



# Noteworthy

## **Automobile insurance reforms** *focus on cost reductions and fairness to consumers*

Two primary components in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Automobile Insurance reform package are cost reductions and fairness to consumers. Premier Roger Grimes, George Sweeney, Minister of Government Services and Lands, and Kelvin Parsons, Minister of Justice presented the reforms.

"Since all drivers are required by law to carry public liability insurance, it is incumbent on government to ensure that reasonable compensation is available at affordable and fair prices," said Premier Grimes. "By shifting the portion of this insurance which relates to the right to compensation for minor pain and suffering to an optional coverage, consumers will be guaranteed a 30 per cent reduction in their public liability insurance premiums."

The Premier continued: "This new option will be available for purchase at current prices. Rather than eliminate this type of coverage as in other jurisdictions, we have decided to continue to make it available to consumers. Consumers already have the option to purchase additional liability, accident benefits, collision and comprehensive coverage and to choose their deductibles."

"This is one of the most comprehensive insurance reform packages in recent history," stated Minister Sweeney. "Since I accepted this portfolio in February of this year, continued work on this file has been a priority. By combining the contents of Bill 28 with other fairness and cost initiatives, I believe we have achieved an excellent package for the people."

Minister Parsons said: "Through increased vigilance in monitoring insurance companies and giving consumers flexibility in choosing their insurance package, government has reached a balance. I believe the preservation of the rights of consumers is an important part of this proposal."

For more information on this reform package, please contact the Department of Government Services and Lands at (709) 729-4834, or visit the Automobile Insurance Reform Web site at <http://www.gov.nl.ca/gsl/>

## **LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT** *initialled*

Chief negotiators for the Labrador Inuit Association, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada recently initialled the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. This land claims and self-government agreement is the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada.

"The initialling of the agreement is a positive step forward for the economic and social development in our province's Aboriginal communities," said Premier Roger Grimes. "I am very pleased with the work this administration has done over the past number of years to make today's celebrations possible and pleased to keep another commitment made to the people of this province."

"It is with great joy and pride that I share in today's celebration," said Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Wally Andersen. "This is a great day for the Labrador Inuit and the people of this province. After many years of negotiations, a Final Agreement is in sight which will bring new opportunities to the Labrador Inuit and a new relationship with governments."

Copies of the Final Agreement and related documents are available at [www.gov.nl.ca/liacclaims](http://www.gov.nl.ca/liacclaims).

## **Community Accounts up for top national prize**

Community Accounts, a made-in-Newfoundland and Labrador information system that monitors well-being in communities, regions and the province as a whole, is vying for top prize in a national competition that recognizes public service excellence.

"This is certainly great news, and well-deserved," said Premier Roger Grimes. "Community Accounts is an innovative tool for social and economic policy development that other jurisdictions are looking to model. I congratulate the Community Accounts team for helping to position Newfoundland and Labrador as an innovator not only in the social policy field, but also in the world of information technology."

The IPAC Award for Innovative Management, established by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, recognizes excellence and outstanding achievement in the public service. Community Accounts is one of four finalists out of a field of 90 representing civil service organizations across Canada.

Community Accounts was developed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, Department of Finance, in partnership with Memorial University and the Strategic Social Plan. The Web-based system brings together information on a wide variety of topics including health, education, income, and employment, and is a key tool for the first ever Social Audit.

