

1 Yearly subscription \$39.09 w/taxes FREE WHEN PICKED UP FROM A STAND VOLUME 130 | EDITION 8 | LE VENDREDI 23 MAI 2025 | FRIDAY MAY 23, 2025 | 181, RUE PRINCIPALE, BUREAU C10, GATINEAU, QC J9H 6A6

Community projects underway at Pontiac Long-Term Care with Fortin's support



Buckingham and Masson-Angers arenas need care

Mélissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

For several years, the Buckingham and Masson-Angers arenas have needed renovations and new equipment. According to Daniel St-Gelais, president of the Gatineau Lièvre Minor Hockey Association, the city is having a hard time keeping its infrastructure up to date.

"They're always waiting for something to break before replacing it, but the reality is that our facilities need to be modernized," explained St-Gelais.

"We don't have to have futuristic arenas, but we need a bare minimum of renovations to make it a pleasant experience for everyone."

According to St-Gelais, the Buckingham arena's decor has remained unchanged since 1971 and is in dire need of a refresh. The ceiling also needs to be repaired, and equipment such as the scoreboard and safety net need to be replaced. "We inherited the old scoreboard from the old Robert-Guertin arena, and the entire display system is backward, making it extremely difficult for officials to manage everything."

Continued on page 2

The upgrades to Pontiac Community Hospital's long-term care unit—supported by a personal donation from MNA André Fortin through the hospital foundation and confirmed by the CISSS de l'Outaouais—aim to improve daily life for residents and staff through projects like a new patio, accessible shower, and family room, as part of a broader regional effort to meet the growing needs of an aging population. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ANDRÉ FORTIN

Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

The long-term care unit at Pontiac Community Hospital is undergoing a series of upgrades designed to improve

daily life for residents and their families. Current projects include the construction of an outdoor patio, the installation of an accessible shower for residents with limited mobility, and the creation of a new family room.

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Community projects underway at Pontiac Long-Term Care with Fortin's support

Continued from page 1

André Fortin, Member of the National Assembly for Pontiac, confirmed his support for the improvements through a personal financial donation made via the Pontiac Community Hospital Foundation. While the amount of the donation has not been disclosed, Fortin said the upgrades align with his longstanding commitment to supporting seniors

and health infrastructure in the region.

"These are all important projects because they directly improve the living environment for residents and their families," Fortin said. "A family room or outdoor patio offers a space for residents to connect with others, socialize, and share important moments with loved ones and volunteers. That has a real impact on quality of life."

He also emphasized the practical

benefit of the accessible shower for both residents and staff. "This type of equipment allows the care team to do their work in a safer, more adapted environment," he said.

According to the CISSS de l'Outaouais, these projects are part of its broader plan to enhance care conditions in long-term care settings across the region. The organization noted that such investments are increasingly nec-

essary given the aging population and the rising complexity of care needs. Funding for the upgrades is being coordinated through the Pontiac Community Hospital Foundation, which continues to play a key role in supporting infrastructure improvements.

Fortin stated that he intends to continue supporting projects that strengthen local healthcare and improve the lives of residents in the Pontiac.



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Buckingham and Masson-Angers arenas need care



Daniel St-Gelais, president of the Gatineau La Lièvre Minor Hockey Association, during his meeting with Mathieu Lacombe, Member of the National Assembly for Papineau (May 5, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: FACEBOOK PAGE: MATHIEU LACOMBE, MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR PAPINEAU

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As for the Masson-Angers arena, it would have issues with the volunteer room, which, according to St-Gelais, is completely outdated. "We use this room a lot," he explained. "Last year, the refrigerator pipe broke, and instead of repairing it, it was locked."

"Furthermore, when visitors come, we often receive comments saying they would have preferred the tournament to be held in facilities like Slush Puppie or Branchaud-Brière." St-Gelais estimates that the city will have to spend between \$60,000 and \$70,000 to get the two arenas operational. "In my opinion, that's not

much for the City of Gatineau, when we're talking about maintaining their infrastructure, which should have been done a long time ago."

Daniel said that he hasn't received an official response from the city. He did, however, manage to meet with Mathieu Lacombe, Member of the National Assembly for Papineau. "I was very well received, and according to him, my requests are very legitimate [...]," he emphasized. "I will also be having a meeting with Buckingham City Councillor Edmond Leclerc, as well as a second meeting next week with Masson-Angers City Councillor Mario Aubé."

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Chelsea invites residents to help choose their official name



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJJ Reporter

As part of its 150th anniversary, the Municipality of Chelsea is inviting residents to help define a meaningful part of the town's identity: choosing an official name—also known as a gentilé—for the people who live here. The public consultation, led by the Recreation Department, runs till May 28 and encourages the community to suggest thoughtful, original ideas that could become part of Chelsea's story for generations to come.

While Chelsea's heritage dates back to 1875, when its first municipal council was formed, there has never been a widely recognized or officially adopted term for its population. In the context of this milestone year, the municipality sees the naming process as a way to both celebrate its deep roots and express its evolving, inclusive spirit. The anniversary slogan, "Honouring our roots, cultivating our future," reflects this dual vision.

Submissions should aim to capture



Chelsea is inviting residents to help choose an official name for its population through public consultation, as part of its 150th anniversary celebrations. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHELSEA

the character of Chelsea, while being respectful of both official languages and inclusive in gender expression and must align with the toponymic standards of Québec. To guide the creative process, residents might look to examples such as Chelseans, Chelseaites, or Chelsoniens, while also exploring more imaginative or locally meaningful options that reflect the town's bilingualism and cultural landscape. Ultimately, the chosen name should feel authentic to Chelsea's identity and resonate with both newer arrivals and long-established families.

Beyond the practical task of choosing a name, the initiative is seen as a way to strengthen community bonds and celebrate shared identity. It's a rare opportunity for residents to contribute something lasting, a name that will reflect who they are and where they belong.

To take part, visit the consultation page:

<https://consultations.chelsea.ca/projects/consultation-publique-pour-trouver-un-gentile-aux-residentes-de-chelsea>

In Quebec, tips will now be calculated before taxes



Mélissa **Gélinas**
LJJ Reporter

Bill 72 will now require all restaurants and businesses in Quebec to display the proposed tips before taxes are applied on all terminals, starting May 7, 2025.

This measure will be specifically included in a new bill entitled: An Act to protect consumers against abusive commercial practices and provide greater transparency in pricing and credit. It was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly.

Furthermore, terminals will no longer provide customers with any incentives regarding the recommended tip rate. "In this sense, higher percentages will no longer be highlighted, nor will smiley or sad face emoticons be displayed for tips deemed good or not so good," explained Charles Tanguay,

spokesperson for the Office of Consumer Protection. This way, it will be up to the consumer to choose the tip amount they wish to pay.

According to Martin Vézina, Vice-President of Public and Government Affairs for the Association Restauration Québec, the reason why consumers previously paid tips after taxes is simply due to the terminal programming.

However, according to Martin, not all terminals are easy to reprogram. "For the majority of them, this required computer changes that were made in recent months, and there are still operators who will have to wait for new devices to comply with the new law," he explained. "Some will also have to manually calculate their tips since their terminal won't have the option to calculate them."

Therefore, this new law risks reduc-

ing workers' income. "We want to assess whether this will have an impact

on some employees' resignations," Martin commented.

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Notice to readers: Delivery of the *West Quebec Post* during the Canada Post strike



LILY Ryan

There are a few things readers should know in case there is no agreement between Canada Post and the union that represents mail delivery workers. If there is a work stoppage, a strike or a lock-out, regular distribution will be interrupted or delayed. This edition of the *West Quebec Post* should get out for delivery in the last days before this potential disruption. After that, who knows how long this situation will last.

In the case of a longer Canada Post delivery interruption, subscriptions will be extended to cover the number

of missed editions. However, the *West Quebec Post* team will stay on the job. Editions will be available on the *West Quebec Post* website at www.westquebecpost.com. And the same is true for sister newspapers, the *Gatineau Bulletin*, the *Pontiac Journal* and the *Aylmer Bulletin*. News coverage, reporting, advertising, managing the administration of all that happens behind the scenes; this will be ongoing on the part of the newspaper team.

Readers, please continue to be part of the *West Quebec Post* team. Send in your news topics, your letters to the editor, your ideas for advertising sections, your requests for in-depth cover-

age. These ways that readers participate in the life of the *Post* are key to making this newspaper as lively as it is. Sure, this is a small newspaper, but it matters. Ensuring the coverage of community news goes on, despite an inability to deliver it to subscribers, is a welcome challenge.

On the footsteps of June, the *West Quebec Post* news team takes the role of local journalism seriously. Municipal elections are just six months away. Candidates are therefore in full campaign swing – whether they are obvious about it or not. Outaouais waterways and forest are to be tested this summer: is there enough water retention, how hot

will the summer be, and what impact will there be on the abundant wildlife in our wetlands and forest corridors?

These issues do not languish on the back-burner just because of a paused news delivery system. And so, if a bit of effort is needed on the part of you, dear reader, please take the actions needed to read the *West Quebec Post*. Go to the website, find it in stores or visit our office.

We'll get back to delivering your copy right to your door just as soon as possible. In the meantime, on behalf of everyone at your local newspaper, we thank you for your support and look forward to your feedback.

Homophobia in our community

This morning, as I was working from a small neighbourhood café, I heard something that deeply disturbed me.

At the table in front of me were two men in their thirties and an older woman. In the middle of a discussion, one of the men suddenly bragged that he'd 'beaten the shit out of' a gay man coming out of a bar on Rue Principale in Aylmer... last night.

This is the second time in a short space of time that I've witnessed hateful and threatening language directed at LGBTQ+ people. The first time, it was hostile comments directed at Lucy and me. Unfortunately, we're all familiar with these kinds of situations: we keep our heads up, we walk away, we avoid conflict. But this time it was more than words.

Maybe he just wanted to look tough

in front of his friends. Maybe he was telling the truth. Maybe someone really was attacked, here, in our home, simply for who they are.

I didn't say anything. I was just scared. Afraid it would backfire on me. I went home with a knot in my throat, telling myself that I could have done at least one discreet thing: taken a photo, noted a detail, reported it to the police, just in case.

My heart is heavy this morning. Not just for the person who may have been attacked, but also for what I didn't do. For the fear that made me stay put. For the silence.

Homophobia isn't always loud, but it's still there... Unfortunately. (Translated)

Louise Rousseau
Aylmer

Seniors' Tribute Awards 2025 - The social and voluntary commitment of seniors honoured in each region

The call for nominations for the 2025 edition of the Seniors' Tribute Awards is now open.

This year's call for nominations will run from 28 April to 30 May.

The Seniors' Tribute Awards are organised annually by the Quebec government to highlight the exceptional contribution of a senior in each region. This contribution to the community must promote the well-being of seniors and their participation in the life of the community of which they are a part.

Each year, nominations are received by each of the 18 Tables régionales de concertation des aînés (TRCAs), which bring together organisations representing seniors in their respective regions. The TRCAs submit the nominations to independent

regional committees, which assess them. The selected recipients are recommended to the Minister. The winners are announced at a ceremony in the autumn.

As I do every year, I'm looking forward to receiving the nominations for the Seniors' Tribute Awards, which reflect the dynamism of the voluntary sector and the commitment of seniors in every region of Quebec. I look forward to learning more about these exceptional people who make our society even better through their commitment to their communities.

(Translated)

Sonia Bélanger, Minister
responsible for Seniors,
Minister for Health and
inister responsible for the
Laurentides region

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Unit C10, 181, rue Principale, Aylmer sector, Gatineau, Qc J9H 6A6
Tel. : 819 684-4755 | editor@westquebecpost.com

Subscriptions
\$33,95 (+ taxes)

Publisher Emeritus: Fred Ryan | Publishers: Sophia Ryan et Lily Ryan
Editor: Lily Ryan
Operations Manager: Lily Ryan
Business Consultant: Lynne Lavery | Accounts: Enel Polinice
Classifieds/Circulation: Dominique Leclair | classifieds@bulletinaylmer.com
Journalists: Marie-Eve Turpin, Sophie Demers, Reuel S. Amdur, Carl Hager, Greg Newing, Grace Richards, Mélissa Gélinas

Production Manager: Tanya Laframboise | production@bulletinaylmer.com
Advertising Manager: pub@bulletinaylmer.com
Publicité / Advertising: pub@bulletinaylmer.com
Advertising Consultants: Jerry Alary, Brenda McGuire, Mélanie Ward
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Poetry in song



It's certainly no secret that I love language expressed poetically. I also appreciate the poetry expressed through choral arrangements where many voices bring their harmony to it. Recently, I had one more chance to delight in a well-orchestrated performance of the Heart and Soul Singers under the direction of Daniel Lafleur. As I close my eyes, the memory lingers of the graceful gestures that accompanied their singing. It is that lingering feeling that lifts the spirit. It was another of the Heart and Soul Singers performances that brought a standing ovation from their audience as a gesture of appreciation. It is appropriate to remind ourselves of the many dedicated hours involved in preparation for their Spring Concert. Kudos to Daniel Lafleur and the Singers for a fine performance.

As one of around 70 choristers with Atlantic Voices, the Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa, I know well the hours spent tuning the final touches for these concerts. On May 25, we will be presenting our 'Shorelines' spring concert under our director Scott Richardson. The following are a few examples of the poetry woven into choral arrangements that we will present that Sunday afternoon.

From "Saltwater Joys," by Wayne Chaulk:

Following a little brook as it trickles to the shore
in the autumn when the leaves are flaming red
kicking leaves that fall around me
watching the sunlight paint the hills;
That's all I'll ever need to feel at home.

From "Trinity Bay," by Reg Petty:

Oh, Trinity Bay where I was born
Where the winds they blow cold
but the people are warm.
I long for the moment
I live for the day
When I can return to Trinity Bay.

From "Frobisher Bay," by James Gordon:

...and cold is the Arctic Sea
Far are your arms from me
Long will this winter be,
frozen in Frobisher Bay
frozen in Frobisher Bay.

From "Fogarty's Cove," by Stan Rogers:

She will walk the sandy shores so plain
Watch the combers roll in
'Til I come to Wild Rose Chance again
Down in Fogarty's Cove.

From "Make and Break Harbour," by Stan Rogers:

In Make and Break Harbour the boats
are so few,
too many are pulled up and rotten.
Most houses stand empty, old nets hung
to dry,
are blown away, lost and forgotten.

From "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," by Robbie Burns:

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy
green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy
praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring
stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not
her dream.

From "The Cliffs of Dooneen," by Jack McAuliffe:

You may travel afar from your own na-
tive land,
Far away o'er the mountains, far away
o'er the foam,
But of all the fine places that I've ever seen,
Sure there's none to compare with the
cliffs of Dooneen.

Finally, this concert invitation from Shelly Donaldson of Atlantic Voices:

Hello friends!

Are you all as happy as I am that spring
has finally arrived? To celebrate, I'm send-
ing you a personal invitation to join At-
lantic Voices on May 25 for 'Shorelines',
our latest concert celebrating the music
of Canada's East Coast!

For only \$30, you will enjoy our choral
concert (including a live opening band),
get a chance to win a wonderful door
prize, and enjoy a delicious light lunch.
Tickets for 'Shorelines' are on sale now. We
look forward to seeing you at the show!

Shelly
Atlantic Voices PR team
Sunday, May 25, at Centretown United
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Doors open at 2:15 p.m. for pre-concert
entertainment by the Fumblin' Fingers
Concert starts at 3:00 p.m., with recep-
tion to follow

Tickets are \$30 until May 24, or \$35 at
the door (free for children 12 and under)
Available from choir members or
through EventBrite

Online silent auction starts on concert
day and runs all week,

Visit atlanticvoices.ca for more infor-
mation on tickets, our silent auction,
parking, and more.



Can Ukraine Survive Trump?

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

We are getting very close to the point where Donald Trump realises that his dear friend Vladimir Putin has been playing him for a fool. The Russian president never had the slightest intention of moderating his war aims, which include the annexation of much of Ukraine and the demotion of the rest to the status of a puppet state.

There have been no 'peace negotiations'; just Putin tirelessly repeating his non-negotiable demands. He behaves like a man who is certain he will win his war of choice, but then he has to. Any other outcome after three years of fighting and hundreds of thousands of Russian deaths would certainly lead to his removal from power and quite possibly to his death.

Yet there is no evidence that Ukraine is really on the brink of defeat. Its soldiers are certainly tired but so are Putin's. The Russians are gaining ground so slowly – tens of metres a day along one or another small portion of the 2,000 km. front line – that at the current pace they would reach Kyiv in about 2029.

Trump will try to bully Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky into accepting Russia's terms because he has no leverage over Putin. He will probably insist once again that Ukraine has 'no cards' and must submit, but that wasn't true then and it isn't true now. So what will happen after Zelensky says 'no'?

It's almost certain that Trump would react by once again punishing Ukraine. The United States would immediately stop selling it arms and, more importantly, cut off the flow of real-time intelligence data from US satellites and long-distance surveillance aircraft that helps Ukraine intercept Russian attacks and strike Russian targets.

This wouldn't spell military disaster for Ukraine, although it would cause thousands of extra Ukrainian deaths both at the front and in cities under Russian air and missile attack. Ukraine survived six months without US aid when the Republicans in Congress halted arms deliveries in 2024, and twice more when Trump briefly stopped everything again last February and March.

There would be no point in hanging on if the Ukrainians were ultimately doomed, but they aren't. The two sides are effectively deadlocked, even if superior Russian numbers enable them to creep forward a bit from time to time. Sooner or later one side will break, but nobody knows which one or when.

That is how wars of attrition usually end: a sudden collapse of morale on one side or the other after years of stalemate, often triggered by a major offensive that either succeeds (in which case the attacker wins the war) or fails (in which case the defender wins). These collapses often morph into outright mutinies, and entire regimes are sometimes overthrown.

The war in Ukraine is almost the First World War in miniature: a long war of attrition with everybody driven below ground level by new weapons (machine-guns and rapid-firing long-range artillery then; drones, drones and more drones now).

At this point, three years in, the situation in Ukraine can be compared to the First World War in 1917. There was a lot of movement and ground changing hands in the early months of the war, but then it was down into the trenches and bloody deadlock ever since. The soldiers are now nearing the end of their rope, and the generals are getting desperate.

There were three big offensives in 1917. The French one failed so badly that much of the army mutinied and France was effectively out of the fighting for the rest of the war. The Russian offensive failed even more disastrously and not only the army but the whole empire collapsed. The German one succeeded, and the Italian army fled 150 km. to the rear.

Germany's great offensive in spring 1918 came within an ace of success, and then collapsed utterly. The army mutinied, and Germany surrendered in November 1918.

So what lessons can Ukrainians draw from these examples? First: It ain't over till it's over. And two: Stay on the defensive and wait for the Russians to break. It could happen. See above.

Arbre-Évolution launches platform to showcase environmental impact across Quebec



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Arbre-Évolution, a Quebec-based environmental cooperative, has launched a new digital platform to transparently showcase the environmental and social impacts of over 300 ecological restoration projects across the province, including two in the Outaouais region. This initiative, timed with the start of Tree Month, reflects nearly a decade of work in reforesting communities and mitigating climate impacts, particularly in areas vulnerable to heat and biodiversity loss.

In 2019, Arbre-Évolution collaborated with the municipality of L'Ange-Gardien to reforest a riparian zone along the Lièvre River, planting over 650 trees and shrubs to stabilize the riverbank, boost biodiversity, and create a publicly accessible green space. That same year, the cooperative partnered with Groupe ABS in Val-des-Monts to help the company offset its transport-related carbon emissions by planting trees across multiple sites.



Arbre-Évolution has launched a digital platform to amalgamate the environmental and social impacts of over 300 ecological restoration projects across the province, including two in the Outaouais region, highlighting nearly a decade of work in reforesting communities and mitigating climate impacts. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ARBRE-ÉVOLUTION

The new regulation banning cell phone use in schools is causing discontent among Quebec students



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

Minister of Education Bernard Drainville recently announced a ban on cell phone use in classrooms, outside, and on school grounds, starting next September. This regulation will apply to all Quebec schools, including public and private elementary and secondary schools.

For Drainville, this measure is intended to maximize civic mindedness among young people and reduce the rate of bullying.

Far from gaining unanimous support among young people, a student posted a video that went viral on TikTok, calling on Quebec students to go on strike on Friday, May 9. "Young people, we're going on strike!" says Youry Roy. "Starting next year, the Quebec government will require us to call our teachers, ladies and gentlemen, and make cell phones illegal in schools," he continued. "I don't

know what you think, but I find it stupid. Mr. and Madam Government, we have much more serious problems than phones in schools."

Furthermore, several students in some Outaouais schools have expressed their dissatisfaction with the new regulation. Indeed, most students at the Érablière comprehensive school in Gatineau supported the strike. "I think that, in an emergency, it can still be very useful, and I don't think banning it would be the best choice," said a student at the school.

The Draveurs school service centre, for its part, confirmed that it had been informed of the TikTok video. "We hope that students will use the appropriate channels to express their opinions and would like to emphasize the importance of attending classes at the end of the school year," stated the Draveurs School Service Centre.

Minister Drainville clarified that there will be certain exceptions for cell phone use, particularly for students with special needs.

The cooperative's efforts are supported through three major programs—Social Reforestation™, Riparian Carbon™, and Le Semoir™—which have garnered financial backing from more than 200 partners, raising close to \$4 million since 2017. According to Simon Côté, General Coordinator of Arbre-Évolution, "We have built an ecosystem of initiatives based on ecological compensation and the principle of giving back."

The new platform provides tailored socio-environmental reports for contributors, detailing metrics such as trees planted, square meters of land restored, and heat islands addressed. Notably, 128 of Arbre-Évolution's plantation sites have been identified as heat islands, a finding supported by a collaboration with the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ). Pierre-Gerlier Forest, President and CEO of INSPQ, stated, "We are delighted when our scientific analysis and mapping work is highlighted and helps our civil society

partners in their work."

Beyond reforestation, Arbre-Évolution places a strong emphasis on environmental education. Through the Le Semoir program, launched in 2019, thousands of young people have participated in eco-education workshops and the development of outdoor classrooms. Laurence Côté-Leduc, coordinator of the program, emphasized the importance of public awareness, saying, "It's important to spread the good news, to let people know that we're moving toward a better world."

With the infrastructure now in place, Arbre-Évolution is looking to expand its impact. Simon Côté expressed the organization's future ambitions: "Our actions for the planet, our movement for the future of the world, could easily increase tenfold if more funds were invested."

The platform is publicly accessible on Arbre-Évolution's website: arbre-evolution.org.

Prices on the rise locally with tariff war underway



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

The price increases linked to U.S. tariffs are already being felt in several grocery stores and pharmacies, including Walmart, Loblaws, Provigo, Maxi, and Pharmaprix.

According to Nathalie Normandeau, a former politician and host of the 104.7 radio show La commission, Loblaws-owned Provigo and Maxi grocery stores have already begun putting "T" symbols on more than 1,000 products, indicating a price increase caused by the tariffs.

Furthermore, according to Normandeau, within two months, a total of 6,000 products will be displaying this symbol in these grocery stores. "Fruits and vegetables will be the first to be affected," she emphasized.

AFFECTED PRODUCTS:

- Dairy products
- Meat
- Coffee and tea
- Cereals
- Spices
- Pasta
- Oil
- Soft drinks
- Sweets

- Natural, hygiene, and beauty products
- And more

"Although there are alternatives, they could cost more due to the tariff response," said Normandeau. Canadian products containing ingredients from the United States may also see their costs increase.

"It's quite rare to find a product that's 100% made in Canada," said Sylvain Charlebois, Senior Director of the Agri-Food Analytical Sciences Laboratory at Dalhousie University. "It's important to know that the price increase won't be 25%, but rather 3% to 5%," he adds.

As for Walmart, the company is trying to find solutions to continue offering the lowest possible prices. "Since the pandemic, according to the first quarter results, people with higher incomes are shopping more at Walmart, particularly for groceries," said Normandeau. "There's a lot of concern among consumers."

According to information from Maurice Doyon, professor of agri-food economics and consumer sciences at Université Laval, boycotting American stores such as Walmart and Costco is not recommended, as they still sell some Canadian products. In this sense, it's American products that should be avoided, not the stores.

Outaouais stakeholders weigh in on Quebec's energy future



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Stakeholders from across the Outaouais region met at Gatineau City Hall to weigh in on Quebec's future energy strategy during a regional stop of the government's Vision énergie tour, held on May 2. The consultation was led by Minister of Economy, Innovation and Energy Christine Fréchette and MNA Yves Montigny.

Sixteen participants took part in the half-day session, including representatives from Action Climat Outaouais, the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, the Algonquin Anishinabeg Tribal Council, the University of Quebec in Outaouais, Domtar, and the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais. They brought perspectives from Indigenous communities, environmental groups, the energy sector, academia, and local governments to help shape the province's long-term energy planning.

The event comes as Bill 69, An Act to Ensure the Responsible Governance of Energy Resources and to Amend Various Legislative Provisions, is under study in the National Assembly. The bill proposes far-reaching reforms to how Quebec manages its energy system, including the develop-

ment of a Plan de gestion intégrée des ressources énergétiques (PGIRE), which would guide policy decisions over the next quarter-century. It also strengthens the minister's role in energy planning and restructures the powers of the Régie de l'énergie.

While the government argues that Bill 69 is essential for coordinating a rapid and coherent energy transition, a broad coalition of civil society groups, unions, and environmental organizations has raised alarm over provisions they say could lead to the privatization of Quebec's electricity system. The bill proposes to expand the role of private sectors in energy generation and distribution—sectors historically under the control of Hydro-Québec—and grants the Minister of Economy, Innovation and Energy new discretionary powers to approve projects and set priorities, bypassing traditional regulatory oversight.

Groups such as the Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique (SCFP), the Association coopérative d'économie familiale (ACEF) du Nord de Montréal, the Front commun pour la transition énergétique, and the Réseau Québécois des groupes écologistes (RQGE) have warned that these changes could weaken public accountability and lead to higher electricity rates for consumers. They argue the bill risks

concentrating decision-making within the executive branch, reducing transparency and democratic input in shaping Quebec's energy future. Critics have also expressed concern that the bill does not do enough to guarantee the long-term integrity of Hydro-Québec as a public utility, nor to protect energy as a collective resource.

At the Gatineau session, participants engaged in workshops on energy demand and supply, providing input on topics ranging from decarbonization strategies for hard-to-electrify sectors to the need for decentralized production and energy storage solutions. There was broad consensus on the importance of involving Indigenous communities in energy development and maximizing the use of local renewable sources, including biomass and solar energy.

The plenary discussion underscored a shared desire for transparency and democratic oversight in the development of the PGIRE. Concerns were raised about ensuring equitable access to energy and

avoiding decisions that disproportionately benefit corporate interests at the expense of community needs. Attendees also highlighted the potential of public transit, waste heat recovery, and regional autonomy in building a more resilient and sustainable energy network.

Minister Fréchette emphasized that the Vision énergie tour is intended to gather diverse perspectives that will inform the PGIRE. "We're aiming to build an energy framework that reflects Quebecers' values and supports a low-carbon, economically strong future," she said. Montigny, who is responsible for coordinating the tour, said that hearing directly from regional sectors was crucial to developing a plan suited to the province's energy and environmental challenges.

Quebec residents are invited to take part in the process through a participatory platform where they can vote on, comment, or suggest proposals for Quebec's energy future: <https://consultation.quebec.ca/processes/VisionEnergie/f/427/>.

Promoting the Issues of Mental Health Services in the Outaouais



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

An evening panel and consultation took place as part of the Mental Health Services in the Outaouais event on Tuesday, May 13, at the Maison du Citoyen.

Organized by ReprésentACTION Outaouais, Droits-Accès de l'Outaouais, Action Santé Outaouais, and the partners of Ensemble pour le droit à la santé, this event aimed to foster exchanges and discussions on the issues and challenges of mental health services in the Outaouais, while also providing concrete action.

To this end, panelist Pierre Pariseau-Legault, researcher and professor at the Université du Québec en Outaouais in the Laurentians, provided an update on the situation. According to him, delays in accessing services are undoubtedly one of the biggest problems. "Added to this is the staff shortage," he explained. "Many people leave, saying they don't

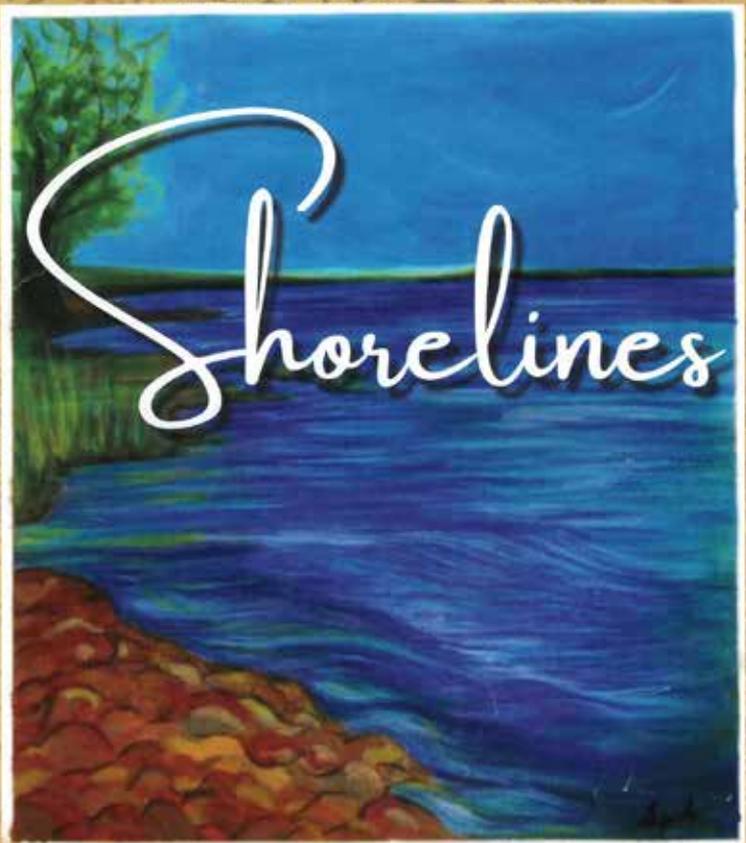
feel they're helping people since they end up on prescriptions under medical authority." According to him, many decide to pursue other careers or move to the private sector.

"When we look at intervention models in Quebec, we realize that it's a biomedical model that's very prescription-oriented," Pariseau-Legault stated. "I'm not saying that prescribing is useless, but instead, the idea is to promote an intervention model to properly meet the needs of the people who consult us."

Furthermore, one of the biggest stereotypes is the belief that intervention by an expert is required. "More than 90% of mental health problems can be treated on the front line," said Pariseau-Legault. "It depends on the model you adopt, but for me, mental health is very different from psychiatry. It's a question of creativity and human relationships. It needs room for alternative practices and for testimonials."

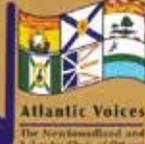
To conclude the evening, testimonials and discussion workshops took place.

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Projet de loi 83 : une fausse bonne solution pour freiner l'exode des médecins vers le privé?



Tashi **Farmilo**

Les mesures prises par le gouvernement du Québec pour protéger l'accès aux soins de santé soulèvent des questions quant à savoir si la province compromet ses propres efforts à long terme.

Le projet de loi 83, déposé par le ministre de la Santé Christian Dubé, vise à obliger les nouveaux médecins de famille et les médecins spécialistes formés au Québec à pratiquer dans le réseau public québécois pendant les cinq premières années suivant la fin de leurs études, sous peine de sanctions financières pouvant aller jusqu'à 200 000 \$ par jour. Rappelons que la formation d'un médecin coûte, en incluant la résidence, entre 435 000 \$ et 790 000 \$ aux contribuables québécois.

« Nous nous donnons les moyens pour que la population ait accès aux soins pour lesquels elle paie. Notre gouvernement pose les gestes nécessaires pour assurer l'engagement des médecins envers la population et le réseau public », a déclaré le ministre Dubé. « Notre priorité est de protéger l'accès aux soins pour les patients ».

Toutefois, des voix se sont élevées en commission parlementaire pour demander au gouvernement de revoir son approche, disant que les contraintes imposées aux jeunes médecins risquent de légitimer les départs



Le projet de loi 83 vise à renforcer le système de santé public en obligeant les nouveaux médecins à y pratiquer pendant au moins cinq ans suivant la fin de leurs études. Toutefois, certains estiment que le projet de loi rate la cible et risque d'avoir un impact limité sur les vrais problèmes du réseau de santé québécois.

PHOTO : GRACIEUSETÉ DU CAMPUS DE L'UNIVERSITÉ MCGILL EN OUTAOUAIS

vers le secteur privé ou une autre province. Donc, les effets du projet de loi pourraient être contraires aux objectifs recherchés.

Le projet de loi 83 a été mis en place en partie pour contrer la tendance à la hausse des médecins formés

par le réseau public qui partent vers le privé. Selon le ministre Dubé, parmi les 22 868 médecins qui exercent actuellement au Québec, 835 le font uniquement en milieu privé, soit une augmentation de plus de 80 % depuis 2020. En outre, plus de 1 400 diplômés en médecine ont quitté la province rien qu'en 2023, tandis que seulement 273 sont venus d'autres provinces.

Jason Clement, directeur adjoint des communications à la Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé de l'Université McGill, a déclaré que, si le projet de loi part d'un principe louable, son impact sur la rétention et l'attractivité au sein du réseau public est incertain. « Il est difficile de prédire comment de telles mesures influenceront les choix des étudiants », a-t-il dit.

Selon André Fortin, député de Pontiac et porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en matière de santé, le projet de loi risque de ne pas avoir l'effet escompté. « L'intention du gouvernement de renforcer l'accès aux soins et de freiner l'érosion du réseau public est bonne », a-t-il concédé. « Toutefois, la stratégie utilisée par la CAQ est contre-productive ». Il a fait valoir que même le Collège des médecins, dont la mission est de protéger le public en veillant à une médecine de qualité, a exhorté le gouvernement à retirer la clause empêchant les étudiants québécois de faire leur résidence à l'extérieur du Québec.

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MéliSSa **Gélinas**

Il sera dorénavant obligatoire en vertu de la loi 72 d'afficher sur l'entièreté des terminaux les pourboires proposés avant l'application des taxes sur le montant, et ce, à partir du 7 mai 2025 pour l'ensemble des restaurateurs et commerces du Québec.

Cette mesure s'inscrira, plus précisément, dans un nouveau projet de loi intitulé Loi protégeant les consommateurs contre les pratiques commerciales abusives et offrant une meilleure transparence en matière de prix et de crédit, qui a été adopté à l'unanimité par l'Assemblée nationale.

Par ailleurs, les terminaux n'enverront plus aucun

incitatif au client quant au taux de pourboire recommandé. « Ainsi, les pourcentages les plus élevés ne seront plus mis en évidence, ni les émoticônes souriantes ou tristes pour les pourboires jugés bons et moins bons », explique Charles Tanguay, porte-parole de l'Office de la protection du consommateur. De cette façon, il sera laissé à la discrétion du consommateur de choisir le montant du pourboire qu'il désire déboursier.

Selon Martin Vézina, vice-président aux Affaires publiques et gouvernementales de l'Association Restauration Québec, la raison pour laquelle le consommateur payait, auparavant, le pourboire après les taxes est simplement due à la programmation des terminaux.

Toutefois, d'après M. Vézina, ce ne sont pas tous les terminaux qui sont simples à reprogrammer. « Pour la majorité d'entre eux, cela a demandé des changements informatiques qui ont été faits ces derniers mois et il y a des exploitants, encore à ce jour, qui vont devoir attendre de nouveaux appareils pour qu'ils soient conformes avec la nouvelle loi », explique-t-il. « Certains devront, également, procéder au calcul manuel de leur pourboire puisque leur terminal n'aura pas l'option de le calculer », ajoute-t-il.

Par conséquent, cette nouvelle loi risque d'apporter une baisse de revenus pour les travailleurs. « Nous souhaitons évaluer si cela aura un impact sur la démission de certains employés », commente M. Vézina.

Projet de loi 83 : une fausse bonne solution pour freiner l'exode des médecins vers le privé?

Suite de la page 8

« Il y a un véritable risque que les meilleurs étudiants en médecine quittent la province pour exercer leur profession ailleurs », a déclaré M. Fortin. « Si le gouvernement souhaite réellement favoriser l'engagement des médecins dans les établissements publics du réseau, il existe d'autres options. Par exemple, interdire aux médecins qui exercent au privé de facturer plus que ce qu'ils recevraient dans le secteur public. C'est déjà le cas en Alberta, et ça fonctionne ».

Le député a aussi proposé d'alléger la bureaucratie et de mieux exploiter les ressources hospitalières existantes. « Il est crucial de nous assurer que nos blocs opératoires sont utilisés. Cela implique de disposer du personnel de soutien nécessaire. Les solutions existent ».

« Pour assurer un accès équitable et universel aux

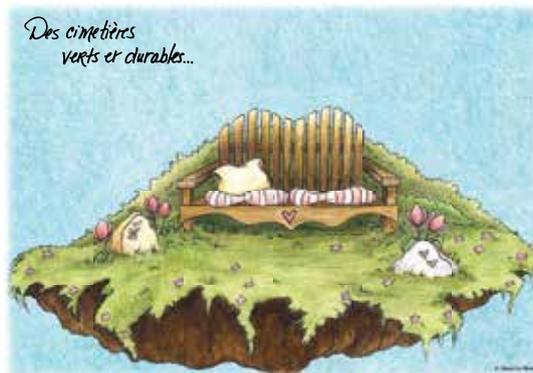
soins, nous devons offrir un milieu de travail attrayant aux médecins », a souligné l'Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS). « Il ne faut pas leur imposer des restrictions, mais plutôt créer des conditions qui leur donnent envie de rester ».

En 2025, un Québécois sur quatre n'a pas de médecin de famille attribué – le taux le plus élevé au Canada. Cette situation s'explique surtout par les départs à la retraite d'omnipraticiens et la prise en charge de patients par des groupes de médecins. Néanmoins, il y a une lueur d'espoir : il a récemment été annoncé que sur les 943 étudiants en médecine qui amorceront leur résidence postdoctorale cet été, 484 ont choisi la médecine familiale. Il s'agit de la plus importante cohorte québécoise à ce jour pour cette catégorie. Trad. : MET



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Outaouais cultivate agritourism roots, Pontiac at the lead



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Pontiac is helping drive a growing agritourism movement across the Outaouais, connecting visitors to the land through immersive food, farm, and drink experiences that showcase the region's rural richness and local pride.

Through initiatives like the Pontiac Land and Flavours Route, the cross-border Tap & Cork Route, and the region-wide Circuit Croquez l'Outaouais, Pontiac and its partners are offering visitors a diverse taste of the Outaouais agricultural landscape—from vineyard tastings and cider mills to yak farms and seasonal markets.

“We currently offer a Pontiac-specific agritourism route called the Pontiac Land and Flavours Route,” said Francis Beausoleil, Strategic Communications Advisor at MRC Pontiac. “It’s a great

way to see all the Pontiac has to offer in agritourism, from beef, ostriches and yaks to cider, wine and beer and everything in between.”

The Pontiac Land and Flavours Route guides visitors through farms, vineyards, and local markets across the region, offering a chance to meet producers and sample a wide range of products—maple syrup, fresh vegetables, artisanal pastries, and more. One vibrant stop on the route is the Marché de Chapeau in L'Isle-aux-Allumettes, a seasonal market where local farmers and artisans gather weekly to sell fresh produce, baked goods, and handcrafted products. It offers both residents and visitors a hyperlocal taste of western Pontiac's farm economy and community spirit. The full route is available online at: destinationpontiac.ca/en/tourism/pontiacs-route-du-terroir/

Complementing this initiative is the Tap & Cork Route, a cross-border partnership between MRC Pontiac, SADC Pontiac, and

Renfrew County. This trail includes more than 15 wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries on both sides of the Ottawa River. Featured Pontiac stops include Coronation Hall Cider Mill in Bristol, Domaine du Pontiac Village in Quyon, and Brauwerk Hoffman in Campbell's Bay. For a full list of participating businesses, visit: www.tapandcork.ca

Expanding the culinary journey even further is the Circuit Croquez l'Outaouais, which highlights agrotourism and food destinations across the greater Outaouais region. The circuit brings together producers, processors, and restaurateurs who invite visitors to explore local flavours and craftsmanship. An interactive map of destinations is available at: www.croquezoutaouais.com/en/interactive-map/

These initiatives are supported by the recently adopted Plan de développement de la zone agricole (PDZA), a strategic framework for developing Pontiac's agricultural potential. “There will be projects

to further develop this part of agriculture in the Pontiac that will be developed over the coming months, based on the needs of the businesses,” Beausoleil said.

Looking ahead to World Agritourism Day 2025, MRC Pontiac plans to amplify its promotional efforts. “Given our farms are just getting started for the summer season this time of year, the MRC will promote our route and the importance of checking out and supporting local farms and businesses this coming growing season,” Beausoleil said.

Beyond tourism, these initiatives signal a wider shift toward economic resilience and localism. “The biggest trend that we hope remains a priority for our community is the desire to support local, Québec and Canada during the current economic trade war with the United States,” Beausoleil added. “We hope that, whenever possible, consumers try their hardest to support their local businesses, which in turn helps develop a thriving community.”



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GARAGE SALE - Saturday, May 31, 2025, at St. Mark's the Evangelist Church, 160 Rue Principale, Gatineau, QC. From 8 am to 2 pm.

GARDEN PLANT SALE - For a great selection of perennials, come to the Aylmer Heritage Association's 24th plant sale on Saturday, June 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Old Methodist Chapel, 495 Aylmer Road (entrance on Golf Street), Gatineau. Cash only, please!

SOUTH HULL HOME & SCHOOL INDOOR FLEA MARKET Saturday, May 31, 9 am to 1 pm. Shop for used & new items, veggie plants, baked goods, and more! www.southhullhs.ca - 86, Prom. Crescent, Gatineau (Aylmer), QC.

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PRAYER

MAY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS be adored, loved, glorified, and persevered throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. Amen. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help for the hopeless, pray for us. St. Therese, little flower of Jesus, pray for us. Say this nine times a day for nine days. By the ninth day, your prayer will be answered. Publication must be promised. Thank you very much the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude for the favors received. D.C

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LES CHEVALIERS DE COLOMB CONSEIL 5281 vous invitent à leurs fameux soupers de doré, lesquels ont lieu le dernier

vendredi de chaque mois jusqu'en novembre. Ces soupers sont suivis d'une soirée dansante, animée par nul autre que Dan St-Amour, chansonnier. Billets à la porte, places limitées. De plus, nous avons notre grande salle disponible pour location, prix avantageux, stationnement gratuit et service de bar. Pour plus de détails : 819-684-5552.

LES HABITATIONS PARTAGÉES DE L'OUTAOUAIS, AVIS DE CONVOCATION. Nous avons le plaisir de vous inviter à notre 37e assemblée générale annuelle, qui aura lieu le mercredi 4 juin 2025 à la Cabane en bois rond (salle Roland-Giguère), 331, boul. de la Cité-des-Jeunes, Gatineau. Nous tenons à vous informer que l'assemblée annuelle débutera à 17 h 30 et sera suivie d'un léger goûter. Il est à noter que pour être en règle (avoir droit de vote), il est important que vous possédiez une carte de membre en règle. Si vous désirez obtenir des renseignements supplémentaires ou participer à l'assemblée annuelle, vous pouvez nous joindre en composant le 819-771-6576 (poste 200) ou par courriel au audefm.hpou@videotron.ca pour soumettre vos coordonnées afin de participer en mode virtuel ou confirmer votre présence.



ER wait times at Pontiac Hospital worsen amid regional demand and bed shortages



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Wait times at Pontiac Community Hospital's emergency room have increased significantly over the past year, making it the only hospital in the Outaouais region to see a decline in its overall emergency care performance.

According to data provided by the CISSS de l'Outaouais, the average stretcher wait time in Pontiac rose to 17 hours in 2024–2025, compared to just 7 hours the previous year. The proportion of patients remaining on stretchers for more than 48 hours also increased sharply, rising from 1.5% to 6.2%.

This trend stands in contrast to improvements reported in other hospitals across the region. Facilities in Hull, Gatineau, Wakefield, and Papineau saw modest gains, including reduced stretcher wait times and improved scores in emergency performance assessments. The Pontiac hospital's overall rating dropped from B- to C.

A number of factors have contributed to longer delays at the Shawville facility. The number of users at the Pontiac ER has grown steadily, nearly doubling in five years — from 527 in 2020–2021 to 935 in 2024–2025. While some of that increase reflects local need, part of the demand is coming from residents of urban centres like Gatineau, where emergency rooms remain more congested. According to the CISSS, patients are sometimes seeking care in rural hospitals like Pontiac to

avoid longer waits closer to home.

Bed availability is another ongoing concern. Of the 33 active care beds at Pontiac Community Hospital, 14 are currently occupied by patients who are waiting to be transferred to other levels of care. This shortage of available beds creates a backlog in the emergency room, as new patients cannot be admitted until others are moved.

The region's aging population adds to the pressure. Older patients often require more complex and longer-term care, which contributes to increased use of emergency services and longer hospital stays. At the same time, the supply of long-term care placements remains limited, with not enough spaces in seniors' residences or intermediate care facilities to meet the growing demand.

The CISSS de l'Outaouais stated that efforts are ongoing to improve patient flow and reduce pressure on emergency rooms. These include tools for monitoring hospital stays and initiatives focused on early discharge planning.

Meanwhile, outpatient visits across all six hospitals in the region rose by approximately six percent in the past year, reaching more than 103,000 in total. Despite the higher volume, four of the six hospitals improved their emergency department performance, which the CISSS attributed to the work of local care teams and system-wide efforts.

Pontiac MNA André Fortin expressed concern about the growing gap in care between rural and urban com-

munities. He pointed to factors like staffing shortages and insufficient access to clinics as reasons more patients are being pushed into emergency departments. He also reiterated his call for increased health funding in the region and salary parity with Ontario to help recruit and retain healthcare professionals.

As the region moves into the summer months — typically a time of increased emergency room use — Pontiac Community Hospital continues to face pressure on a system already struggling with limited capacity and rising demand.

Shop Le Pontiac initiative gains momentum amid renewed emphasis on shopping local



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

As global trade tensions intensify, supporting local economies is becoming more than a slogan. In the Pontiac, that urgency is materializing through Shop Le Pontiac, an initiative aimed at strengthening local businesses by boosting their digital presence.

Organized by the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce in partnership with SADC Pontiac, the program offers selected businesses professional photography, social media-ready videos, and coordinated promotion across online platforms. "Shop Le Pontiac is an initiative designed to encourage local commerce and strengthen the economic backbone of our beautiful region," said André Piché, employee at the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce "It's a strategy that showcases participating businesses to highlight the unique value of our local entrepreneurs and the services they offer."

Seven businesses are currently participating: Spruceholme Inn, Brauwerk Hoffman, Twin Sheds (Cabanes des Jumeaux), Clinique Chiropratique du Pontiac, Tracy Crane Service, Le DEN, and Just the TEA. Media production is already underway, and some of the promotional content is available through a YouTube playlist curated by SADC Pontiac.

The program exists at a moment when shopping locally carries added economic and political weight. With the cost of imported goods rising, dollars spent in the community have a greater impact—circulating within the local economy, creating jobs, and sustaining essential services. For the Pontiac, where many businesses are family-owned or independent, initiatives like Shop Le Pontiac help preserve the region's character and resilience.

For a full list of participating businesses and more details about the program, visit www.pontiacchamberofcommerce.ca or follow @shoplepontiac on Instagram. Those interested in joining future editions are encouraged to reach out to the Chamber at info@pontiacchamberofcommerce.ca.

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