

JANUARY 21, 2000

# Note-worthy



## ||| **Making our province** *a healthier place to live and breathe*

This week (January 17-23) is National Non-Smoking Week. As part of the provincial Tobacco Reduction Strategy, the province's Teen Tobacco Team began its tobacco awareness program with the launch of their first poster titled "It's Our Turn to be Heard." Its aim is to make young people aware of the Teen Tobacco Team and its goal is to help teens in the province kick the smoking addiction, or to prevent them from ever starting to smoke.

Posters have been distributed to every school in the province, all health care institutions and to many community groups. The Department of Health and Community Services has established a toll free number (1-877-330-TEEN) and an e-mail address (teentobaccoteam@mail.gov.nf.ca) so that teens from all parts of the province can touch base to discuss issues relating to tobacco.

This week Minister Roger Grimes congratulated the Heart Health Coalition and the management of three of the city's largest shopping centres for their leadership in adopting smoke-free policies. The Avalon Mall, Village Shopping Centre and Sobey's Square Shopping Centre will be adopting smoke-free policies as of May 1, 2000. Minister Grimes said that this positive action on the part of mall management is in line with the Provincial Tobacco Reduction Strategy.

Second hand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in Newfoundland and Labrador claiming an estimated 70 lives per year. Second hand smoke is responsible for sickness, disease and death among food service workers and for an estimated 8,000 cases of childhood illness in the province every year. ☞

## **ECONOMIC** momentum continues into 2000

Newfoundland and Labrador carried its economic momentum into the new century while leading the country in employment growth. Average monthly employment in 1999 reached 208,300, an increase of 5.3 per cent from 1998, according to Statistics Canada's most recent Labour Force Survey.

Premier Tobin said that economic growth was broadly-based led by offshore oil, the fishery, major project construction, tourism and consumer spending. The Premier said that high consumer spending is anticipated and that strong economic growth is generating new job opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It is encouraging to see that the unemployment rate has declined in all regions of the province. For example, the unemployment rate for the Burin Peninsula and South Coast declined by 4.6 per cent from December of last year and the rate for the Central Newfoundland - North East Coast by 4.0 per cent. There has also been a 8.4 per cent decline in the youth unemployment rate.

Statistics Canada also found that Newfoundland and Labrador led the country for new vehicle sales with an increase of 33.1 per cent to the end of November compared with the same period in 1998. ☞

## *Premier Shuffles Cabinet*

Premier Brian Tobin shuffled his Cabinet on January 13, 2000. Kelvin Parsons (MHA Burgeo & Lapoile) joined Cabinet as Minister of Justice. Ministers who assumed new portfolios are: Paul Dicks, Minister of Mines and Energy; Lloyd Matthews, Minister of Finance; Roger Grimes, Minister of Health and Community Services; and Joan Marie Aylward, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Percy Barrett retained his responsibilities as Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier, and assumed the additional role of Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy. Jim Walsh was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy. Paul Dicks is the Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy and Joan Marie Aylward is the Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy. ☞

