

It was June 1985; the school year had just ended

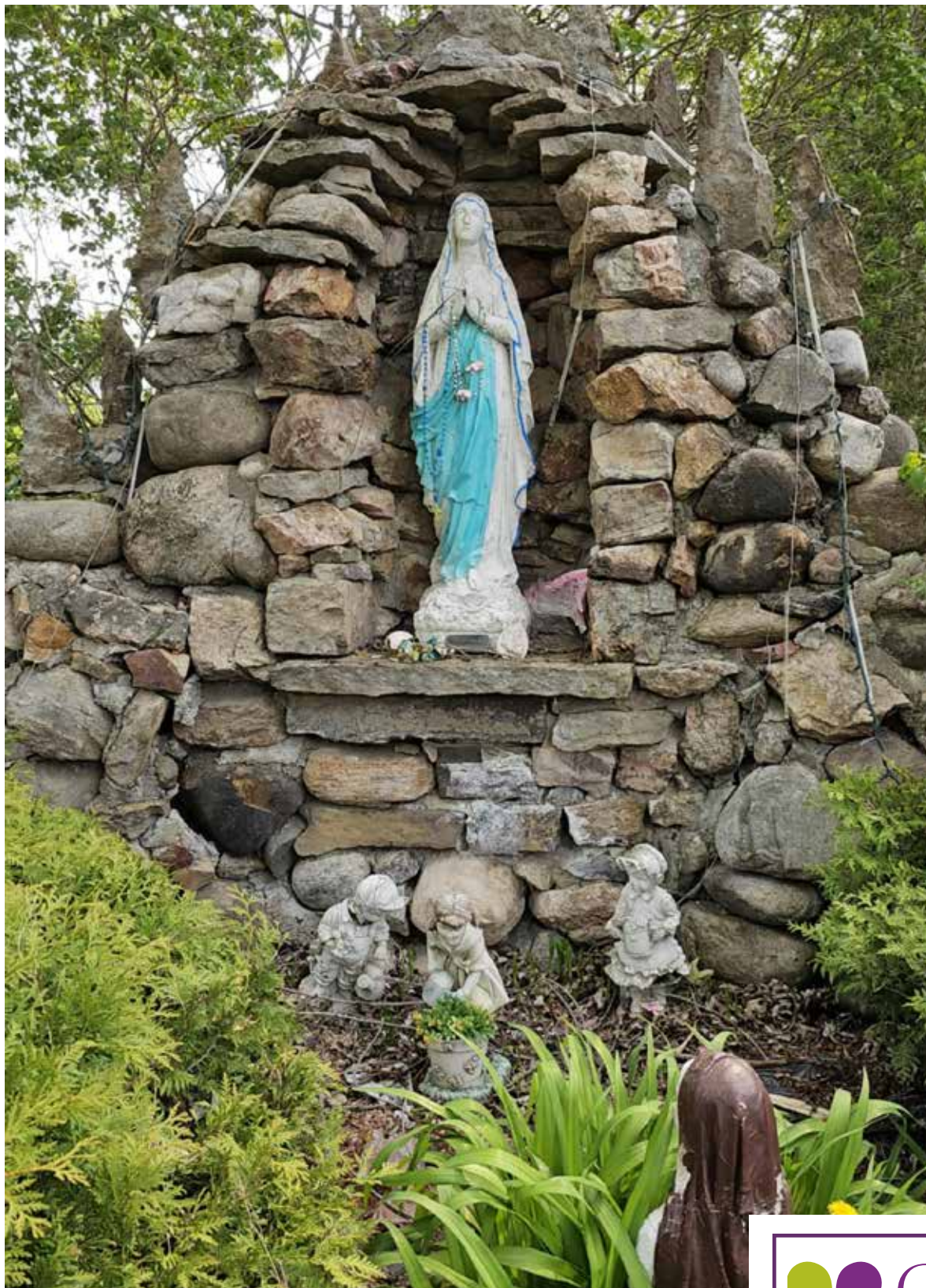


Today Tuvalu;  
Tomorrow the World

1

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Quebec is revamping its approach to preserving religious heritage buildings amid widespread closures and declining church attendance, but communities in the Outaouais are still waiting for clarity on whether local sites will be included in the province's plans. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

## Future of Outaouais religious heritage buildings unclear amid province-wide policy shift



Tashi **Farmilo**  
LJI Reporter

As churches across the Outaouais stand empty or in slow decline, the Quebec government is overhauling how it manages religious heritage properties. The current strategy, in place since the 1990s, is being revised in response to rising upkeep costs, an accelerating pace of closures, and a steadily secularizing population.

A key influence behind the shift is the Statistics Canada study *Religiosity in Canada* and its evolution from 1985 to 2019, based on the General Social Survey. The study found that approximately 762 Catholic churches in Quebec—nearly 28 percent of the 2,746 in existence in 2003—have since been closed, demolished, abandoned, or repurposed. Between 2003 and 2013 alone, 285 churches were converted for new uses, and 40 were demolished.

More recent census data from 2021 shows the trend continuing. The proportion of Quebecers reporting no religious affiliation

rose to 27.3 percent, up from just 5.8 percent in 2001. Over the same period, the percentage of Christians dropped from 90 percent to 64.8 percent. Weekly mass attendance has fallen dramatically—from around 88 percent in the late 1950s to roughly 2 percent by 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic also sharply reduced participation in group religious activities across the province.

In response to these changes, Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communications, Mathieu Lacombe, launched a year-long policy review in spring 2024. The effort is being led by former deputy minister Sylvie Barcelo. The revised framework will prioritize heritage interventions based on urgency, safety concerns, and the exceptional cultural value of buildings. "The current strategy is no longer viable given that the requests far exceed our investment capacity," Lacombe stated, adding that urgent cases will continue to receive support.

*Continued on page 2*



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# More than 545 Val-des-Monts residents without power during a heatwave



Mélissa Gélinas  
LJI Reporter

During a heatwave, more than 545 Val-des-Monts residents experienced a power outage that lasted nearly 12 hours on June 25.

According to Hydro-Québec's website (Info-pannes), the power went out around 9:38 am. However, the announced restoration of power was continually delayed. "We were told that the situation would be resolved by noon, but when I got home from work around 4:30 pm, we were still without power," said Nathalie Deschênes, a Val-des-Monts resident. "After 12 hours, around 9:49 pm, it was finally restored," she adds. According to Deschênes, power outages are

becoming increasingly frequent in the municipality. "Our generator doesn't have much downtime as it's running quite often," she says. "I plan to get a bigger one, given how often there are outages."

No information regarding the reason for the power outage has been shared with residents. "The weather was nice, the temperature was normal," said Deschênes.

However, according to information gathered from Hydro-Québec, the incident was caused by a breakage that was reported during the night. "Our teams arrived on site around midnight and noticed that two (wooden) poles were broken," says Cynthia Rivard, a community relations advisor at Hydro-Québec. However, the cause of the breakage remains unknown. The installation was temporarily secured.

As a result, the following morning, the teams on site noticed the situation had deteriorated. "Indeed, there were other damaged poles located along Route 307," said Rivard. "Obviously, this was taken as a priority."

Several reasons can explain the damage caused to the structures. According to Rivard, the most common causes are tree branches falling on the electrical wires, causing them to break. It can also be a car accident. "This explains the revision of restoration times throughout the day," she explained.

Recommendations for a power outage during a heatwave:

- Stay hydrated
- Look for cool areas
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors tightly closed
- Use a generator

## First impressions



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## Future of Outaouais religious heritage buildings unclear amid province-wide policy shift

*Continued from page 1*

To date, no specific churches in the Outaouais have been identified for priority intervention. The Ministry has said that all projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and that funding will remain subject to government approval. Property owners are being encouraged to contact the Ministry for guidance under Quebec's Cultural Heritage Act, but there have been no announcements regarding regional consultation, funding allocations, or implementation timelines in the Outaouais.

Since the spring, approximately 20 organizations have been consulted, including municipalities, religious groups, and nonprofit organizations focused on church requalification. While none of these have been named publicly, the Ministry has reported unanimous agreement among stakeholders that the current approach is no longer adequate. The Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec is expected to play a central role in the province-wide strategy, though its involvement in the Outaouais specifically has not yet been detailed.

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# QAHN honours volunteers safeguarding Quebec's anglophone heritage



**Tashi Farmilo**  
LJI Reporter

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) has honoured volunteers and organizations for their outstanding contributions to preserving English-speaking Quebec's cultural legacy.

At a ceremony held on June 21 at the historic Louis-Joseph Forget House in Montreal, QAHN presented its 2025 volunteer recognition awards, celebrating those whose efforts continue to shape and safeguard the province's Anglophone heritage.

This year's Richard Evans Award was presented to the Townships Sun, a volunteer-run magazine that has documented life in the Eastern Townships for over five decades. Established under the Eastern Townships Social Action Group, the magazine has become a vital platform for capturing regional voices and histories. Volunteer Marie Moliner describes it as both a mirror and a megaphone, reflecting the community's past and amplifying contemporary voices. Through stories of rural life, cultural identity, and social change, the Sun continues to ensure Anglophone heritage remains part of Quebec's evolving narrative.

QAHN also introduced a new Young Volunteer Award this year to recognize the often-overlooked efforts of youth in heritage work. The inaugural recipients, Bryan McGaw and Jacob Coleman of the Vimy Foundation Canadian Centre for the Great War (VF-CCGW), were honoured for their extensive contributions to archival research, translation, photography, and digital initiatives related to Montreal's First World War history.

Bryan has helped identify significant wartime sites in the city and researched



**A delegation from the Townships Sun accepts the Richard Evans Award at QAHN's annual ceremony at the Maison Louis Forget in Montreal. Pictured (L-R): QAHN president Grant Myers; Gerry Cutting, Melanie Cutting, and Marie Moliner of the Townships Sun; QAHN directors Sandi Beebe and Michèle Thibau. (TF)**

PHOTO: M. FARFAN

local initiatives like the Westmount Soldiers' Wives League. Jacob has used data analysis to uncover the stories of soldiers connected to Montreal's English-speaking churches. According to Ada Chan of the VF-CCGW, their work has shed new light on the lives of Anglophone Montrealers during and after the war. Despite a demanding full-time job, Bryan consistently volunteered two afternoons a week. Jacob has balanced his contributions with doctoral studies and part-time work.

Dr. Ross Higgins received the Marion Phelps Award for individual

achievement. A historian, archivist, and educator, Higgins co-founded the Archives gaies du Québec and served as its first president. His doctoral research into gay life in mid-20th century Montreal led to the creation of the archive, which remains a vital resource for scholars and the broader public.

Higgins was also part of the founding collective behind Androgeny, Montreal's first gay and lesbian bookstore. Over the years, he has taught at McGill, UQAM, and Concordia, and published extensively on queer history in both English and French. Fellow historian Marhan Mozetich praised his decades-

long commitment to collecting archival materials dating back to the 1920s, calling his contributions essential to the preservation of LGBTQ2S heritage in Quebec.

These five honourees were recognized as part of QAHN's 25th anniversary celebrations. Their work reflects the diversity and dedication of individuals and groups committed to protecting and promoting Quebec's English-speaking heritage.

Nominations for the 2026 QAHN Volunteer Recognition Awards will open later this year. For eligibility and submission details, visit [qahn.org](http://qahn.org).

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# Quebec's own social network, Nouvelle Place to replace Tik Tok?



LILY Ryan

By most accounts a huge mistake happened over the last twenty years. Web giants were permitted to create a massive system of surveillance and then permitted to control access to information, with the further error of permitting these same conglomerates to advertise to all these users with highly targeted advertising.

Maybe the cat is out of the bag and there's no going back to a time when Canadians could search for information online without that search being corralled towards sponsored information and used for tailoring advertising later.

Canadian media see so clearly who this has worked to the harm of each of us. Search filters on most search engines put independent and researched news very low in search results. Try it! Search for the same thing on different computers, with different search engines, and with all cookies disabled, say, in a private search mode. The naive thinker will assume the results should be similar in each situation. Yet the results are very much dependent on which set of controls are framing the search.

This is why Google is accused of non-competition behaviour in some countries, the company has created a market, scooped up all revenue associated with advertising to the market, dropped the price to rock bottom

meaning no one else could compete on price or on market reach – and then proceed to control the type of search results. Terrifying situation, is it not? For a newsroom manager who operates on a principal of critical independence and free thought, this situation could not be worse. And yet it is all around us.

Last year, Thomas Owen Ripley, Canadian Heritage's Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs at the time, spoke to a group of experts on a panel topic called Cultural Sovereignty and Web Giants August 16, 2024. The gargantuan challenge democracies face cannot be over-stated. The challenge is not just on election influence, the Denis Bouchard, La Cité communications department also

notes that the future is now. He pointed out that First Nations cannot search in their languages on google, a point of needed change.

Of all the paths towards a future with access to independent thought and information for Canadians, one of them is the creation of a new social media platform and of the creation of a new search engine – Canadian ones. The risk is that a massive effort will be made for two digital tools that are boring and underused. Will the planners think of the most popular common denominator? Dear reader – would you drop Tik Tok for Can Tok? How about focusing on Quebec's upcoming social media called Nouvelle Place?

## LETTERS

to the **Editor** *Opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the paper*

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All letters must be signed with a phone number (not published). Any language is acceptable ... but be clear, civil, and not rude. All letters are edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc, and for length. Expect your letter to be edited. No personal attacks, nor promotional pieces for political candidates or parties accepted.

*The Editor*

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# Clarification



It was June 1985; the school year had just ended. Jim Creskey, then editor of this paper, called *The Buckingham Post* at the time, wanted someone to write about country music. Cindy Burke, who worked in advertising at the paper, encountered someone in Wakefield who said that they'd happily take out an ad if there was something in the paper about country music. I love old-time country music and Jim asked if I'd be willing to write about it. It is one thing to like a music genre; it is a much greater challenge to write about it.

In September 1984, I'd written a feature about Orval Prophet, who under the pseudonym Johnny Six, had some success in Nashville with the release of two songs: "Mademoiselle" and "Town of Memories." These, along with his hit "My Lois and Me," were recorded on his "True Blue" album latest release. I'd grown up listening to singers like Orval Prophet and it was a thrill to be able to tell his story.

Thus began *Country Tracks*, a title given to the column by Cindy Burke. The column's subject matter has transitioned over the years into what you read today. It's 40 years officially and I now feel entitled to bestow upon myself the distinction of: *An Old Grinder*. I'm grateful for it all. More on this next column, but for now here are musings on recent happenings.

Over the course of these columns, there have been some embarrassments. Most of these go unnoticed except by me and I must own what is written. What appears in print is sometimes not exactly what I intended. Today, this old grinder wants to clarify a few errors that occurred recently.

In the last column, you read about the tragic event in Vancouver, where Jenifer Darbellay was one of the eleven people who lost their lives when a van ploughed into a Filipino festival. Yes, her name was Jenifer, not Jennifer, as appeared in the column. Jenifer is what I wrote. The more common spelling, Jennifer, is what appeared in the column.

How did this happen? To understand now it unfolded, here is

an explanation. When I write these words putting pen to paper, I leave them in the capable hands of one of two of my daughters to type. Both are very competent: one, with a Doctorate in English Literature. The other has a Master of Library Science. Along with a very competent Copy Editor, I am open to suggestions or improvements to what I write. This is not humility; this is a recognition of where I stand.

Every time I put pen to paper, I am acutely aware that some who read it will know more than I do about the topic. Indeed, that might be you. Good heavens, when I write my little verses of poetry, there may be true poets or teachers of English Literature who read them. As an old grinder, however, I unabashedly plough onward.

More about the evolution of *Country Tracks* next week, but for now here is a poem recently included in this column where the middle stanza is revised to give the poem some semblance of clarity.

## GHOSTS PAST AND PRESENT

Ghosts, as smoke, rise above  
dying embers  
'round a campfire at closing of  
day.

It is there we sing songs and tell  
stories

That wipe all our worries away.

Ghosts of the past hover o'er us  
Faces turned golden we see  
Red-tinted by flames of a fire  
Resurrected in our memory.

In dreams they return to be with  
us

As we cherish the words that they  
say.

Warmed by faces of those past  
and present,

Worry-free we begin a new day.

Finally, the misspelling of Jenifer's name was probably due to a spell-check on the computer, where the name "Jennifer" is more commonly used.



# Today Tuvalu; Tomorrow the World

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

Some big changes arrive with a bang, but usually they sort of sneak in and you barely notice them at first. Last week's big change saw the creation of the world's first climate-change visas. It's a way of giving potential climate refugees some hope and some dignity, and it would certainly be an improvement on the current migration mess.

In late June all ten thousand residents of the South Pacific island state of Tuvalu were invited to enter a lottery whose 280 lucky winners will get a special climate-change visa that entitles them to work, study and live in Australia indefinitely. Over 3,000 – almost a third of the population – put down their \$25 to register for a chance to leave.

Tuvalu is actually a nice place to live, although jobs are scarce and the entertainment is limited. The main drawback is that its nine coral atolls are very low-lying (two are already mostly flooded). They will all be underwater by 2080, or a good deal sooner if sea level rise speeds up as melting Antarctic and Greenland glaciers slide into the sea.

But that's all right: there will be another 280 Australian visas every year, and New Zealand is providing another 75, so everybody should be safely off the islands long before they disappear. Pity about the slow loss of the language and culture as the Tuvaluans are dispersed

among populations thousands of times bigger, but at least they will survive.

The Australian government is quite proud of its innovation: "This is the first agreement of its kind anywhere in the world, providing a pathway for mobility with dignity as climate impacts worsen." It's entitled to its little boast, but numbers matter. The hard truth is that this would not be happening if there were a million Tuvaluans in the same plight.

The key fact in any discussion about climate refugees is that the tropical countries will be hit sooner and harder than those closer to the poles. Yet the countries in the temperate zone created most of the warming, because they industrialised and began emitting greenhouse gases over a century ago.

The blame and the pain are both unequally distributed, and everybody in the poorer countries nearer to the equator knows that. As Atiq Rahman of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies put it: "From now

on we need to have a system where, for every 10,000 tonnes of carbon you emit, you have to take a Bangladeshi family to live with you."

But that isn't going to happen voluntarily, is it? Yet thirty million Bangladeshi families will be losing their land and their homes to flooding in the coming generation (rising sea levels to the south and great rivers filled with water from melting Himalayan glaciers to the north and west). They have to go somewhere, and nobody will be giving them climate-change visas.

I'm only picking on Bangladesh because it has more articulate scientists than most places. Forty percent of the planet's human population lives in the tropics, and as many as half of them will be facing situations so dreadful that they will have to move in the next generation.

A few tens of millions will probably have to start moving within the next ten years, and the remaining gates to safe havens elsewhere will slam shut against them. (They're mostly closed already.) In most cases it will be ugly, and in some places it will be bloody.

No country is remotely prepared for this. The vast majority have not even acknowledged that it is coming. Even most scientists cling to utterly unrealistic expectations of sudden changes of heart and vastly accelerated decarbonisation that will somehow save us at the next-to-last moment.

That's not going to happen. All human history and all current experience tell us that it won't happen. Even if we halved our carbon dioxide and methane emissions next year, crashing the global economy in the process, the momentum of the warming is such that almost nothing would change in the climate forecasts of the next ten years.

The only action that could change that future now (and it doesn't come with a guarantee) is geoengineering to cool the planet. It's only treating the symptoms, of course, but heat is the ultimate cause of all the other climate disasters and it must be kept down while we work as fast as we can at ending our emissions.

Geoengineering (also known as climate repair) is feasible, not impossibly expensive, and probably safe as it largely mimics or expands upon existing atmospheric processes. Introduce it gradually, monitor it closely, and hope it works well, because we are running out of options.



# Plan PME 2025–2028 draws praise from business community for backing small enterprises



**Tashi Farmilo**  
LJJ Reporter

The Plan PME 2025–2028, unveiled on June 19 by Quebec Ministers Christopher Skeete and Jean Boulet, is being welcomed as a significant commitment to the province's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). With \$494 million in funding, the plan aims to support business growth, succession and regional entrepreneurship amid ongoing economic uncertainty.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (FCEI), the country's largest SME association, endorsed the initiative as a long-overdue recognition of the sector's vital role in Quebec's economy. "This plan is a step in the right direction," said François Vincent, FCEI's vice-president for Quebec. "Entrepreneurs are under pressure from inflation, labour shortages and regulatory complexity. Structured support like this can help them remain resilient and grow."

A key component of the plan targets improved access to government services, an area where many business owners remain in the dark. An FCEI survey found that a significant number of SMEs were unaware of available provincial programmes. "Eighty-three percent of owners want better access to advisory and support services," Vincent noted. "This plan begins to meet that demand."

Led in part by Minister Skeete, the



At the announcement of the Plan PME 2025–2028 are Mr. Guillaume Tremblay (President of the Union des municipalités du Québec – UMQ), Mr. Simon Allaire (MNA for Maskinongé), Ms. Sonia LeBel (President of the Treasury Board and Minister Responsible for Government Administration), Mr. Christopher Skeete (Minister for the Economy and Minister Responsible for the Fight Against Racism), Mr. Jacques Demers (President of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités – FQM), Mr. Jean Boulet (Minister of Labour), and Mr. Benoît Richard (President and CEO of AGT Robotics). (TF)

PHOTO: LI-ANN LAVERDIÈRE – MEIE

initiative also seeks to coordinate provincial efforts under a more unified framework. Working with regional partners, the government aims to ensure that support tools are accessible and aligned with the real-world needs of businesses across Quebec. The broader

goal is to boost productivity and competitiveness province-wide.

The FCEI also welcomed measures to reduce regulatory and administrative burdens, particularly for the smallest firms, which are often disproportionately affected by compliance obligations. "The

paperwork burden is five times heavier for businesses with fewer than five employees than it is for those with over 100," said Vincent Pâquet, senior policy analyst at the FCEI. "When 87 percent of SMEs say excessive regulation hampers productivity, it is more than a nuisance. It is an economic barrier."

However, the FCEI cautioned that while the plan addresses structural inefficiencies, it leaves major fiscal concerns unresolved. "Quebec remains the most tax-unfavourable province in the country for SMEs," Vincent said. "It is the only province where the smallest service and construction firms are denied access to the reduced small business tax rate. Payroll taxes are also around 30 percent higher than the Canadian average."

The federation also criticised the continued use of mandatory collective agreement decrees in certain sectors, a practice unique in North America. "These decrees add paperwork and costs," said Pâquet. "They are outdated, and the government has the authority to end them."

Still, the FCEI expressed cautious optimism, calling the plan a meaningful first step. "This is a clear signal that the government is listening to entrepreneurs," Vincent said. "But the work is not done. Further reductions in regulatory burden, real tax reform and smarter succession planning are essential if Quebec's SMEs are to thrive."

## Provincial funding opens doors for Outaouais farms to grow local market reach



**Tashi Farmilo**  
LJJ Reporter

Outaouais agricultural and food businesses are now eligible for a new round of provincial funding aimed at strengthening Quebec's local food systems. The Quebec government has announced a \$3 million investment to support a range of agricultural, horticultural, and agritourism initiatives, with special emphasis on small producers and those in outlying regions like Outaouais.

Unveiled on June 12 by Agriculture Minister André Lamontagne during the



A new \$3 million provincial initiative is offering financial support to small farms and food businesses in Outaouais to boost local marketing and agritourism, with applications open until October 31, 2025. (TF)

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAPAQ

launch of the Chaudière-Appalaches Gourmet Stops summer season, the funding will support approximately 70 greenhouse and horticultural projects and nearly 60 proximity-marketing and agritourism projects across the province.

In Outaouais, eligible businesses include farms and food processors with less than \$1 million in annual revenue. The funding will help these enterprises implement or strengthen plans to sell directly to consumers, through initiatives like on-farm shops, agritourism experiences, or local market participation.

*Continued on page 8*



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### Avis public de notification (Articles 136 et 137 C.p.c.)

**Avis est donné à DRISS KHAYATEY HOUSSAINI** de vous présenter au greffe de la Cour du Québec du district de Montréal au 1 rue Notre-Dame E, Montréal, Québec dans les 10 jours afin de recevoir un **AVIS D'EXÉCUTION** (saisie en mains tierces - sommes et/ou meubles) (saisie mobilière), **DÉCISION DU TRIBUNAL ADMINISTRATIF DU LOGEMENT, AVIS AU DÉBITEUR**, un **AVIS DE CESSION DE CRÉANCES ET CONVENTION DE CESSION DE CRÉANCES** et **DÉCLARATION DU TIERS-SAISI (BANQUE DE MONTREAL)** qui ont été laissés à votre attention dans le dossier numéro 500-02-273393-251.

Vous pouvez vous opposer aux mesures d'exécution prises contre vous dans les 15 jours de la notification du procès-verbal de la saisie ou de la saisie en mains tierces. Vous pouvez également contester la déclaration du tiers-saisi dans les 10 jours de celle-ci, conformément à l'article 711 C.p.c.

Le présent avis est publié à la demande de Marie-Ève Garneau, huissier, qui a tenté sans succès de vous signifier le présent document.

Il ne sera pas publié à nouveau, à moins que les circonstances ne l'exigent.

Montréal, le 20 juin 2025

Audrée Pigeon, huissier de justice



## BECAUSE WE HAVE YOUR ACTIVITIES AT HEART COMMUNITY EVENTS

**AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33** A Hot Summer at the Aylmer Legion and you're all invited! - July 1st: The Best Canada Day Party is at the Aylmer Legion! Starts at 11 a.m. Outdoor celebration including artisans, face painting & crafts for kids, all-day BBQ, live music with over 8 musicians by "Hey Neighbour, Mon Voisin" & The "Gib Rozon Band," beverages, snacks, sandbag game and more! - July 19 at 1 pm: Euchre Tournament. - July 19: Happy Hour + Patio Night, pizza and live music by Jason Coyle. - July 25: Happy Hour + Patio Night, pizza and live music by Donna and Marc (Rabbit). - August 16: Golf tournament fundraiser at Les Vieux-Moulins Golf Club. Sponsorship opportunities available in support of the Aylmer Legion. For info, call Denise at 613-614-7847. The Aylmer Legion is located at 59 Bancroft Street, Gatineau (Aylmer) QC. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

**LES BEAUX DIMANCHES AU MUSÉE IS A SERIES OF FREE CONCERTS** offered as part

of Ville de Gatineau's summer programming! Bring your chair and enjoy the music in the gardens of the Inn. Following each concert, at 3:15 p.m., historian Roger Blanchette will offer a free guided tour of the museum (in French only). Spots for the tours are limited. Reservations for the tour can be made here: <https://www.zeffy.com/.../visite-guideee-avec-roger...> July 6 at 2 p.m. - Dominic Gauthier on double bass and Lucy Chen on percussion. August 3 at 2 p.m. - Noël Samyn, French classics on the piano. August 17 at 2 p.m. - Nicole Ratté, Jazz Quartet. September 7 at 2 p.m. - Davina Pearl on the saxophone, Gino Scaffidi on the guitar and Tom McMahon on the Chapman stick. Once again this year, we're offering tea in the museum gardens during our concerts. The cost is \$10 per person and includes a beverage of your choice (tea, coffee, lemonade) and a scone with butter and jam. Each Sunday, we'll have 5 tables, accommodating 2 to 4 people. Reservations are necessary, as seating is

very limited. Book your table for tea during the concert here: <https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/the-dans-les-jardins--2025>. Couldn't get a table for tea? Don't worry, you can always bring your own chairs to enjoy the concert and atmosphere for free. Once all our tables are served, we'll be able to offer our drinks menu on a takeaway basis while stocks last. 1 Rue Front, Gatineau, QC.

**OLD AYLMEYER MARKET** Come celebrate the opening of the season with us! Meet up with your favorite market gardeners, producers, and artisans, and meet new, passionate people from our beautiful region. They all have one thing in common: a love for quality, local products. From June 1 to October 5, 2025, the Old Aylmer Market returns every Sunday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Commemorative Park, 117 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer). Join us and celebrate the return of your favorite merchants!

**THIS SUMMER AT THE SYMMES INN MUSEUM:** Discover our new escape room Robbery at the Aquatic Club! Book your time slot to try to escape at [www.symmesevasion.ca](http://www.symmesevasion.ca) or 819-682-0291.

**THURSDAY LIVE SESSIONS - JAZZ ON LA TERRASSE DU SQUARE** Every Thursday evening this summer until October 4 from 7 pm to 10 pm, join us for free live jazz on the Terrasse du Square. In a relaxed and welcoming setting, professional musicians from the local jazz scene - handpicked and curated by drummer Andrew Federber - take the stage for a weekly concert. This is your go-to weekly summer event: whether you're a jazz lover or just looking for a great night out, Thursday Live is the perfect reason to make it a habit. In case of bad weather, the event will move indoors to La Cocktailerie, where the vibe stays just as smooth. Free, friendly, and full of local talent. Everyone's welcome! 248 Chemin Old Chelsea, Chelsea, QC.

**PÈLERINAGE/PILGRIMAGE:** Please join us/Joignez-vous à nous le 10 août/on august 10, 2025 pour célébrer notre/to celebrate our "Pilgrimage to honor Our Lady of Knock", St. Malachy's Church, Mayo, Quebec, J8L 3Z8. <http://stmalachyolv.com/pilgrimage.asp>.



# Chelsea to open first public access points to Gatineau River in major regional investment



**Tashi Farmilo**  
LJ/Reporter

For the first time in its history, the Municipality of Chelsea is developing official public access points to the Gatineau River, responding to years of local demand and a growing commitment to sustainable, inclusive infrastructure. The project, supported by \$210,000 in funding from the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, forms part of a broader \$1.2 million regional investment into community-based development across six municipalities.

Set for completion in spring 2026, the work will include three distinct river access sites. A universally accessible dock and a 125-metre open-water swimming corridor will be built in front of Farm Point Park, providing a rare public space for safe and structured recreation. Two additional access points for non-motorized watercraft will be constructed: one near the Farm Point Community Centre, the other at the end of chemin Burnett. The project is being developed in line with provincial environmental regulations, with preparatory work already underway while the Municipality awaits final approvals from Québec's Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks.

The announcement follows a public consultation process that confirmed strong community support for river access. Alongside the construction of new infrastructure, the Farm Point



Chelsea is set to open its first official public access points to the Gatineau River by spring 2026, as part of a \$1.2 million regional investment in sustainable, community-driven infrastructure across the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

Park service chalet is being renovated to improve accessibility and will include new restrooms and changing facilities. The Municipality has also committed to working with the Société de sauvetage du Québec to meet safety standards and to implementing measures that will ensure respectful use of the space by visitors and nearby residents alike.

Chelsea Mayor Pierre Guénard emphasized the significance of the project, describing the river as central to both the community's history and its daily life. He called the initiative a move to "democratize" access to the river in a

way that is environmentally respectful and socially inclusive, marking a shift in how public space is envisioned and shared.

This investment in Chelsea is one of several projects across the region supported by the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais through Québec's Fonds régions et ruralité – Volet 3, administered by the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation. Other municipalities benefiting from the funding include Cantley, where a multipurpose path is under construction, and L'Ange-Gardien, which is enhancing its regional

park facilities. In La Pêche, efforts are underway to restore the presbytery, while Pontiac is investing in upgrades to local parks in Luskville and Quyon. Val-des-Monts will convert a historic church into a new cultural centre, blending heritage preservation with modern community use.

Prefect of the MRC, Marc Carrière, framed the initiative as part of a shared vision for regional sustainability and community resilience. "These investments make it possible to realize a shared vision of the sustainable development of our territory," he said.

## Provincial funding opens doors for Outaouais farms to grow local market reach

*Continued from page 6*

The program also allows for a 15% boost in financial assistance for young agricultural businesses and those pursuing organic certification.

"The assistance offered will support the growth of farms while allowing them to diversify their marketing channels," said Minister Lamontagne, noting the importance of food self-sufficiency and the unique role regional producers play in Québec's economy.

In 2024, four projects in the Outaouais received a combined total of \$70,000 through the Proximité initiative. This year, several local businesses have already contacted the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) to assess eligibility, though the ministry noted that some apply without prior consultation, making regional forecasting difficult.

Recognizing the additional challenges rural regions face, the government

is also advancing the launch of the application period and increasing aid rates for outlying areas.

"I am pleased with this financial support, which will help support numerous local agricultural projects throughout Québec," said Minister Lamontagne. "Promoting a diversity of production models and supporting initiatives that bring consumers closer to producers is good for the economy of our regions and is also a step in the

right direction to increase our food self-sufficiency."

Applications for the Proximité Ministerial Initiative are being accepted from now until October 31, 2025, or until the \$1 million budget is exhausted. Full application guidelines are available at the Québec government's official portal: [www.quebec.ca/agriculture-environnement-et-ressources-naturelles/agriculture/aide-financiere/initiative-ministerielle-proximite](http://www.quebec.ca/agriculture-environnement-et-ressources-naturelles/agriculture/aide-financiere/initiative-ministerielle-proximite)