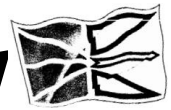


MAY 18, 2001

Noteworthy




Tourism still growing

In declaring May as Tourism Awareness Month and recognizing the importance of the industry, Tourism, Culture and Recreation Minister Kevin Aylward also provided an update on the contributions of tourist activity within the province. Minister Aylward noted that tourism is an increasingly positive contributor to the province's economy. This year's tourism theme is "Tourism is Everybody's Business."

"Our most recent statistics reveal that over the past five years, Newfoundland and Labrador has experienced close to a 40 per cent increase in visitation," said Minister Aylward. "In 2000, we reached a record 426,250 non-resident visitors, which is up 3.2 per cent over 1999 figures." Associated spending of these visitors was estimated at \$290 million. Total tourist expenditures, including resident tourism, was more than \$600 million.

Some highlights of tourism activity to date in 2001 include:


- overall air passenger travel at the province's six major airports is up 13 per cent;
- direct international arrivals are up 17 per cent;
- car rental revenue increased eight per cent; and
- hotel occupancy rates have increased 13 per cent;

"Clearly, these early indicators point to another successful year in 2001. With an increased awareness of the province, new meeting and convention capacity with the opening of the St. John's Civic Centre, our Receiving the World celebrations and other new products and capacity coming on stream, we are well-positioned for continued growth." 

Roads and infrastructure projects announced

Government will move forward on a number of roads and infrastructure projects throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in the coming building season. Funding for roads and infrastructure was recently announced by Works, Services and Transportation Minister Percy Barrett and Municipal and Provincial Affairs Minister Oliver Langdon.

Works, Services and Transportation has started calling tenders on \$22 million worth of projects across the province. The minister highlighted \$4.5 million for coastal roads in northern Labrador and \$2 million to construct the Long Island Causeway pending federal cost-sharing. The total to be spent on roads this year is almost \$122 million.

Minister Langdon announced that \$51.5 million will be spent on 172 infrastructure projects, particularly initiatives which will help rural communities. The municipal cost for some of the projects in rural communities will be less than 10 per cent. Over 60 per cent of the funding will be invested in water and sewer projects. 

Waste management consultations announced

Beginning next month, an advisory committee will hold discussions on the development of a comprehensive provincial waste management strategy, Environment Minister Ralph Wiseman announced recently. The committee will seek the views and opinions of key stakeholders, groups and individuals on a comprehensive, long-term plan for waste management.

Derm Flynn, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, will chair the advisory committee. Joining Mr. Flynn are Corner Brook city councillor Priscilla Boutcher, president of the Recycling Depot Operator's Association Catherine Barrett and Jessie Bird of Cartwright.

The public consultation is the first step in fulfilling government's commitment in the Speech from the Throne to develop a long-term strategy for waste management in Newfoundland and Labrador. When developed, the waste management strategy will ensure protection of the environment for generations to come.

The minister is encouraging those interested to take part in the discussion in their area or forward comments to the Department of Environment advisory committee. "Protecting Our Environment for Tomorrow: A public consultation paper for a strategy for waste management" will be available by contacting the department or visiting www.gov.nf.ca/env. 