

As hunger count hits new high, Moisson Outaouais warns of social emergency



Volunteers work in the Moisson Outaouais warehouse as the organization faces record-high demand for food assistance and calls for long-term solutions to rising food insecurity in the region. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY

Outaouais MRC Warden election results



MRC PAPINEAU

Paul-André David was elected Warden of Papineau with 61.32% of the votes. Runner-up, Pierre Bernier lost by 2,385 votes. The MRC had a 45.30% voter turnout with 10,537 valid votes and 715 rejected ballots.

MRC VALLÉE-DE-LA-GATINEAU

Chantal Lamarche was re-elected for a third term as Vallée-de-la-Gatineau Warden with 70.65% of the vote. Her opponent Denis Côté lost by 3,231 votes. The MRC has a 40.91% voter turnout with a total of 7825 valid votes and 174 rejected ballots.

Continued on page 7



With Quebec's newly released Hunger Count showing food assistance requests reaching more than three million per month, Moisson Outaouais is sounding the alarm about the deepening food insecurity crisis in the region.

In the Outaouais, Moisson Outaouais responded to over 94,000 food assistance

requests in March 2025 alone, one of the highest monthly totals the organization has seen this year. That figure, while striking on its own, reflects a broader and sustained increase in demand throughout 2025. The local numbers mirror the provincial trend identified in the Bilan-Faim 2025, which reports a 7 per cent increase in monthly requests across Quebec since last year and a 37 per cent jump since 2022.

Continued on oage 7



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See page 3

Change of leadership for Youth Protection Service



Méliissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

The 2024-2025 report, entitled, Changing the World, One Child at a Time, was submitted by the National Director of Youth Protection (NDYP), Lesley Hill, on October 23. This report demonstrates several concrete advances made since 2024, in collaboration with several partners, with respect to youth protection and the positive impact they have had on children and families in Quebec.

"This is what we are focusing on for the coming months...", commented Hill. "This is the right path to follow to implement youth protection services that are more humane, more consistent, and that promote trust, safety, and rehabilitation for young people."

RENEWED GOVERNANCE

Major changes marked the 2024-2025 year, including a major reform in health and social services, the arrival of the very first Commissioner for the Well-being and Rights of Children in Quebec, and the appointment of a new NDYP in November 2024.

Upon her arrival, Leslie Hill held a series of meetings with Santé Québec to establish



Lesley Hill, NDYP, during her visit to the Opitciwan community (June 6, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ATIKAMEKW OPITCIWAN COUNCIL

the sharing of roles and responsibilities. A portrait of the structural issues was also drawn up based on previous reforms.

CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS

The participation of young people and their parents is essential to improving services. To this end, the NDYP wishes to implement strategies to encourage young people and parents to express their opinions. To this end, several meetings were held with youth representatives to learn about their concerns.

Hill also met with associations representing parents and community organizations to better understand the challenges faced by parents within the Youth Protection Directorate (YPD).

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW GUIDELINES

New guidelines have been implemented to better protect young people and better regulate practices in rehabilitation centres. To this end, nearly 450 people were consulted to learn about their concerns.

- To obtain more tools for service providers

ers to meet the needs of children with special needs.

- To develop partnerships with community and institutional organizations.
- To provide more services for parents and young people by teaming up with local service providers.
- To ensure better respect for the rights of young people, particularly regarding their schooling, health, individual needs, and other matters.

Services for First Nations and Inuit Youth and Families

These services are part of an approach based on respect and the importance of cultural safety and reconciliation. Several visits were made by the NDYP to various communities, including Opitciwan, Manawan, and Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam. These meetings made it possible to gather their perspectives while fostering dialogue.

Actions carried out in 2024-2025:

- Support for the community of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam
- Support for Inuit authorities
- Online publication of clinical tools for service providers
- Launch of work on developing ministerial guidelines

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Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais

Québec

Chelsea voters deliver clear win to Brian Nolan, unseating previous mayor seeking second term



Sophie Demers
LJI Reporter

Former federal conservative candidate, Brian Nolan, sweeps mayoral race over previous mayor Pierre Guénard. Chelsea had a 51.84% voter turnout. There was a total of 6,678 eligible voters, and 3,384 valid votes. There were 78 ballots that were rejected.

Nolan won by 830 votes with a total 2107 votes (62.26%) while Guénard received 1277 votes (37.74%).

Nolan campaigned for fiscal responsibility, and denouncing the accumulation of debt Chelsea has accrued. Throughout his career he has been a public servant across various government departments for 25 years and most recently served as a Senior Program Officer for the Canadian Border Service Agency.

Nolan is also an experienced business owner; he owns a hemp farm in Ontario and founded an IT consulting company which he ran for over a decade. He has worked in the Cannabis industry with two start-up companies and co-owns a store in the Byward Market.



Brian Nolan, newly elected mayor of Chelsea.
(November 11, 2025) SD

PHOTO: COURTESY

In terms of community involvement, Nolan has volunteered for the Des Collines Minor Hockey service as President for eight years, and as Vice-President for four.

ELECTION RESULTS FOR CHELSEA COUNCILLORS:

- District 1: Marie-Claude Renaud won with 74.48% of the vote, defeating incumbent councillor Enrico Valente, who was seeking re-election.
- District 2: Incumbent councillor Dominic Labrie won with 61.32% of votes over opponent Sébastien Redmond.
- District 3: Gerg McGuire won his seat on council with 60.11% of votes over his opponent Chantal Jacques-Gagnon.
- District 4: Susan Young was elected in a tight race with Emily Dwyer. Young received 52.02% of the votes.
- District 5: Rita Jain was re-elected with 59.56% of voters over Frédéric Gates.
- District 6: Donald Dery won the race against fellow candidates Jean-Charles Lalonde and Hervé Lemaire. Dery was elected with 47.06% of the votes.

La Pêche mayor Guillaume Lamoureux re-elected for third term by acclamation



Sophie Demers
LJI Reporter

Guillaume Lamoureux was re-elected as Mayor of La Pêche by acclamation after running unopposed. Originally elected in 2017, this will be his third term as mayor.

Lamoureux has a bachelor's degree from McGill University in Bio-resource engineering. Before becoming mayor, he worked as a coordinator responsible for septic tank treatment centre and environment at the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau.

COUNCILLOR ELECTION RESULTS:

- **District 1:** Yan Bernier was elected by acclamation.
- **District 2:** Daniel Meunier was re-elected with 74% of votes over opponent Cindy Guilbeault
- **District 3:** Incumbent councillor Pierre LeBel, was re-elected by acclamation
- **District 4:** Shaughn McArthur ran unopposed and was elected by acclamation
- **District 5:** Incumbent councillor Pamela Ross was re-elected by acclamation
- **District 6:** Benoit Hudon ran unopposed and was elected by acclamation



Guillaume Lamoureux was elected by acclamation for a third term as Mayor of La Pêche. (SD)

PHOTO: COURTESY



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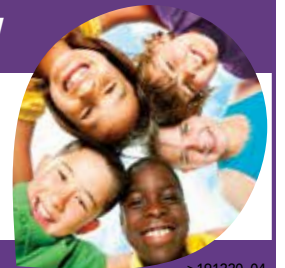
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Where was Elections Quebec on Sunday? Counting votes: responsibility should go back to Elections Quebec



LILY Ryan

When polls closed on November 2, thousands of journalists and political watchers powered up their computers to connect with Elections Quebec. They did this as they had done so many times before – three years out of four, actually. One year, there is a provincial election; the next, a federal; and then, a municipal. There's no regular polling in the fourth year.

Elections Quebec is the authority responsible for publishing real-time results from polling stations. Before this year, anyone

could access the Elections Quebec website, navigate to the "Vote results" section and then select a municipality. From there, they could view a graphical representation of the polling stations and the number of votes cast for each candidate (as well as the number of rejected ballots).

This year, Quebec downloaded another responsibility to the municipalities: posting vote counts. For a regional newspaper such as the *West Quebec Post*, tracking election results was madness. Each municipality and MRC had its own website page with results that were often delayed. Some municipalities didn't report their results at all throughout

the evening of the vote count on Sunday. Cantley was one hot election race

that interested many journalists, yet reported nothing for hours on election night.

Because each municipal body was creating and managing its own new results site, there were inconsistencies and errors all along the way. Gatineau, for example, displayed a running tally along the bottom screen of how many polls were reporting, but erred fundamentally. In that space, the site showed the first poll reporting as "1 of 1", the second as "2 of 2", and so on. Instead, it should have read "1 of 465", "2 of 465" and so on, until the last poll returned results, which would

have shown "465 of 465".

While not a highly consequential problem, this error in the reporting method did impact all who watched the vote come in. And it was a flag about the reliability of the entire process. This red flag doesn't necessarily fall on the municipalities; rather, the downloading of responsibilities from Quebec needs to be done in a better way.

For election results reporting across the province, standards of communicating to the public are a perfect example of a system that should be consistent. Will Elections Quebec take back responsibility for election result reporting?

LETTERS

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

Canada must protect the IAE to fight global malnutrition

Severe malnutrition is rising, with women, children, and adolescents most at risk. Front-line clinics require predictable support to plan effectively. I commend the Government of Canada's recent \$78 million commitment to the Child Nutrition Fund. This is a significant step toward expanding lifesaving tools like Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food and improving coverage to prevent relapse.

Achieving large-scale impact requires sustained commitment. The International Assistance Envelope (IAE) supports both emergency nutrition and long-term health

systems, including local supply chains, trained health workers, and country-led investments tailored to community needs. As other donors reduce support, Canada's consistency is increasingly vital for stability, credibility, and results.

I urge Minister of Finance François-Philippe Champagne to maintain the IAE at CAD \$10.6 billion for 2025–26. Sustaining this funding will save lives now and build resilience for the future, reflecting the principled leadership Canadians expect.

Tanner Bergsma,
Waterloo, ON

Doctors leaving Quebec? What is Legault thinking?

I'm writing to add my voice to my neighbours' call for help. I understand Quebec has a new deal with Quebec doctors. It passed recently, and now we see the results. Doctors are leaving Outaouais, en masse!!! Already we are in crisis. Not enough nurses and other specialists to keep our operating rooms open in Hull, the region's trauma center (one of five ORs are able to open, CBC reported this week).

What is going to happen? Is this the Legault government last kick at forcing privatization of health care? It sure feels like the CAQ government is corralling the public away from public care and right into the wolf den of private care.

I want none of it. Let's focus on the necessities: caring for our sick and vulnerable.

Joelle Legault
Chelsea

Message from the Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada on Veterans Week 2025

Veterans Week is an opportunity to honor the men and women who have worn the uniform for their exemplary service and sacrifices.

Last spring, I was in the Netherlands to pay tribute to the memory of the brave members of our Armed Forces who helped restore peace to Europe during the Second World War. I was touched by the deep gratitude expressed by the Dutch people toward Canadian veterans, whose heroic actions during that dark period changed the course of history and laid the foundation for a lasting friendship between our two nations. The soldiers who lost their lives there and those who returned home, some unscathed, others scarred, but all

transformed, will remain forever in our memories.

Through their courage and determination in times of war, conflict, and peace, our veterans inspire entire generations. It is our duty to carry on their proud legacy, to take the time to listen to their stories and to share them with others.

To our veterans and their families, thank you for your unwavering commitment to defending the values we hold dear.

Let us never forget.

Mary Simon
Governor General and
Commander-in-Chief
of Canada
(Transl.: BA)

Letters to the Editor Guidelines:

To make sure your letter is published:

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

West Quebec Post

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Subscriptions
\$33,95 (+ taxes)

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A Modern Major Prime Minister



As these words are written, we may be at the cusp of another federal election. Whether we go to the polls or not, the purpose of its contents will become evident, as I've been sitting on this story awaiting it to happen. First, however, a wee background is necessary.

For several years, I was involved with the Savoy Society of Ottawa, founded in 1975, by a Gilbert and Sullivan troupe from the Montreal West Operatic Society. Over the years, the Ottawa Savoy Society raised over \$96,000 for the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Foundation. On November 24, 2014, I was one of the choristers in a modern major fundraiser benefitting CHEO and Savoy. That concert would also help us to raise funds for our spring production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. The concert program contained an announcement of an open contest to re-write the lyrics to the Major-General's famous patter song from *Penzance*. The winning selection was performed during that spring's performance. For those unacquainted with the Major General's song, here are some of the lyrics:

I am the very model of a modern Major-General,
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I know the Kings of England, and I quote the fights historical

From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical,
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,

I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical,
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,

With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.

As you will discern, the Major-General was portrayed as one who was puffed up with a profound knowledge of all subjects. One person, Allan MacDonald, a high school drama teacher, who had been part of the 2013 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, submitted his revision of the G and S lyrics and became the Director of this *Penzance* production.

A federal election was underway in 2015. Here is Allan's revision:

HARPER MAJOR-GENERAL OR PRIME MINISTER REPLACING MAJOR GENERAL STANLEY

[Prime Minister] I am the very model of a modern
Pry-I'm min-is-ter,
I keep confidences to myself hiding all that's sinister.
I am the King of Canada, and I worship wars historical.
From eighteen twelve to World War II in order categorical

I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters economical,
I trust in enterprise from the Lilliputian to cor-
porational

Concerning Darwin's theorem I am teeming with
a lot of news,

That trendy Trudeau pompous lad he poses while
he misconstrues

[Choristers] That trendy Trudeau pompous lad he

poses while he misconstrues!

That trendy Trudeau pompous lad he poses while
he misconstrues!

That trendy Trudeau pompous lad he poses while
he misconstrues!

[PM] I strive to make Machiavellian ploys political;
I laugh at all those back bench losers oppositional
In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic and sinister
I am the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter

[C] In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic, and
sinister
He is the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter!

[PM] I always dreamt that I would be a PM extra
ordinaire

Reached for the Top as a lad at Toronto Richview
Secondaire
I did flee from U of T for a spree at U of Calgary.
Once out west I tilted right in political economy
I socked the left when I led the coalition of Citizens
Reform and Tories I homogenized into my dorky
denizens

With robocalls and payouts to Mike Duffy...Oh we
made great mischief

To defeat the Libs of Martin, Dion, Trudeau and
Ignatieff!

[C] To defeat the Libs of Martin, Dion, Trudeau and
Ignatieff

to defeat the Libs of Martin, Dion, Trudeau and
Ignatieff

to defeat the Libs of Martin, Dion, Trudeau and
Ignatieff

[PM] I am the monarch who reigns supreme pro-
roguing the parliament

I yearned to shut the senate up then filled it with
my loyal men

In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic and sinister
I am the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter
[C] In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic and
sinister

he is the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter!
[PM] I sing while tinkling ivories in a rock band
with propriety

While Lauren cuddles kittens from the Humane
Society

I scolded that rascal Putin with my plucky sincerity
While I bombed ISIS terrorists for their barbarous
barbarity

I muzzle my Ministers from muttering any malapoop
While twittering terrific tidings of my dear party's
agitprop

Statisticians must not measure nor can science do
experiment

I am the fearless commander of a rubber stamp
parliament!

[C] He is the fearless commander of a rubber stamp
parliament

He is the fearless commander of a rubber stamp
parliament

He is the fearless commander of a rubber stamp
parliament

[PM] I scribed a book about the Leafs oh my those
poor forgotten men

At the NAC with Yo-Yo Ma I get by with Help From
my Friend!

In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic and sinister
I am the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter

[C] In short, in matters scurrilous, sardonic and
sinister

he is the very model of a modern Pry-I'm Min-is-ter!



Made You Look

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

'Made You Look' is a children's game where a kid points to something that doesn't exist just to get another kid to look in that direction. Then the perpetrator mocks the victim: "Made you look! Made you look!" One of the dumber games, but it usually works.

Donald Trump is a master of this game. He can infallibly trick the public into looking over there, drawing their attention away from something else that he doesn't want them to see. He is the King of Distraction.

So when Trump announced on Saturday (2 November) that he may send the US Army into Nigeria "guns-a-blazing", the smart money instantly assumed that something new and embarrassing was coming out about him and Epstein. Because surely he couldn't be serious about invading Nigeria, could he?

Yet he is going through the motions with complete seriousness. Accusing the Nigerian government of not doing enough to protect its Christian citizens from Islamist extremists, he declared that "If we attack, it will be fast, vicious and sweet, just like the terrorist thugs attack our CHERISHED Christians!"

Wait a minute. 'Fast and vicious' attacks are not normally described as 'sweet', except by people who are addicted to violence or at least want to be seen as scary. And Nigerian Christians are not some downtrodden minority in need of being cherished by Donald Trump; they are the richer half of the population in Africa's most populous country.

Yet Trump says he has instructed his newly renamed 'Department of War' to "prepare for action". Secretary of State for War Pete Hegseth replied: "Yes sir. The Department of War is preparing for action. Either the Nigerian Government protects Christians, or we will kill the Islamic Terrorists who are committing these horrible atrocities."

Really? I can believe that an American president might invade Venezuela, which is close, defiant and not very powerful militarily. In fact, that may happen any day now. But Nigeria is very far away across a large ocean (about 8,000 km) and it has around 230 million people (about twice the size of France, but with almost four times as many people).

It also has no past or present quarrel with the United States: the bewildered Nigerian government is desperately trying to figure out how it ended up on Trump's hit list. Nigeria has a high crime rate (three times more murders

per capita than the US), but the southern, majority-Christian parts see only one-third as much violence as the northern, Muslim parts.

There are indeed radical Islamist groups in the north that do a great deal of killing, but the people they are killing are overwhelmingly less fanatical Muslims. There simply aren't many Christians up there to kill.

It's tempting to dismiss this fantasy as just another case of Trump bearing the impression of the last person he talked to (presumably in this case a not very well-traveled evangelical Christian), but that's a bit too easy. It assumes that behind this ridiculous facade there really are grown-ups in charge, but where is the evidence for that? Who are they?

Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller, most pundits would reply – and behind him the evil geniuses who wrote the 900-page Project 2025 plan for radically restructuring the federal government and concentrating all power in the executive branch.

There is clearly a huge effort being put into this project: Congress has been largely sidelined and the Supreme Court is reliably pro-Republican. But the evil geniuses owe all of their power to Trump's popularity with the MAGA movement, and they seem to have no control whatever over his behaviour.

Which brings us back to the highly erratic and self-interested behaviour of Donald Trump himself. While Trump's plans to overawe and maybe destroy the existing Venezuelan regime grew naturally out of previous US government policies in the region, a large part of his foreign policy is basically driven by random enthusiasms.

This obviously includes things like his relentless pursuit of the Nobel Prize, his fantasy of a 'Riviera of the Middle East' in Gaza (of which we may not have heard the last), his half-baked plans for the annexation of Greenland, Canada and Panama, and now his notion of a military crusade to 'save' the Christians of Nigeria.

It is very unlikely that any of these things will come to pass, but if the 'Project 25' mob cannot stop him from frittering away his own popular support they will all go down together. And yes, if there are new revelations about Trump and Epstein on the way then Trump needs useful distractions, but at the same time they may be his actual ambitions, however foolish.

Jour du Souvenir

11 novembre

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Remembrance Day

November 11

HEROES WE MUST
NEVER FORGET

3 ways to support Canada's veterans year-round

On Remembrance Day, Canadians across the country commemorate the brave men and women who died in the line of duty as well as those who currently serve in the armed forces. However, your recognition doesn't have to be limited to November 11. Here are three ways you can support Canadian veterans year-round.

1. Donate to a reputable charity

There are a number of charities, including the Poppy Fund, VETS Canada and Wounded Warriors Canada, doing critical work to empower and support veterans from coast to coast. Donating even a small amount to a reputable organization can help improve the circumstances of those who risked their lives for their country.



2. Volunteer at a Royal Canadian Legion

There are more than 1,300 Legion branches across the country. As Canada's largest veteran service organization, the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) offers outreach and assistance programs for veterans and their families as well as community services and support. Volunteering at your local Legion branch is a great way to make a real difference in the lives of those who served.

3. Visit a veteran in your community

Veteran Affairs Canada (VAC), in collaboration with the RCL, runs an initiative that facilitates face-to-face visits with veterans in retirement and long-term care facilities. These visits provide social interaction and a sense of community to individuals who may not otherwise receive many visitors. Spending time with a veteran can have a major impact on their life as well as your own.

This Remembrance Day, know that Canadian veterans need your help year-round, and consider taking steps to offer your support.



*Merci pour votre service !
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As hunger count hits new high, Moisson Outaouais warns of social emergency

Continued from page 1

As food banks across the province prepare for another difficult winter, the message from the region's largest food distributor is clear: hunger is no longer an exception, it is a daily reality for thousands of working families.

"In four years, the number of workers we help has doubled," said Marie-Pier Chaput, Director of Communications at Moisson Outaouais. "Hunger is spreading, and it no longer spares even those who have jobs."

Chaput said that 21 per cent of those receiving support are employed, double the number from 2021. Nearly half of the

households helped are families, including a growing number of two-parent households, a group not traditionally associated with food insecurity. "Working is no longer enough to put food on the table," she said.

The 2025 Bilan-Faim, released October 27 by Banques alimentaires du Québec (BAQ), presents a stark provincial picture. The number of unique individuals supported each month now exceeds 600,000, and total food assistance requests have reached levels that surpass earlier projections. According to BAQ, food is not the only resource in short supply; human and material capacity is also being stretched to the limit.

While inflation at the grocery store has contributed to this growing demand, Chaput emphasized that the affordable housing crisis is the primary driver of food insecurity in the Outaouais. "People face fixed costs like rent, heating, and transport, and the only flexible part of their budget is food. So, they cut back," she said. "First in quality, then in quantity. And it doesn't take long before that affects their health."

With colder months approaching, the pressure on local food banks is expected to increase. The upcoming holiday season, typically one of the busiest times of year for food assistance, could see record-breaking demand. "Every donation

counts," Chaput said. "Whether it's food, funds, or your time, if you can give, now is the time."

Moisson Outaouais is also calling for long-term solutions. The organization supports policies that address the root causes of poverty, including more affordable housing, improved income support, and greater access to social pricing programs. Without structural changes, Chaput warned, the region will remain caught in a cycle of crisis.

"Our growth is not a measure of success," she said. "It is a symptom of a social emergency that is unfolding right here, right now."

Outaouais MRC Warden election results

Continued from page 1

MRC COLLINES-DE-L'OUTAOUAIS

Marc Carrière was re-elected after running unopposed for MRC Warden. This will be his second term.

MRC PONTIAC

Jane Toller was re-elected as MRC Pontiac Warden for a third term. Four candidates ran and Toller won with 38.06% of votes. Runner-up Jean-Pierre Landry came short

by 632 votes (27.95% of the vote), while Josey Bouchard received 26.53% and Bruno St-Cyr came away with 7.47%.

GATINEAU

The city of Gatineau re-elected Maude Marquis-Bissonnette as Mayor. Leader of Action Gatineau, Marquis-Bissonnette ran a tight race with opponent Mario Aubé, leader of Équipe Mario Aubé. She won with 51.14% of the vote, while Aubé came away with 47% after a strong campaign. Independent Candidate Rémi Bergeron had 1.87% of the vote.

No fire department closures in the immediate future for MRC Pontiac

Peter L. Smith
LJI Reporter

The future of fire services in the MRC Pontiac was the focus of a well-attended public information session held October 9 at the St. Joseph Centre for Families and Seniors.

More than 85 residents gathered to hear Julien Gagnon, MRC Pontiac Public and Civil Security Manager, present a slideshow outlining current challenges and potential changes to regional fire services. Every municipality has a Fire Safety Cover Plan in effect, which is updated every five years.

Gagnon emphasized that while no fire department closures are planned in the immediate future, municipalities are facing mounting costs that are outpacing local budgets. Between 2002 and 2025, fire protection costs have risen by 485%, while municipal budgets have only grown by 199%.

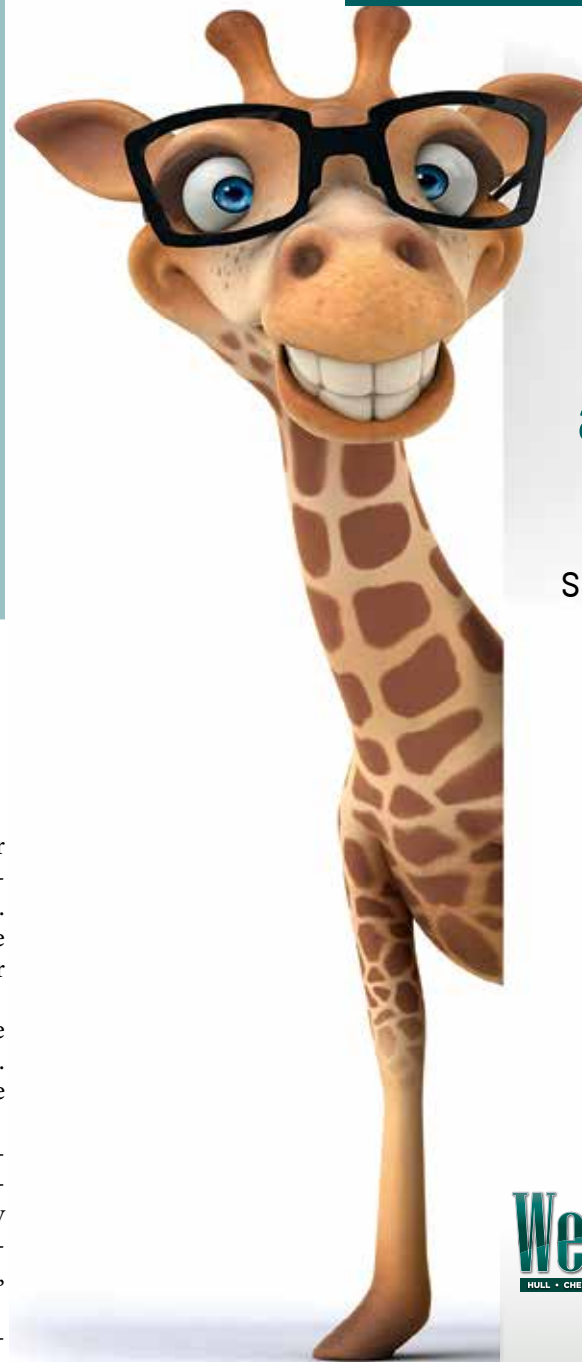
Since municipalities are responsible for financing fire services, the financial burden is ultimately passed on to ratepayers. Larger departments have access to some government funding, but it doesn't cover fire trucks.

"Replacing a fire truck costs on average \$700,000 without financing," said Gagnon. "The average age of our 46 front-line fire vehicles is 21.3 years."

The MRC Pontiac's fire departments include 233 firefighters across nine departments, though only about 50 are typically available during daytime hours. Some firefighters volunteer in multiple departments, helping to fill gaps when needed.

In 2018, the MRC commissioned consultant Richard Lefebvre, former Rouyn-Noranda fire chief, to conduct a study on the feasibility of merging fire services.

Continued on page 10



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Dairy Farmer from the Gaspé Peninsula continues Presidency at the Canadian Dairy Commission



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

On October 23, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Heath MacDonald, appointed Jennifer Hayes as President of the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) for a second four-year term, effective December 23.

In a press release, MacDonald stated, “Her expertise and commitment are essential for our sector as we continue to work together to ensure our national dairy industry remains competitive, resilient, and innovative in a rapidly evolving landscape.”

BACKGROUND:

Jennifer Hayes began her career at the CDC in 2017 as a commissioner and was subsequently appointed president in 2021. She was the first woman to hold this position.



Jennifer Hayes, President of the Canadian Dairy Commission (October 23, 2025) (MG)
COURTESY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Hayes is a third-generation dairy and beef farmer and co-owner, with her father and uncle, of PineCrest Farms in Shigawake, Quebec, her hometown. She has always been involved in agriculture.

A mother of two, she holds a graduate diploma in business management from Concordia University and is a revitalization officer for the Bonaventure Regional County Municipality (RCM).

She has been heavily involved in rural development initiatives in her region, particularly by actively participating in community development projects and the implementation of economic and social development plans. In partnership with her husband, she also launched the Rural Project to help advance the development of rural communities in Quebec.

Hayes has worked with the Union des producteurs agricoles, where she advocated for the development of various sectors (dairy, beef,

and agriculture).

In addition, she is the president of the Hayes Scholarship for Continuing Education, a charity that raises funds for young people in the region for their post-secondary studies.

THE CANADIAN DAIRY COMMISSION:

The CDC constitutes a highly important industry for Canada. More specifically, it is a Crown corporation that was created in 1966 and reports to Parliament through the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

The CDC also plays a key role in setting marketing regulations, particularly through price setting. For consumers, it ensures quality dairy products and a stable supply.

In Quebec and Ontario, the dairy industry represents 81% of the market. Throughout Canada, there are more than 10,300 dairy farms with a total of approximately 970,000 cows.

Magic and microscopes at the Chelsea Library



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Aylmer author Claire Huneault brought her love of storytelling and science to the Chelsea Library on October 22, during a special bilingual event held for Quebec Library Week. The session welcomed local families and young readers for an afternoon of reading, discussion, and interactive learning.

Huneault, a retired French-language teacher who now writes and illustrates from her studio in Chelsea, is the founder of Éditions À la craie, her own publishing house focused on youth literature. Her stories follow Iris and Max, two young characters from a magical community who pursue scientific studies in the outside world. Iris becomes a microbiologist, while Max becomes an aerospace engineer. Their adventures are featured in the bilingual series *Tea, Elixir and Cottongrass*, available in both French and English. The English editions include Vol. 1: *The Gardens*, Vol. 2: *At Night, All Cats Are Grey*, and Vol. 3: *The Fairy Lake*. Blending science with ancestral magic, the books encourage young readers to ask questions, reflect on identity, and explore the world with curiosity.

Speaking to her inspiration, Huneault said the stories grew out of her years spent in the classroom. “Over the years, I shared the daily lives of my young students. Their questions, enthusiasm, and concerns deeply shaped my perception of childhood, a vibrant time marked by discovery, transformation, and learning. When I write, I think of them, growing up in an increasingly complex society.”

The October event brought this connection to life, with Huneault reading from her books and guiding children through hands-



Local author Claire Huneault visited the Chelsea Library during Quebec Library Week to share her youth fiction series, combining science and magic to inspire children's curiosity, learning, and self-reflection through storytelling and hands-on activities. (TF) PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

on exploration using a real microscope and prepared slides. These tools reflected the interests of Iris, the scientist in her fiction.

“Scientific discoveries fascinate young people, especially when we talk to them about it,” Huneault explained. “Science helps us better understand the world around us, from the infinitely small to the infinitely vast. These discoveries are so extraordinary, they sometimes border on magic.”

While her books contain magical elements, they are firmly rooted in themes of identity, resilience, and learning. Huneault said she uses fiction to help children navigate real-world issues while staying engaged. “Fiction is a particularly effective way to reach young people. It allows us to explore ideas, values,

and issues in an indirect and engaging way. Iris and Max must navigate a duality, their ancestral magical values and the dominant scientific thinking of society.”

Huneault also emphasized the importance of parents reading with their children. “Reading together helps create a space for discussion and builds trust,” she said. “When children are used to talking about stories, they are more likely to ask questions and share ideas. It strengthens

communication as they grow older.”

Huneault’s goal is not only to entertain, but also to provide meaningful models for reflection and growth. “I hope they serve as references for young readers, who will face many challenges in adulthood, environmental, technological and social,” she said. “By offering them captivating characters who rise to challenges, I aim to support their personal development.”

Quebec opens public consultation on forest work in Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Quebec is inviting residents of the Outaouais region to comment on new forestry plans aimed at recovering trees damaged by a major spruce budworm outbreak. The public consultation started on October 28 and runs until November 21.

The plans propose logging, replanting, thinning, and roadwork in parts of the Pontiac, Papineau, La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, and Les Collines-de-l’Outaouais. Some forest units also extend into Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Laurentides.

The work is outlined in updated Operational Integrated Forest Management Plans and Special Management Plans. These documents identify where forestry activities could take place in response to insect damage and changing forest conditions.

According to Natural Resources Canada, Quebec has been experiencing one of the largest spruce budworm outbreaks



Quebec is asking residents of the Outaouais region to comment on proposed forestry operations aimed at recovering wood from forests severely affected by a widespread spruce budworm outbreak that has defoliated millions of hectares across the province. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FORESTS

in decades. By 2019, over 9.6 million hectares of forest showed moderate to severe defoliation. The outbreak has led to elevated tree mortality and increased pressure on timber supply and ecosystems across the province.

Continued on page 9

Buckingham: under high tension!



Méliissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

The Buckingham Residents Association (ARB) invited Gatineau Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette, city councillors, and residents to participate in an exploratory walk on October 24 along a portion of the route proposed for Enbridge Gaz Québec's high-pressure (3,500 kPa) pure hydrogen pipeline project in the Buckingham area.

It should be noted that at the city council meeting on September 16, the Gatineau city council unanimously adopted a resolution that the H2 project be submitted to the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), Québec's environmental public hearing office. This walk was therefore a continuation of this collective effort.

The ARB emphasized that they were not against the project itself, but rather against the proposed route. Indeed, hydrogen energy can be very promising for the energy transition. "However, Enbridge chose the easiest route, taking advantage of their acquired rights on Georges Street, where their buried natural gas pipelines are al-



Left: Gatineau Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette accompanied by members of the ARB, city councillors, candidates, and residents (October 24, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF VÉRONIQUE SANTOS, ARB ADMINISTRATOR

said Santos. "Clearly, the terrain speaks for itself, and this project requires a full study by the BAPE."

Hydrogen is a highly volatile and flammable gas. In the event of an explosion following a leak, this would result in a very high risk of loss of human life, total destruction, and damage that could extend

which could create several risks in terms of corrosion and electrical interference.

ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Built in 1845, it is one of the oldest English-speaking churches in the Outaouais region. This heritage site is located within

the potential impact zone of the pipeline (45 Donaldson Road). In other words, in the event of an explosion, the church would risk being completely destroyed.

DONALDSON ROAD

This is an area susceptible to landslides as it is known to have unstable soil. A channeled stream runs under the road, weakening the soil and causing recurrent subsidence.

Furthermore, this road is frequently used by heavy trucks transporting hazardous materials. Nearly 7,000 pass through it each year to get to the ERCO plant.

It should be noted that other key points were also presented during the walk, including Maclaren West Street, Georges Street, and more.

Once the walk was completed, everyone was invited to an unofficial press scrum in the Saint-Luc hall to share and exchange discussions on the subject. "Residents remain hopeful for a clear commitment from the government and the City of Gatineau so that public safety and transparency prevail in the evaluation of this project," said Nicole Carrière-Robitaille, president of the ARB.

New rules aim to cut court delays in Gatineau, Pontiac



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Mandatory mediation and automatic arbitration are now required for small claims under \$5,000 in Québec's Gatineau and Pontiac judicial districts, part of a broader effort to make the justice system faster, more accessible, and less burdensome for residents.

The policy, in effect since November 3, applies to all contested claims filed in the Small Claims Division of the Court of Québec in these regions. Under the new process, parties must first attempt to resolve their dispute through mediation. If no agreement is reached, the case moves directly to arbitration, eliminating the need for a court hearing.

"This is about making the justice system more efficient, more accessible, and more human," said Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette. "It gives residents a greater role in resolving their own disputes, while reducing wait times."

In 2024, the median time to obtain a judgment in small claims court was roughly 24 months in Gatineau and 16 months in Pontiac. The government estimates the new system will resolve disputes in three to nine months, depending on the outcome of mediation and arbitration.

The reform is part of Québec's Act to Improve the Efficiency and Accessibility of



Quebec has introduced mandatory mediation and automatic arbitration for small claims under \$5,000 in Gatineau and Pontiac, a reform supported by Suzanne Tremblay, MNA for Hull, who says the changes will reduce delays and ease the emotional burden on residents. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

Justice, which encourages alternative dispute resolution and simplifies civil court procedures. For claims exceeding \$5,000, mediation and arbitration remain voluntary, but residents who choose mediation early may have their files processed more quickly.

Regional leaders welcomed the initiative, noting the heavy caseloads in local courthouses. "The courthouses in our region are some of the busiest in Québec," said Mathieu Lacombe, minister responsible for the Outaouais. "This will significantly reduce the number of cases that reach a judge."

For many residents, small claims court may be their only interaction with the legal system. Officials hope this shift will result in a more collaborative, less stressful process.

"Having a legal case can be a source of stress, especially when the outcome takes a long time," said Suzanne Tremblay, MNA for Hull. "Mandatory mediation and arbitration will help residents of Gatineau move on more quickly by reducing delays, while offering a more human experience that encourages dialogue. This approach will ease the emotional burden many people face."

Quebec opens public consultation on forest work in Outaouais

Continued from page 8

Residents can view the proposed plans and submit comments online at: www.quebec.ca/agriculture-environnement-et-ressources-naturelles/forets/planification-forestiere/plans-regionaux-consultations/outaouais

In collaboration with the Pontiac MRC, two virtual information sessions are also being held. The first is scheduled for November 4 from 12:30 - 1:30 pm, and the second for November 5 from 7:00 - 8:00 pm. Registration is required in advance at: www.trgirtto.ca/fr. The deadline to register is noon the day before each session.

For more information, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests can be contacted by phone at 819-246-4827 ext. 701449 or by email at consultationpafi-outaouais@mrnf.gouv.qc.ca. This consultation does not affect land-use designations or existing rights on public lands. It focuses only on how and where forestry operations may be carried out in areas already designated for such use.

No fire department closures in the immediate future for MRC Pontiac

Continued from page 7

The findings highlighted equipment inconsistencies between departments — such as hoses and hydrant fittings of varying sizes — which could complicate joint responses to major fires. Additionally, several municipalities have non-conforming hydrant networks, requiring tanker opera-

tions to sustain water flow during emergencies.

GAGNON OUTLINED SEVERAL POSSIBLE INITIATIVES:

- Cross-border response to ensure the closest available truck responds to an emergency;
- Better back-up for simultaneous calls;



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every other Tuesday, free registration. Call Bruce at 613-240-6915. -Knitting Group, a humanitarian initiative, meets every Monday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Legion is open to all. Come for a visit! 59 Bancroft Street, Old Aylmer, QC. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com

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ST. MARK'S CHURCH, 160 RUE PRINCIPALE, ANNUAL FALL BAZAAR on Saturday, November 8, from 8 am to 2 pm. We will have household items, jewelry, crafts, toys, games, small electronic and sports items, home-baked goods, and a "Gift Shop", so come for some early Christmas shopping.



MRC Pontiac Public Security Manager Julien Gagnon gives a presentation on the future of fire services in the Pontiac at a public information session held October 9 in Chapeau. (PS)

- Shared administration and apparatus' to stretch tax dollars;
- Standardized training, equipment, and operating procedures;
- Coordinated prevention and inspection efforts across departments;

The study noted a regional apparatus strategy (sharing, redeployment, common specs) could reduce the overall number of vehicles needed while maintaining — and even improving — service reliability. Early estimates suggest replacing 10 vehicles could be avoided.

As for governance models, Gagnon said options being studied include a MRC-managed regional fire service, an intermunicipal régie, or expanded intermunicipal agreements.

"No final decision will be made until a complete agreement is drafted by a joint committee and adopted by each council, likely in mid-

2026," Gagnon stated.

He stressed that some fire departments within the MRC are already combined to improve service and reduce costs.

"Integrating fire departments should be seen as strengthening local service, not erasing it," Gagnon added.

However, not everyone was optimistic about the proposed changes. Waltham Fire Chief Larry Perry, who is set to retire at the end of the year, voiced concern.

"I believe these new initiatives will not encourage more volunteers to step forward," said Perry. "Things are working well in Waltham. Our trucks are well maintained and our firefighters are continually training. Expecting eight volunteer firefighters to be available at any given time is unrealistic when most have full-time jobs, some outside their towns."



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PLATEAU CHRISTMAS MARKET November 22 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Come discover the very first Christmas market in the Plateau and celebrate the magic of the holidays in a warm and festive atmosphere. On the program: Lighting of the big tree at 6 p.m. Local crafts and creations for all tastes. Music and entertainment throughout the day. Sweet and savory treats to enjoy. Take advantage of this first edition to stroll, discover local treasures, and share a convivial moment with family or friends. 35 Allée de Hambourg, Gatineau, QC.



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