



Windsor resident Mildred Smiley is very pleased with the quality of her new tap water.

Windsor Water Treatment Plant

"Our clear, tasty water is quite a topic of conversation in town and at every barbeque," said Doug Fraser.

"The first thing that you notice is when you pour a glass of water, it is so perfectly clear and the taste has very much improved," said Windsor resident Mildred Smiley. "Before we always filtered our water for tea, coffee, for everything. And I don't have to clean my sink half as often."

Doug Fraser, who also lives in town, adds that in the 32 years that he has lived there, he had never seen the water so nice. "We can now put ice cubes in our refrigerator and not have a yellow spot in the middle," said Fraser. "Our clear, tasty water is quite a topic of conversation in town and at every barbeque."

There's only one small price for the improved water quality – a reduction in quantity. Before the new plant, the town was drawing unlimited water from the Mill Brook River. "We do have a limited supply now," said Beatty. Nevertheless, he says, "we can produce 1.5 million gallons per day, which is almost twice our normal consumption, so we have a fair bit of room for growth."

Fred Fox, Windsor's Fire Chief, adds that he is pleased with the large storage capacity. "It would take a major incident to give us a problem," said Fox. "With the previous system, almost every time the fire department used a considerable volume of water from a hydrant, we would stir-up Mrs. Smiley's water and everyone else's." But the new reduction in sediment should solve the problem.

Beatty feels there's still work to be done on restoring confidence in drinking Windsor's tap water, but with water quality now exceeding the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines, and with its greatly improved taste and clarity, the Town of Windsor can be confident that it is successfully delivering safe drinking water. "It has been a long and huge process. Something like this water project does not happen overnight," said Mayor Allen. "But we are proud of our water treatment plant. This plant is vitally important to us."

It's the talk of the town. Residents of the spot famous for being the birthplace of hockey are dropping the topic of pucks to chat instead about water. Clean water.

Eleven years ago, there were concerns about the quality of Windsor's drinking water. Anna Allen, Mayor of Windsor, recalls back in 1991 a visitor commenting on how lovely the town was but that their water was terrible. "I never forgot that comment," said Mayor Allen, "I became a strong supporter of having this water treatment plant."

"Water treatment has been a big topic going back three councils," adds Don Beatty, Director of Public Works for Windsor. "It was the previous council that gave it the go ahead and set the ground rules, and the current council bit the bullet and authorized the funding and the rate increases necessary to fund the project."

The project was not affordable without external funding because the water rates were near the provincial average. Thanks to funding from the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, a new water treatment plant has become a reality. Joint federal/provincial funding of more than \$2.5 million was awarded in August 2001. Construction of the water treatment plant was completed in September 2002.

The council chose to model the new plant on a Port Hardy, B.C. design that uses a process called dissolved air floatation. Mayor Allen spoke with the Mayor of Port Hardy and asked about the public reaction to their new water plant. The Port Hardy Mayor said that within days, residents called and commented on how great the water was. "I was hoping for the same reaction and bingo, we got it," said Mayor Allen. "We are very pleased with the water quality now."



A Message from the Honourable Gerry Byrne

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I'd like to welcome you to the premier issue of *Communities First*—the newsletter of the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program. It is here that you can look forward to reading updates on the Program's progress.

But perhaps more importantly, this is where you can read about the tangible effects of the Program on the communities it serves throughout Nova Scotia. The Government of Canada is dedicated to improving the quality of life of Nova Scotians by addressing their infrastructure needs. This newsletter is a forum for the stories of the lives the Program is affecting on a daily basis.

Projects have been funded in every Nova Scotia county in both urban and rural areas, and there are still many more in the works. Enhancing the environment, supporting long-term growth and improving community infrastructure—these are the cornerstones of a great partnership that continues to put our communities first.

Gerry Byrne
Minister of State for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Hubbards Point Community Centre



Maureen Foster took this photo of her son Andrew's eighth birthday party at the centre in April.

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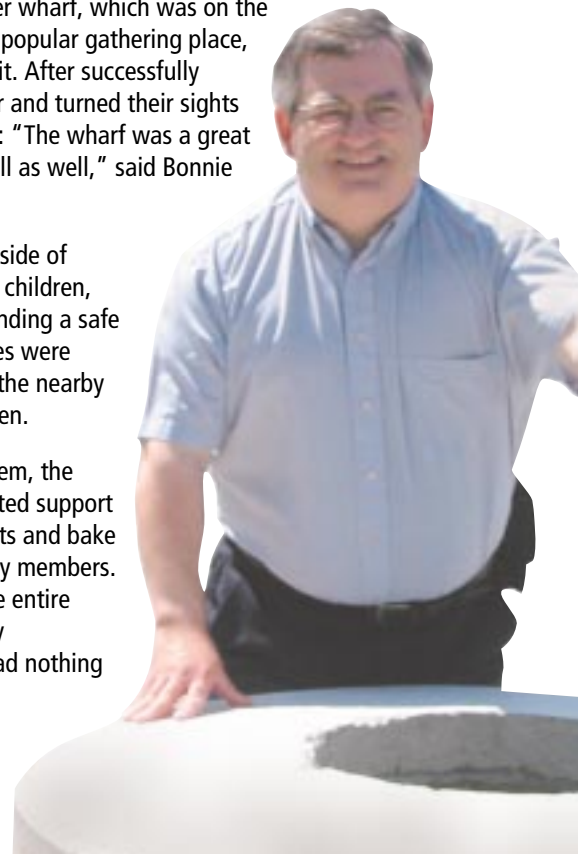
It is said that good things come in small packages. At only \$27,000, the Hubbards Point Community Centre Project is one of the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program's smallest investments to date; yet at the same time, the project packs a very big community impact. Nestled amongst the trees on a quiet rural junction, the facility's official opening was celebrated in August to much fanfare and fireworks. And there was a lot to celebrate. As local residents will tell you, the road was a long and often bumpy one indeed.

Born and raised in Hubbards Point, Greg Foster started the Hubbards Point Community Association in 1998 with a view to saving their local Tusket River wharf, which was on the verge of being dismantled or sold. The wharf was a popular gathering place, and the local population was anxious to hang onto it. After successfully securing the wharf, they took the idea a step further and turned their sights on the possibility of a year-round community centre: "The wharf was a great start and we thought it would be good to have a hall as well," said Bonnie Durkee, association vice-president.

Hubbards Point is a bedroom community of 250 outside of Yarmouth. Populated largely by young couples with children, community members faced a constant struggle of finding a safe and fun place to hold family-oriented events. Choices were limited to travelling long distances, or using one of the nearby facilities with open bars – not ideal for young children.

With the community and local businesses behind them, the association got to work. For four years, Foster solicited support and staged fundraising activities such as flea markets and bake sales attended by local and neighbouring community members. Local businesses supplied items to raffle off, and the entire community got involved: "The community gave very generously...everybody felt strongly about it. We had nothing

Association President Greg Foster shows off the Hubbards Point Community Centre's new 16' well.





here for us and it was amazing how much people donated. By donating and buying as well, they often gave twice," said Ms. Durkee.

The group raised about \$20,000 through their efforts, and finally with enough funds in hand, they were ready for construction. A special committee designed the building, and used mainly local carpenters to do the work. In May 2001 they started clearing the donated land, and by May 2002 the building was complete. But there was one last piece of the puzzle remaining before the centre could open its doors – they still needed a well and septic system, so the association applied for funding from the Infrastructure Program.

"We put it together \$30,000 at a time. It took many different partners to make it happen," said Foster, proudly showing the finished centre.

With the doors finally open, the community has embraced the centre, and bookings are made several months in advance. A Canada Day celebration, kids birthday parties, a safe graduation event and TOPS weightwatching club meetings are just some of the events that have taken place so far. Future plans include a CAP site and regular youth programming. "This is the first time we've ever had anything like this in the community. My parents never had something like this," said Gary Muise, accountant and volunteer bookkeeper for the association.

Bonnie Durkee credits Greg Foster's tireless determination with the centre's success. And there's more here than meets the eye, beyond a building and a happy community: "Not only is it a good place for the children, but the whole process set a good example for them," said Durkee. "Watching the community working together to pull something like this together... it helps them see the possibilities."

Little Dover Sewer Project

Who knows better than locals about what their communities need?

The infrastructure Program was designed to give communities first choice at picking projects they recognize as priorities for them and them alone. It's all about fitting the shoe to the foot. As October rains poured down on the freshly-landscaped properties of the tiny seaside community of Little Dover, Municipal Councillor Janet Peitzsche and fellow citizens Alcide (Acke) Myatt and Cal Harnish proudly told the story of the award-winning wastewater collection and treatment project that was right for them.

When Peitzsche first entered council in 1997, she came across an interesting file while sorting through her newly-inherited papers. Included in the documents was a letter to the Municipality of Guysborough dated in 1975 requesting funding for a new sewer and water system for the village.

The request was based on a 1974 pollution control study that found a water contamination problem due to the close proximity of on-site waste disposal to wells throughout the little village.

Unfortunately, as the documents revealed, the project proposal had little chance of surviving at that time: "In 1974 the village had a higher employment rate and could afford the project," she explained. "Unfortunately at the time, the government couldn't."

Years later, the bottom fell out of a second attempt to revive the proposal with the 1989 downturn in the fisheries. This time the government was in a position to provide funding, but the community no longer could.

Recognizing that the contamination problem was still very much with them, Janet Peitzsche renewed the cause and with the support of council and staff formed a steering committee to get the project going. Because the combined sewage/water proposal was



A Message from the Honourable Angus MacIsaac, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Welcome to the first issue of *Communities First*, Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program's informative newsletter.

As the provincial minister responsible for implementing the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, I am extremely pleased with the investments being made to improve the quality of life for all Nova Scotians.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program is an excellent example of how all levels of government can work together for the greater good. It is a testament to our collective commitment to improving the health and prosperity of Nova Scotians.

We knew partnerships would be critical to our progress and to Nova Scotia's economic growth. By taking a long-term approach, the Program is demonstrating leadership and vision.

The primary focus of the Infrastructure Program is "green" projects that will protect or enhance the quality of our environment, such as potable water, waste and wastewater systems and improved air quality. To date, more than 98% of Program funding has been invested in "green" projects. These investments clearly demonstrate our commitment to the health and safety of our communities.

I am confident that readers will find this newsletter *Communities First* informative and interesting.



Little Dover Wins Municipal InNOVAward

Little Dover is the first-ever recipient of the municipal government innovation award for its design of a sewer project to solve a longstanding water and sewage disposal problem. The Municipal InNOVAward was conceived by the Nova Scotia government to recognize innovative approaches to delivering municipal programs and services.

Congratulations Little Dover!

"This has been a struggling community for years and years. We needed to find an economical way to do this." — Janet Peitzsche

cost-prohibitive, they changed their scope to sewer only: "This has been a struggling community for years and years. We needed to find an economical way to do this," said Peitzsche. The committee was working under the theory that removing contaminants from the soil would help the water problems take care of themselves.

The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations found a sewage system in Sutherlin, Oregon with a company called Orenco Systems Inc. that seemed to fit the bill. The committee flew west. One of the communities they visited had experienced the same contamination problems as Little Dover, and had successfully overcome the problem using a sand filtration system. The community's size and situation so perfectly mirrored Little Dover that the committee knew they had found their solution. Now they just had to be sure the village was on board.

In June 2001, the municipality held a community plebescite and received a return of 68% in favour of the project – the highest the province had ever seen. "This was the one [system] the people could afford," said a smiling Myatt. From there, they applied for funding to the Infrastructure Program.

As work commenced and contractors were brought in, Peitzsche relied more and more on Myatt and Harnish for advice: "Acke grew up here. Ninety-nine percent of the village's excavating holes and wells have been dug by him over the years. Nobody knows the ground here like he does." "The contractors thought the project couldn't be done here," said Myatt. "They thought the land was too rocky, but I knew there would be no trouble."

The work proceeded rapidly, without a hitch. As it turned out, there was nothing but praise on both ends of the deal. Antigonish Construction told Peitzsche that they'd never experienced such a welcoming, cooperative and uncomplaining community. Rumour has it that some residents even made sandwiches for the crews. "That's just who we are," said Peitzsche proudly.

Now with the final landscaping almost completed (with a little extra sod and gravel thrown in here and there for the helpful residents), the trio talk optimistically about their new system. Myatt admits that the community is a little sceptical that such a simple concept will actually work, but a professional measure of results is still a year away. Perhaps the rapid, marked difference in the smell of outskirt ditches will help convince them. And if that doesn't work, the 2002 Municipal InNOVAward they have just won for their innovative idea certainly should.



Little Dover project steering committee members, from left to right: Councillor Janet Peitzsche, Cal Harnish and Alcide Myatt.

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