out into communities across Nova Scotia and see the change that is taking place in our electricity generation, it's exciting to be part of that change."

Making that change happen, while ensuring stable, affordable electricity prices is a focus and a passion for Karen Hutt, President & CEO for Nova Scotia Power.

"Nova Scotians want a cleaner energy future for themselves and our children," says Hutt. "But we know as we manage this change, we can't overlook affordability. So, as we continue to achieve new records in renewable electricity, we remain focused on ensuring electricity prices stay predictable and affordable for our customers."

Over the past five years, annual rate increases have averaged below the rate of inflation for residential customers and most business customers. At the same time, Nova Scotia Power has been a Canadian leader in reducing carbon emissions – achieving a 36% reduction from 2005 levels. By comparison, the COP21 Climate Conference in Paris called for a 30% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030. Nova Scotia Power projects achieving a 58% reduction by 2030, almost double the international climate conference's goal.

Today, wind power is the largest contributor to renewable energy in Nova Scotia, accounting for 18% of electricity in 2018. That's higher



Wind turbines on Digby Neck

A collage of four images: top-left shows a family of four holding hands in a forest; top-right shows a person in winter gear standing in the snow; middle-right shows a person on a mountain bike on a dirt trail; bottom shows a person on a bicycle in a city street.

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than most other provinces and states. Soon, though, hydroelectricity will challenge for Nova Scotia's top spot in renewable energy, thanks to the Maritime Link subsea transmission line to Newfoundland and Labrador. Accessing hydroelectricity from Newfoundland and Labrador will enable Nova Scotia Power to provide 40% renewable energy in 2020, which will be another milestone achievement.

Due to the fact that renewable electricity is largely weather dependent – wind for wind power and rain or snow melt for hydroelectricity – the amount of renewable electricity being generated varies from day to day, and sometimes hour to hour. It's not unusual for 50% or more of Nova Scotia's electricity to be coming from renewable sources. On other occasions, it can be closer to 10%.

"Variability in renewable generation means that we continue to rely on our non-renewable generation to ensure reliable electricity supply to Nova Scotians," says Hutt. "Strategic use of our thermal plants is enabling us to manage our transition to lower carbon generation in a way that is most affordable way for our customers."

As Nova Scotia Power continues its coal-to-clean transformation, it will use its coal plants less and less. The longer term future will involve more transmission interconnections to import clean energy from other provinces, and battery storage (as that technology becomes more efficient and cost-effective) to store intermittent renewable energy like wind and solar.

Learn more about where your energy is coming from today at [www.nspower.ca/todayspower](http://www.nspower.ca/todayspower)



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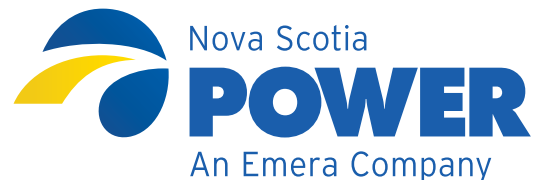




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