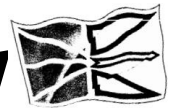


APRIL 20, 2001

Noteworthy



Select Committee on tobacco announced

Justice Minister Kelvin Parsons announced the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Assembly to hear opinions from interested groups regarding An Act to Provide for the Recovery of Tobacco Related Health Care Costs.

"Government recognizes the tremendous health care costs associated with the treatment of tobacco-related illnesses and that those costs constitute a significant burden on the fiscal resources of the province," the minister said. "That is why the Act to Provide for the Recovery of Tobacco Related Health Care Costs is so important."

The members of the select committee are:

Ross Wiseman, MHA, Trinity North, Chair
Wally Andersen, MHA, Torngat Mountains
Jack Harris, MHA, Signal Hill - Quidi Vidi
Yvonne Jones, MHA, Cartwright - L'Anse Au Clair
Eddie Joyce, MHA, Bay of Islands
John Ottenheimer, MHA, St. John's East
Loyola Sullivan, MHA, Ferryland

The committee will accept both oral and written submissions. Public hearings will be held in the House of Assembly between April 30 and May 8, 2001. Written submissions must be received by the committee no later than Friday, April 27, 2001. Persons wishing to make an oral submission are asked to make their request to the Clerk of the Committee no later than Monday, April 23, 2001.

Clerk of Committees, Clerk's Office, Main Floor, East Block
Confederation Building, St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
Telephone: (709) 729-3434 Fax: (709) 729-4820
Email: emurphy@mail.gov.nf.ca

National Volunteer Week APRIL 22-28

National Volunteer Week is being held from April 22-28 to recognize the importance of individuals who volunteer their time and energy to help others and their communities. This year has also been designated International Year of the Volunteer by the United Nations.

"Our volunteers are a precious resource and their work is essential to our well-being as a people and as a province," said Gerald Smith, minister responsible for the Strategic Social Plan (SSP). "There is no single factor that makes a greater contribution to vibrant, supportive communities than the selfless work of volunteers."

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians volunteer nearly 80 million hours each year. The dollar value of these efforts is about \$1.1 billion. The province's residents are the second largest per capita contributors of volunteer hours in the country - volunteers above the age of 15 contribute 3.25 hours per week compared to the Canadian average of 2.5.

Through the Strategic Social Plan, government has allocated \$100,000 to the Community Services Council to support volunteer celebrations across the province throughout 2001. SSP regional steering committees will organize volunteer conferences to promote volunteering networks, develop skills and celebrate volunteer contributions. The Volunteer Service Medal will officially recognize provincial volunteers.

Gas Price Regulation Bill outlined

Mines and Energy Minister Lloyd Matthews and Government Services and Lands Minister Walter Noel recently outlined key elements of government's plan to regulate gas prices.

Minister Matthews said: "The main elements of the bill includes the establishment of an independent petroleum products price commissioner with the ability to set maximum retail and wholesale prices. It provides for the implementation of a binding and automatic market-based price adjustment

mechanism. The commissioner will also have the ability to provide for non-market related adjustments."

Minister Matthews said residents cannot expect uniform prices across the province; however, an attempt will be made to establish five to ten price zones to ensure fairness. Minister Noel stated that while this process will provide greater consumer confidence and less fluctuation, it is important for consumers to realize that it will not guarantee lower prices.



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