

Noteworthy

NEW ACT provides municipalities with greater say

Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs Joan Marie Aylward outlined a new Urban and Rural Planning Act for the province at a news conference on May 9th. The minister said the new Act gives municipalities greater freedom, flexibility and autonomy to more effectively manage their own affairs.

The Urban and Rural Planning Act is the enabling legislation which:

- establishes the province's land use planning system;
- allows the preparation of a range of planning documents;
- provides for their approval and implementation; and,
- provides for public input and an appeal process whereby development decisions can be subjected to independent review.

The new Act has taken into account a number of emerging issues such as the need for greater autonomy for municipalities, the desire for public involvement in the development of local planning policy, the need to provide a level of protection for private property rights, and the changing role of the department.

Minister Aylward said government recognizes that the future growth, development and prosperity of the province as a whole will depend upon strong and vibrant municipalities. ❧

Additional INTERNET ACCESS CENTRES established

The Department of Education, through the Canada/Newfoundland and Labrador Community Access Program, has established 16 new access centres in nine communities across the province in the past year. This brings the total number of Internet access centres in Newfoundland and Labrador to 121.

These centres provide public access to the Internet and guidance on using it effectively. Residents in 109 communities can use technology to develop their computer skills, access government information and education programs and communicate knowledge and ideas.

Through the financial participation of the Department of Human Resources and Employment and Industry Canada, access centres across the province will offer more than 75 new job opportunities for young people.

The communities include: Cape St. George, Eastport, Francois, Gambo, Greenspond, McCallum, Upper Island Cove, Westport and St. John's. ❧

Continued strong growth for Newfoundland and Labrador

The Bank of Montreal issued a new forecast last week that points to continued strong economic growth for the province.

The Bank of Montreal predicted that Newfoundland and Labrador will lead Canada in economic growth over the next five years with an average annual growth rate of 3.9 per cent.

"That's a very positive sign. It certainly helps us attract investment to the province," said Premier Tobin.

Alberta is forecast to post an average growth rate of 3.7 per cent. Ontario is expected to expand by an average of 3.5 per cent a year. ❧

