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Guysborough's regulatory
environment is literally
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THE LIFTOFF ISSUE



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Cover Photo – Guysborough wind farm



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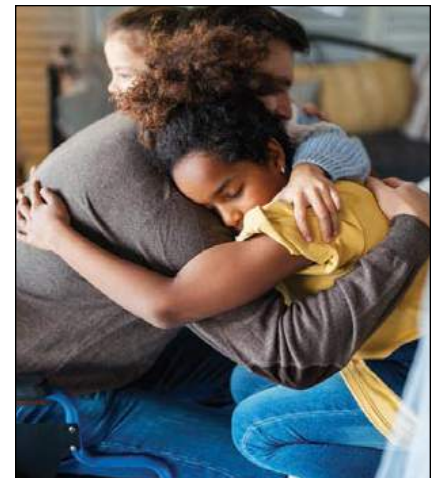
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The NSFM is a not-for-profit organization mandated to represent the interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia. Total membership is 376 elected officials representing all 49 municipalities.

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Thinking Together

By President Brenda Chisholm-Beaton

While liftoff is generally saved for spacefarers—it certainly has a home here on earth and in our communities. When I took on the role of NSFM President in November, I knew we would be rolling up our sleeves this year: climate change, consolidation, infrastructure, restructuring, and an ongoing discussion about the real costs of policing.

What I did not expect is the truly overwhelming groundswell of support from our members for our work. The community of encouragement, inspiration, knowledge, and support we foster in each other is a core strength of NSFM.

Recently at our 2023 Spring Conference in Digby, more than 100 of our members gathered to discuss the issues that matter most to them in three days of deep, important conversation—and some very high-quality networking! Connections and collegiality matter.

The work of governance requires fulsome thought, and more often than not, a sense of urgency. We are not faced with small issues in our communities: environment, housing, public safety, and many others are significant and impactful. Our memberships has identified opportunities to face these challenges and demonstrated the ingenuity to succeed. However, completing this work will require more than one con-

ference; that is why the work of the Advisory Committees, and the Board, is important.

Sometimes the road to change, and the desire to make change, can be challenging and difficult. We must take inspiration and motivation from seeing the successes that our municipalities have achieved, many of which were shared in Digby. Be bold and be assured that the Board, committees, and staff are here to support you.

So, what does liftoff mean for us? It is the idea that the sky has no limit. It is providing services to residents while, at the same time, asking is there a better way to do this. Or it is Guysborough taking the initiative to ensure that their region is “open for business,” which in turn will create the first commercial spaceport in Canada.

We have many difficult questions in front of us and certainly many pressing issues that are increasingly complex and urgent. At the same time, we have the imagination to grasp the unique opportunities that await us. Strap in and embrace the creativity that emerges from asking “why not?” instead of “what now?”

*Sometimes the road
to change, and
the desire to make
change, can be
challenging
and difficult*



From Vision to Reality

By CEO Juanita Spencer

As I reflect on our recent gathering in Digby, I realize how fortunate NSFAM is to have the support and engagement of all municipalities in Nova Scotia. We proudly represent the municipally elected leaders from every corner of this province who are tasked with preparing their communities for the future. NSFAM is a benefactor of their passion and drive for a better tomorrow and we are a stronger organization because of the involvement of our members.

I look forward to our conferences each spring and fall because, aside from the formal program, it is an opportunity for the NSFAM team to listen to and learn from our members. We come away amazed at how municipalities are embracing opportunities and navigating their challenges. It is the willingness of the members to engage with NSFAM that makes our conversations on issues like consolidation, code of conduct, climate action, and quality of life so valuable and important to our work.

With the recent Spring Conference in the rear-view mirror, we look forward to an important Fall Conference, in November. The conference committee has lined up an exciting and informative program that will

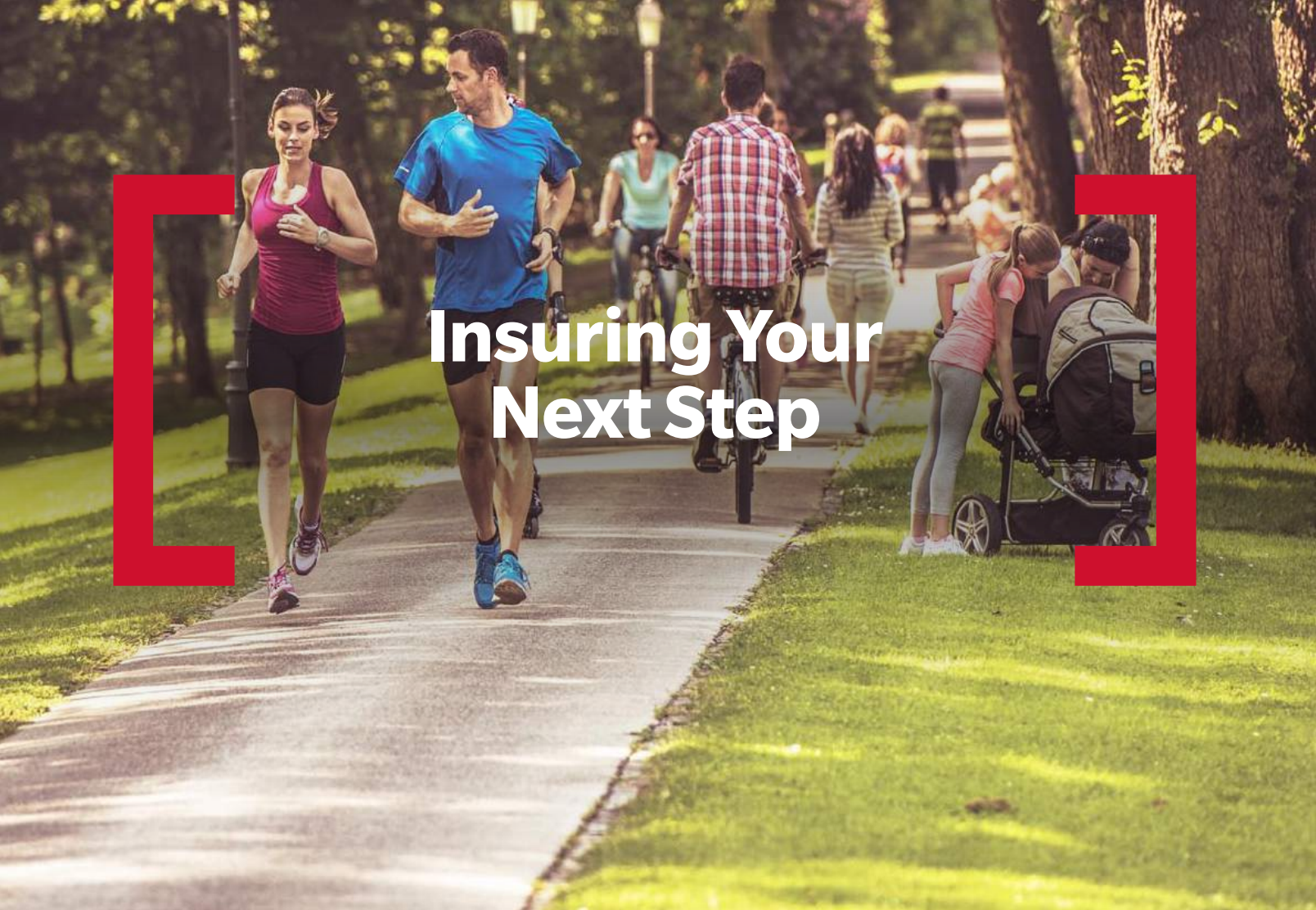
open the door to even more important and challenging conversations. Members will also continue to see the role out of NSFAM's new direction with the election of a new board, appointment of Advisory Committees, and adoption of guiding principles.

By creating ways to allow for deeper and more meaningful engagement with our members, we will be more effective

These initiatives create an opportunity for organizational renewal and development of a road map that will allow members to navigate what lies ahead. This is exciting because we will more effectively tap into our individual and collective strengths and, at the same time, enhance our potential.

Liftoff, the theme of this edition of the *Municipal Observer*, exemplifies our mission to enable effective local government by facilitating collaboration, education, and strategic advocacy. This embodies our work, which is the ability to think deeply and critically about what we do, question ourselves to imagine a better path, and prepare for takeoff to new horizons. By creating ways to allow for deeper and more meaningful engagement with our members, we will be more effective.

Working together we can turn our vision into reality.



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Nova Scotia's Western Regional Enterprise Network working with business owners to secure their transition

What happens to your business when you're ready to retire? It's an important question that's in the back of every business owner's mind and becomes more important over time. Whether business owners plan to leave everything to family, train someone to take over or sell, it's necessary the steps are in place for succession as owners prepare to move on.

Without a clear succession plan, many businesses simply close their doors after the original owner moves on. Not only is this unfortunate, but it also wastes resources and usually affects the livelihood of many people. In a regional community, the impact is far-reaching. Keeping these businesses open after a transition keeps money and youth in our rural communities, attracts people to the region and promotes innovation.

Western REN delivers the Business Transition Program to provide help and direction throughout the steps of succession covering stages from in-depth analysis to planning and execution. Currently, the Western REN works with businesses at various levels of preparedness.

Since the Business Transition Program launched in 2019, 23 companies have participated. Western REN has a vetted list of consultants who work with business owners to develop their Succession Plan, which can include organizational and financial restructuring, IT upgrades and physical re-organization of the workplace. In addition to succession planning, consultants can also determine the value of the operation, develop a marketing plan and promote/advertise the business.

Chuck Callishaw, owner of Chuck's Diner in Yarmouth, participated in the program and went on to sell his business.

"The Succession Planning program was a wonderful program that was well worth my time," says Callishaw. "The project helped me to evaluate the worth of my business in today's market with very little effort."



Many business owners are integral to the operation, often without a substitute who can cover their responsibilities. They are not usually able to dedicate time and effort to projects that are very important but peripheral to the day-to-day operation, like succession planning. Western REN steps in to help with planning so owners can still focus on running their businesses.

Another participant in the program was Randy Co-meau, owner of R.C. Communications Inc.

"The Succession Planning Program was such a huge help to me. I cannot thank everyone involved enough for the help and guidance with the succession of my business."

The Business Transition Program is a key part of Western REN's strategy to promote and develop businesses in the area. While giving owners a chance to secure the future of their business, the program also gives them a chance to refresh and reorganize their operations. This is a program Western REN is keen to continue developing in the coming years.

"It's never too early to plan your exit," says Western REN CEO Angélique LeBlanc. "Ideally, a business is built for eventual sale right from start-up. Over the years, the more standard operating procedures are documented, the easier the eventual sale will be. By the time transition does roll around, it will make the process much easier for all parties involved."

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Nova Scotia's Regional Enterprise Networks (REN) guide and navigate regional economic development while providing support to businesses, operate as a connector among economic development partners, support business growth and retention, and provide regional leadership on economic priorities

Municipalities, First Nations, the Province of Nova Scotia, and regional business communities are all working together through the REN model, to strengthen regional economies

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Trash Talk: How Colchester County shared their experiences in waste

COLCHESTER COUNTY: Colchester County Mayor Christine Blair has returned from a trip to Jordan with FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities), where she has wrapped up her participation in the Jordan Municipal Support Project, sponsored by FCM.

“This is a project that started six years ago,” began Mayor Blair “Any FCM project comes under funding from Global Affairs Canada, and there must be a lot of negotiation before Canadians can travel to another country. Those negotiations were completed to determine what we could assist with, and what is something they need expertise on.”

“Colchester County was brought to the attention of FCM because of our solid waste, balefill, recycling, and compost facility which has been state of the art,” she continued. “It is something we have a lot of experience in, having worked on it for well over 20 years.

The councils of the day had a vision that this is what we need to do to be environmentally responsible. The facility is large and has a huge amount of experience behind it.”

Colchester County was asked to join the project—which began with a couple of councillors and their economic development officer going to Jordan to talk capacity, development, and governance of a project to the scale of what they had at home.

Twelve municipalities eventually made their way overseas to work with 99 Jordanian municipalities, running workshops, hosting information sessions, and otherwise engaging with colleagues about how to administer and fund projects of this scope. Colchester’s Manager of Solid Waste, Darlene Proctor, even did



The FCM team poses on arrival in Jordan, from left to right: Kathy Jeffery, Councillor, Collingwood, ON; Pascal Levoie, FCM Ottawa; Christine Blair, Mayor, Municipality of the County of Colchester; Randy Goulden, Councillor, Yorkton, Saskatchewan; Russell Smith, BC; Linda Glenday, CAO, Squamish, BC.

field work in Jordan, meeting with municipal units to talk about scheduling garbage pickup, where to find efficiencies, and working with sorters to streamline their processes.

“It was a lot of hands-on work,” said Mayor Blair. “One rural area we entered saw a large amount of people adopt backyard composting to begin their own gardening projects. One community started a rooftop garden to allow their whole building to plant and grow. It was quite phenomenal to be able to see what these communities had done.”

The business of solid waste collection is about coalescence of variables—finding ways to streamline processes and create as many efficiencies as possible. Mayor Blair and the FCM team spoke about the many cases where scheduling, pooling of resources (like a

centralized garage), and community education saw an increased participation in environmental stewardship in the participating regions.

“The project was very well received,” she said. “We were very well received and were treated extremely well. It was not just a matter of having peer municipalities in Jordan achieve goals—but the people that travelled to the country learned as well. Everybody learned something.”

“FCM was stellar in pairing us up with municipalities in Jordan and recognizing the value we could each bring to each other,” she concluded. “It was very well run, very well organized—fully funded by Global Affairs Canada, and all very positive for the participants.”

Climate Leadership among Nova Scotian Municipalities

Is your municipality concerned about climate change? Do your residents ask what is being done locally to address this concern? According to NSFM's new Advisory Committee on Climate Change "Municipalities can play a pivotal role in mitigating and adapting to climate change". Of course, many municipalities have long since realized this and have undertaken a great deal of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in Nova Scotia. Yet, much more can be done.

In recognition of the importance of this issue and a need to share innovative ideas throughout the province, NSFM developed the Climate Change Leaders Award in 2013. The award honours municipalities that have demonstrated exemplary leadership in climate change adaptation and/or mitigation through the implementation of initia-

tives and creation of awareness of climate-related issues. The objectives of the award program are to celebrate successes, encourage continuous action towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, support collaborative efforts, and share information among municipalities. Since 2013 NSFM has given 18 Climate Change Leaders Awards to 13 municipalities.

The Climate Change Leaders Award is presented annually at NSFM's Fall Conference. A call for applications for this year's award will occur this summer; consider nominating your municipality for its climate-related work. Information about this and past awards can be found on NSFM's website: <https://nsfm.ca/awards.html>.



Previous recipients of the Climate Change Leaders Award include:

- 2022: Town of New Glasgow for its *Net Zero New Glasgow Climate Action Program* and Halifax Regional Municipality for its *Municipal Electric Vehicle Strategy*
- 2021: Municipality of the District of Argyle for its *Net Zero Energy Administration Building*, Halifax Regional Municipality for *HalifACT* – its long-term climate action plan, and Municipality of the County of Kings for its *Green Municipal Campus*
- 2019: Municipality of Colchester for *Solar Colchester* – a community initiative designed to make renewable energy more accessible and affordable for residents
- 2018: Town of Bridgewater for *Energize Bridgewater* – a community-wide initiative to accelerate the community’s transition to a clean energy economy
- 2017: Town of Antigonish, Town of Berwick, and Town of Mahone Bay for their collaboration on the *Alternative Resource Energy Authority Wind Farm* in Ellershouse
- 2016: Municipality of Digby, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, Municipality of Shelburne, and Town of Bridgewater for their *Clean Energy Financing Programs*
- 2015: Municipality of the County of Antigonish for its collaboration on the climate change film: *Listening to Our Neighbours, Exploring a Changing Climate in Antigonish*
- 2014: Municipality of Digby for its biogas project that is turning mink waste into energy and Municipality of Shelburne for improvements to its wastewater treatment infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and incorporates climate change projections into the design
- 2013: Halifax Regional Municipality for its *Solar City Project*





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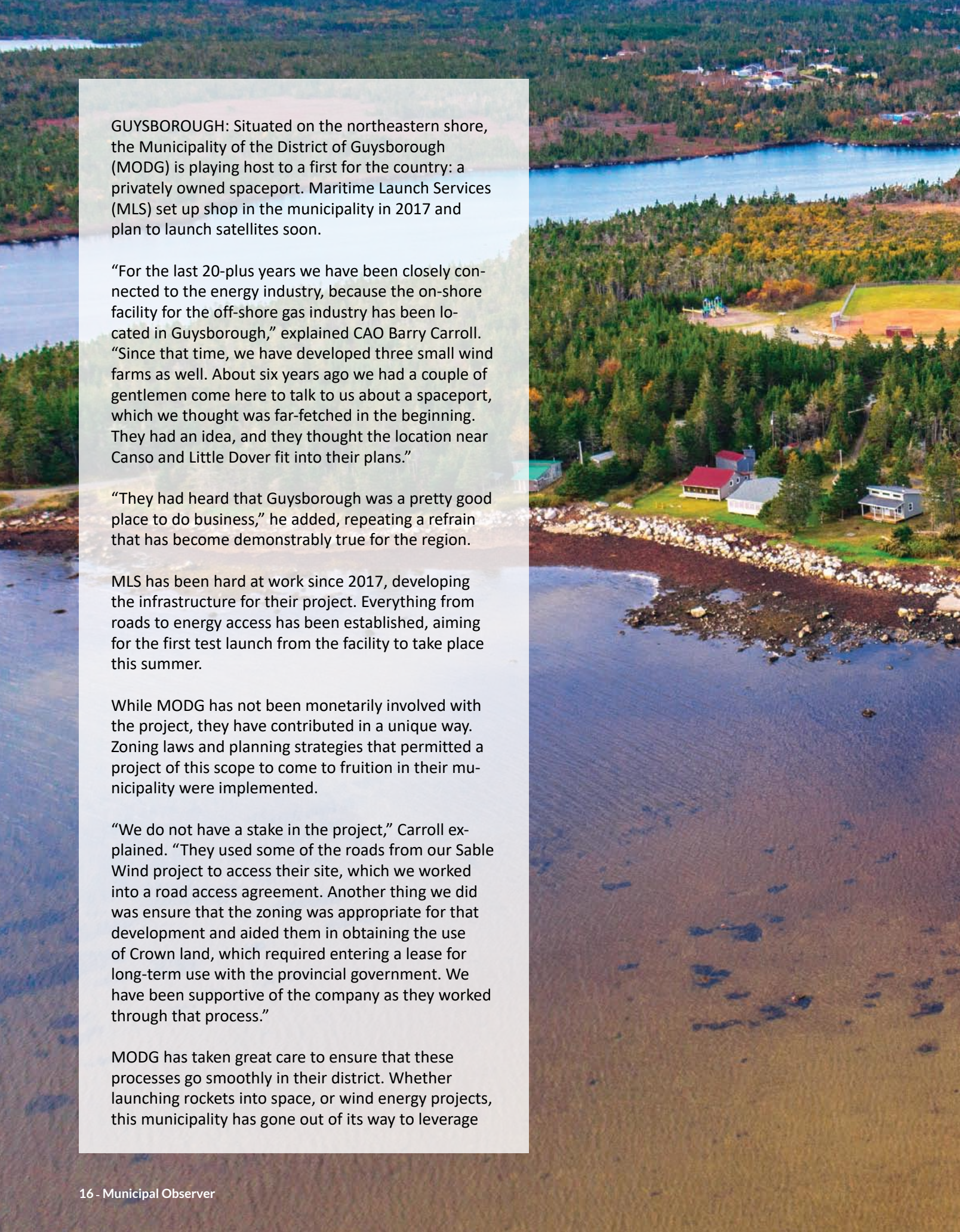
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Moonshot: Guysborough's regulatory environment is literally out of this world





An aerial photograph of a coastal town. In the foreground, there's a rocky shoreline with dark brown seaweed. A large body of water, likely a bay or inlet, is visible. In the middle ground, there's a baseball field with a green field and a brown infield. Several buildings, including a large white one with a red roof and a smaller grey one, are situated near the water. The background is filled with dense green and yellow trees, suggesting a forested area. The sky is clear and blue.

GUYSBOROUGH: Situated on the northeastern shore, the Municipality of the District of Guysborough (MODG) is playing host to a first for the country: a privately owned spaceport. Maritime Launch Services (MLS) set up shop in the municipality in 2017 and plan to launch satellites soon.

“For the last 20-plus years we have been closely connected to the energy industry, because the on-shore facility for the off-shore gas industry has been located in Guysborough,” explained CAO Barry Carroll. “Since that time, we have developed three small wind farms as well. About six years ago we had a couple of gentlemen come here to talk to us about a spaceport, which we thought was far-fetched in the beginning. They had an idea, and they thought the location near Canso and Little Dover fit into their plans.”

“They had heard that Guysborough was a pretty good place to do business,” he added, repeating a refrain that has become demonstrably true for the region.

MLS has been hard at work since 2017, developing the infrastructure for their project. Everything from roads to energy access has been established, aiming for the first test launch from the facility to take place this summer.

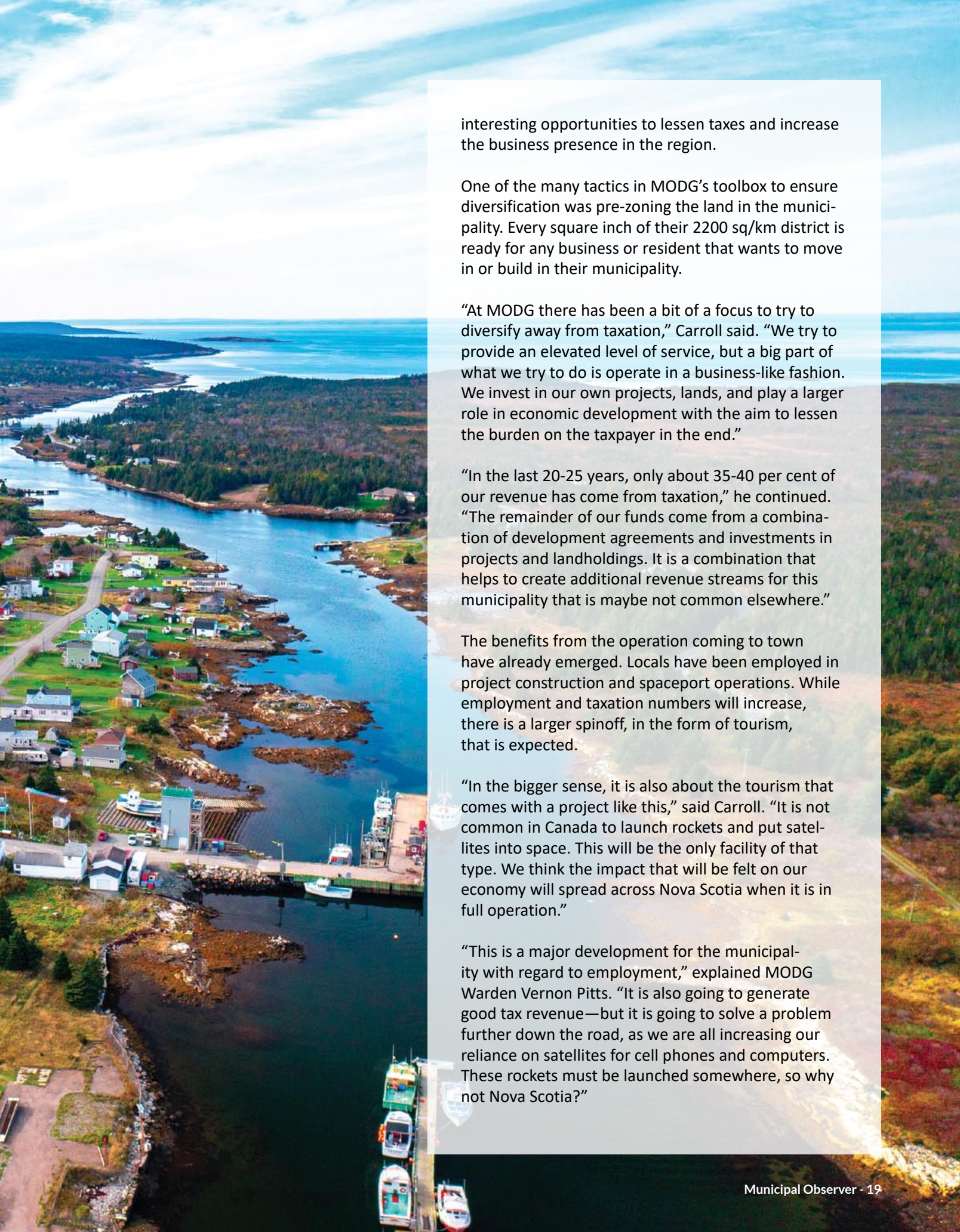
While MODG has not been monetarily involved with the project, they have contributed in a unique way. Zoning laws and planning strategies that permitted a project of this scope to come to fruition in their municipality were implemented.

“We do not have a stake in the project,” Carroll explained. “They used some of the roads from our Sable Wind project to access their site, which we worked into a road access agreement. Another thing we did was ensure that the zoning was appropriate for that development and aided them in obtaining the use of Crown land, which required entering a lease for long-term use with the provincial government. We have been supportive of the company as they worked through that process.”

MODG has taken great care to ensure that these processes go smoothly in their district. Whether launching rockets into space, or wind energy projects, this municipality has gone out of its way to leverage







interesting opportunities to lessen taxes and increase the business presence in the region.

One of the many tactics in MODG's toolbox to ensure diversification was pre-zoning the land in the municipality. Every square inch of their 2200 sq/km district is ready for any business or resident that wants to move in or build in their municipality.


"At MODG there has been a bit of a focus to try to diversify away from taxation," Carroll said. "We try to provide an elevated level of service, but a big part of what we try to do is operate in a business-like fashion. We invest in our own projects, lands, and play a larger role in economic development with the aim to lessen the burden on the taxpayer in the end."

"In the last 20-25 years, only about 35-40 per cent of our revenue has come from taxation," he continued. "The remainder of our funds come from a combination of development agreements and investments in projects and landholdings. It is a combination that helps to create additional revenue streams for this municipality that is maybe not common elsewhere."

The benefits from the operation coming to town have already emerged. Locals have been employed in project construction and spaceport operations. While employment and taxation numbers will increase, there is a larger spinoff, in the form of tourism, that is expected.

"In the bigger sense, it is also about the tourism that comes with a project like this," said Carroll. "It is not common in Canada to launch rockets and put satellites into space. This will be the only facility of that type. We think the impact that will be felt on our economy will spread across Nova Scotia when it is in full operation."

"This is a major development for the municipality with regard to employment," explained MODG Warden Vernon Pitts. "It is also going to generate good tax revenue—but it is going to solve a problem further down the road, as we are all increasing our reliance on satellites for cell phones and computers. These rockets must be launched somewhere, so why not Nova Scotia?"

An aerial photograph of a coastal town. The foreground shows a marina with several boats docked at a wooden pier. The middle ground features a cluster of colorful houses (red, blue, green, white) with green lawns, interspersed with trees. The background is dominated by a dense forest of trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the light from the sky.

“We have done very well over the years from offshore energy, and we invested a lot of that money back into our community,” he said. “It just so happened that things lined up well—but it really comes down to planning. If you do not plan for the future, you plan for failure.”

“We went to our residents when creating planning documents,” he said. “The people decided what they wanted, and we etched that into legislation and moved forward. We had residents that understood what we were trying to achieve, who really bought into our process.”

“I have been on council for 29 years this coming October,” said Warden Pitts. “When I first came on council, we did not have the money in our budget to recover a chair in the lunchroom. Those times have changed, and I have to put it down to planning and having skilled staff. At MODG we are a team. Our CAO, directors, and employees are a huge part of our success.”

“I hope to see the first launch this summer, I think it will be phenomenal,” he continued. “We have apartment buildings going up, a subdivision which started a few years ago, and this year we moved ahead with phase two. All of this generates revenue and generates people who utilize our services, schools, hospital, and recreation complexes. We are fortunate. One feeds the other. Good planning leads to good business relationships, which leads to more residents, which means a lowered tax rate.”

What can other municipalities do when thinking about changing how they plan? “Hire the best person for the job and give them the latitude to do what needs to be done,” advised Warden Pitts. “Do not micromanage your staff, trust them to do what needs to be done. Allow them the opportunity to do it in the way you want it done. It comes down to trust and knowledge”.

“I am looking forward to the future,” he concluded. “Things are going to change dramatically in our municipality. This year we have put in several sidewalks which is going to tie in our hospitals, malls, coffee shops, and businesses. We have fantastic trails. It is a team effort, and the team is from the resident on the street, to the CAO, to the warden.”

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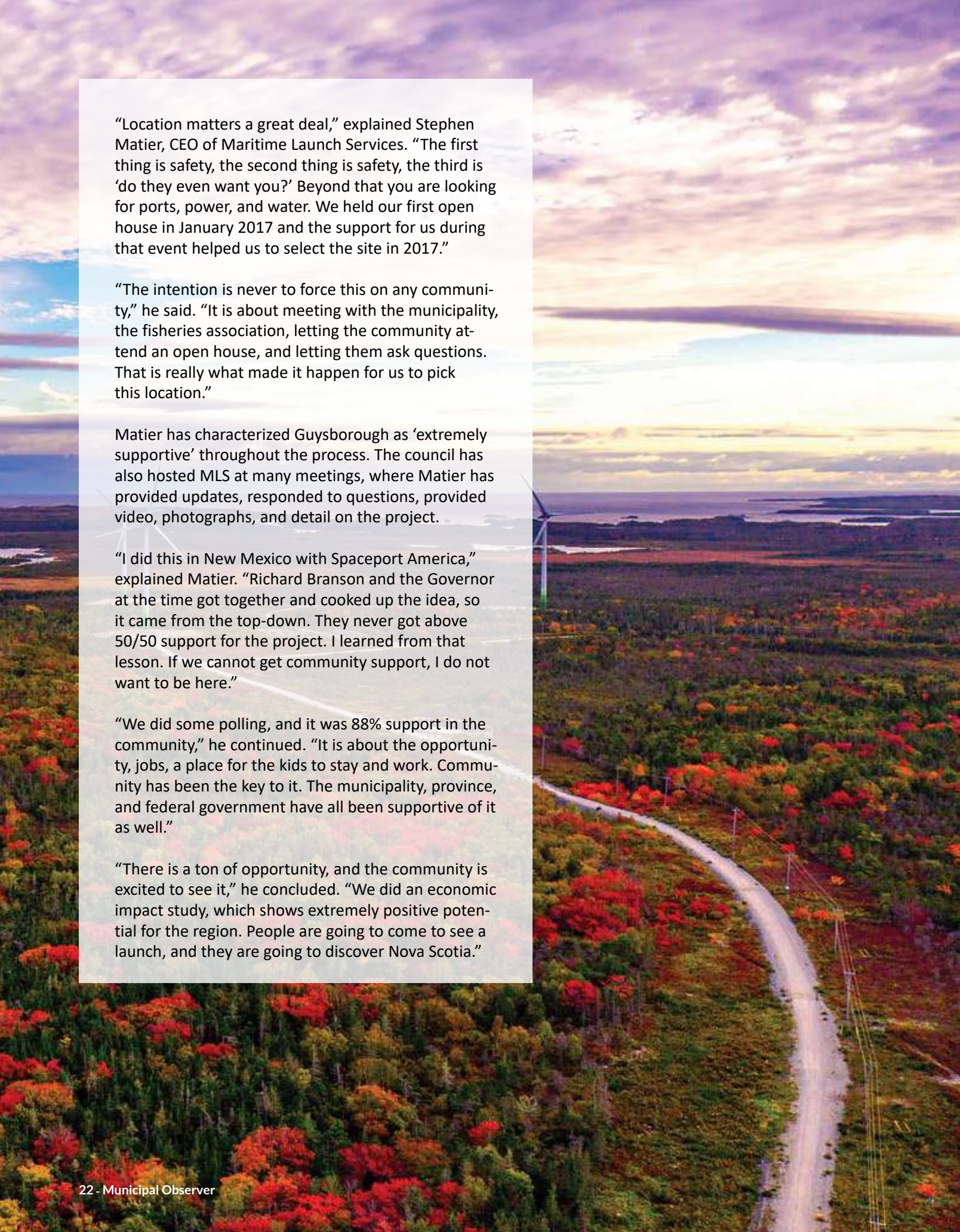
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“Location matters a great deal,” explained Stephen Matier, CEO of Maritime Launch Services. “The first thing is safety, the second thing is safety, the third is ‘do they even want you?’ Beyond that you are looking for ports, power, and water. We held our first open house in January 2017 and the support for us during that event helped us to select the site in 2017.”

“The intention is never to force this on any community,” he said. “It is about meeting with the municipality, the fisheries association, letting the community attend an open house, and letting them ask questions. That is really what made it happen for us to pick this location.”

Matier has characterized Guysborough as ‘extremely supportive’ throughout the process. The council has also hosted MLS at many meetings, where Matier has provided updates, responded to questions, provided video, photographs, and detail on the project.

“I did this in New Mexico with Spaceport America,” explained Matier. “Richard Branson and the Governor at the time got together and cooked up the idea, so it came from the top-down. They never got above 50/50 support for the project. I learned from that lesson. If we cannot get community support, I do not want to be here.”

“We did some polling, and it was 88% support in the community,” he continued. “It is about the opportunity, jobs, a place for the kids to stay and work. Community has been the key to it. The municipality, province, and federal government have all been supportive of it as well.”

“There is a ton of opportunity, and the community is excited to see it,” he concluded. “We did an economic impact study, which shows extremely positive potential for the region. People are going to come to see a launch, and they are going to discover Nova Scotia.”

Preparing municipalities for coastal flooding from storms now and in the future

Coastal flooding and erosion in Atlantic Canada have always been a concern, but never more so than now as climate change is impacting the region more frequently and intensely than ever before.

Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) dedicated team of coastal mapping researchers have developed an online tool to help Maritime Canadians prepare for coastal flooding. Combining years of mapping data from past projects with high-resolution elevation data collected from an aircraft equipped with lidar technology, NSCC's Applied Geomatics Research Group (AGRG) has constructed an online flood risk mapping system.

AGRG has been conducting flood studies for coastal communities for many years now. They share their data with municipalities, provincial governments, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Emergency Management Office of Nova Scotia to help them predict what past benchmark storms would look like in the future with increased sea-level rise and possible storm surges that occur today.

The online mapping tool can supplement other provincial flood risk assessment resources as it can be applied to coastal estuaries during storm surge events and can examine long term sea-level rise. AGRG Research Scientist, Dr. Tim Webster, explains how their system fills gaps and addresses this critical information.

"There are many factors to consider when predicting coastal flooding, such as the predicted tide, storm surge, and total water levels. Our web-based system links all the data in one place to simplify the process for users. Municipalities can increase the sea-level to examine what will be flooded decades from now. This is extremely useful when looking at vulnerable infrastructure or planning new infrastructure that is expected to have a lifespan of over 50 years. One of the biggest impacts for Atlantic Canada from climate change will be increased sea-level rise."

The mapping system can also be used to learn more about approaching storms and hurricanes on the coast. The online tool links predicted tide and storm surge, up to 10 days in advance. There is an option to overlay the flood layer with critical infrastructure like

roads, locations of emergency services, and continuing care facilities to determine if they will be inundated and at risk of flooding. Using lidar data, AGRG has constructed these coastal flood maps for eight Nova Scotia municipalities.

There is a lack of geographically diverse observations of high-water events from storm surges in the region. For example, Halifax, Yarmouth, Port Hawkesbury, and Sydney are the only communities in Nova Scotia that have active tide gauges measuring sea levels. "This lack of data is a problem when we try and calculate the return period of such events using extreme value analysis statistics," says Dr. Webster. "I encourage municipalities to contact provincial representatives to lobby to have your coastal flood risk layers built and added to our online flood risk map. I also suggest installing a water level pressure sensor at your local wharf to measure sea levels. This technology can be purchased for under \$1,000."

AGRG's mapping system was in high demand leading up to and following Hurricane Fiona, which made landfall on September 24, 2022. The predictive water level models were quite accurate. NSCC coastal researchers were shocked by the power of the storm which resulted in a significant amount of damage to coastal features and one of the highest storm surges observed in the region. In the 20 years Dr. Webster has been mapping and documenting such events, the erosion and flooding from Hurricane Fiona were the worst he has seen. With this at top of mind, the plan is to continue making improvements on the AGRG mapping system.

"With additional funding, we will be able to add hydrodynamic models that account for local bathymetry, which is underwater elevation. Using our topo-bathymetric lidar, we can acquire the additional near-shore bathymetry and start modelling waves and wave runup that currently are not part of the system."

Ultimately, AGRG wants to help all Nova Scotians and Atlantic Canadians better prepare for coastal flooding now and in the future. The more observations we have of storm surge events, the better we can calculate and understand the risk.

Update on the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund

This spring, 28 community organizations and institutions in Nova Scotia will receive millions of dollars for local action on climate change, through the first round of the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (SCCF). Funding will go to projects that will support community efforts to reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions, or to prepare for and respond to the impacts of a changing climate. Eligible organizations include First Nations communities, municipalities, post-secondary institutions, and registered non-profit organizations.

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities began administering the SCCF in early 2022 on behalf of the provincial Department of Environment and Climate Change. SCCF is a goal of the Nova Scotia *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* and is financed through the Green Fund. The first call for applications was held in late 2022 and successful grant recipients will be announced soon.

Interest in the first round of funding was tremendous. The fund received over 100 applications. Communities clearly demonstrated they are ready to take local action on climate change. Diverse organizations throughout Nova Scotia will implement a wide range of climate action projects they have determined are important to them. The full list of funding recipients will be available at the SCCF website.

Four municipalities have been tentatively selected to receive funding, representing approximately 17% of the disbursement for this round. Three of the selected projects will reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions and one adaptation project will help prepare for the impacts of

climate change. Projects are at different stages, from strategy to feasibility to construction, and reflect a wide range of priorities and opportunities for local climate action.

The overall portfolio of applications and grant recipients provide interesting insight on how local climate action is taking shape in Nova Scotia:

- A significant number of projects will be undertaken in rural communities.
- An equitable climate response is important to many organizations.
- There is strong interest in mitigation efforts, including energy efficient building design and retrofits, infrastructure for electric vehicles, and on-site energy generation.
- Environmental non-profits are leading the charge on nature-based adaptation solutions.
- Water is a central theme for adaptation and the project portfolio features coastlines, groundwater, waterways, and wetlands.
- There are a few groups of people throughout Nova Scotia who are building networks and a shared vision for climate adaptation, but generally communities are in the early stages of building adaptive capacity.

The SCCF is off to an exciting start and staff are looking forward to improvements to the applicant experience for the second round. Announcements will be made in late spring. Until then, please join our mailing list to receive updates: www.nschallengefund.ca/contact/



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Our commitment to providing safe, reliable service to our customers

Electricity is an essential part of our everyday lives. When we flip the switch, we expect our lights to come on. We rely on it to live, work, and play. Providing safe, reliable service to you, our customers, is a responsibility our team of 2000+ employees at NS Power takes very seriously.

Our team works from Yarmouth to Wreck Cove and every community in between, to make sure customers across the province have power when they need it. This includes proactive work to prevent future power outages and strengthen our electrical system. Each year, we invest about \$180 million in new equipment, upgrades, and refurbishments, as well as tree trimming province wide.

These can be large capital projects or smaller in scope, but all contribute to improving the reliability of service for our customers. Here are some examples of the work we do every day to maintain, strengthen, and continue to improve the essential service we provide Nova Scotians.

Pictou Causeway

This spring crews worked on strengthening a transmission line at the Pictou Causeway that serves over 5,000 customers in the area. They have safely replaced old concrete power poles along the Causeway with new fiberglass poles, while the lines were live to avoid interrupting power to our customers. These fiberglass poles are more durable and resistant to coastal weather, as well as severe weather conditions. They also installed devices, called bird flight diverters, on our transmission lines to protect birds.

These devices help prevent birds from flying into our powerlines and from potentially causing outages for our customers in the area.

Chester and Hubbards Areas

Crews have also been working on strengthening an important powerline in the Chester area. This powerline runs from our substation in Hubbards to the Chester Area and provides safe and reliable power to over 2,200 customers. And since this is the primary line that serves customers in the area, it's important we regularly maintain it. Crews have been rebuilding the line and replacing poles, with more modern and higher quality structures. This work is also being safely done without interrupting power to customers in the surrounding areas, to ensure we keep them connected.

Coxheath Road in Sydney, Cape Breton

For the past three years, we've been upgrading our equipment in Sydney, Cape Breton to improve our system and update our infrastructure. Crews have been working on a section of powerline on Coxheath Road since 2019, as part of a long-term planned investment to improve reliability for customers. They have safely replaced approximately 70 poles that are about 50 years old—all while the lines are still live, to avoid interrupting power to over 4,300 customers in the area. They've installed new poles that are taller, higher quality, and up to current standards. This will help our system better stand up to extreme weather conditions and be more resilient during extreme weather

and storms. All of which helps prevent outages for our customers in the area. We are also upgrading the powerlines to higher voltage lines, to meet the increasing demand for electricity on Coxheath Road. With more customers moving into this area, and the increasing adoption of energy-efficient products—like heat pumps and electric water heaters—customer demand for electricity continues to grow. Not only will these upgrades help more customers adopt more electric products, and move off oil or wood, they will also accommodate the increasing number of electric vehicles on the road in Cape Breton. This will make it much easier for Cape Bretoners to drive electric and lower their carbon footprint from driving by up to 50 per cent.

The Cogswell District Project

In collaboration with Halifax Regional Municipality, our crews worked in downtown Halifax where the Cogswell Interchange now stands—this will one day be a new neighbourhood, connecting downtown to the north end. To serve this new neighbourhood, we've been adding brand new underground lines, from Duke Street to Cornwallis Street, and bringing about 1.5 km of overhead lines underground.

Tree Trimming

Another critical area of work is vegetation management. Tree contacts are the single largest cause of power outages in the province. Each year we invest an average of \$20-25 million in vegetation management to support tree trimming and tree maintenance across Nova Scotia. We clear trees and branches from about 1000km of powerline each year. That's about the same distance from Halifax to Quebec City.

As storms are becoming more frequent and severe, we've increased the investment in vegetation management throughout the province, with plans to spend \$32 million this year (2023) on transmission and distribution right-of-way widening and establishing new rights-of-way where they previously did not exist. Going forward, our plans will include increasing our tree trimming investment year over year, and

nearly doubling our annual investment over the next five years to continue to improve reliability.

Work is prioritized based on the proximity of trees and branches and on areas that experience a larger number of outages caused by trees. This work is year-round and varies across the province. We work with each municipality, community, and individual land-owners on tree trimming, as well as what trees work well near power lines. These working relationships are essential in order to make that work happen. Ideally, we try to keep trees away from lines to reduce the risk of trees or branches coming into contact with them. The ideal distance for reliability of power are areas where we can expand the right of ways and ensure no trees within 20 feet on either side. We have also launched a new tool on our website so you can learn more about who we're working to prevent outages in your area by visiting our tree trimming map: nspower.ca/trees.

Progress

Even amid the busiest storm year in nearly two decades, including Hurricane Fiona which was the most severe storm in Nova Scotian history, investments in strengthening the grid and reliability last year (2022), led to an approximately 15% improvement in both the length and frequency of outages, when compared to 2019 results – post Hurricane Dorian. Our plans for 2023 will continue to build on this work. It will focus on more investments to continue improving the reliability of service, which will include tree trimming and equipment upgrades.

We recognize the challenges caused by power outages and the impact they can have on our customers. We are working to reduce all power outages whether they're related to storms or other factors. Our customers expect and deserve safe, reliable service, and we are committed to delivering that every day.

For more information on how we are improving and strengthening our grid, visit nspower.ca/reliability.



Powering our communities.

We're dedicated to powering your day.

From making electricity in our plants, to strengthening the system that delivers power to your door, to supporting communities as they grow, we're dedicated to powering Nova Scotia, together.



Find out more at:
nspower.ca/reliability





CN's Dangerous Goods Officers lead a training exercise with local first responders.



Working together

with our neighbouring communities for the safety and well-being of all.

cn.ca/delivering-responsibly



CN employees help weed and repair community garden beds in Montreal.