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Milena Buziak named artist of the year in the Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Theatre director Milena Buziak has been awarded the 2025 Prix du CALQ – Artiste de l'année en Outaouais, a major regional honour that recognizes exceptional artistic contributions in Quebec. The prize, which includes a \$10,000 grant, was announced during the Culturiades Gala on November 27 at Cégep Héritage in Gatineau.

Presented by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) in collaboration with Culture Outaouais, the award celebrates a local artist whose work has stood out for its creativity, impact and dedication to the community. For Buziak, who has lived and worked in Gatineau since 2016, the recognition is both personal and collective.

"This award is not just for me, but for all the artists and craftspeople I've worked with over the years," she said. "Creating theatre in the region, for both kids and adults, is a real mission. Living off your art in Gatineau is an act of resistance."

Originally from Poland, Buziak is known for her experimental and inclusive approach to theatre. She is the founder of Voyageurs Immobiliers, a Gatineau-based theatre company that blends traditional performance with sound installations



Milena Buziak, a Gatineau-based theatre director known for her inclusive and experimental work, has been awarded the 2025 Prix du CALQ – Artiste de l'année en Outaouais for her outstanding contributions to the region's cultural landscape. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY

Perkins loses post office at La Villa



See story on page 2

and interactive experiences. Her work often addresses cultural identity, women's stories and the importance of connecting with others through art.

The jury praised Buziak as a "gathering force" who constantly reinvents her practice. In recent years, she has been especially active in developing projects for young audiences and helping strengthen the artistic community in the Outaouais region and beyond. Her collaborations include the Théâtre français at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Théâtre de la Vieille 17 and the University of Ottawa's theatre program.

This is not the first time Buziak's talent has been recognized on a national level. In 2020, she received the John Hirsch Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts, which honours promising theatre directors early in their careers.

The Prix du CALQ is part of the government's effort to support and promote the arts across Quebec. By highlighting regional artists, the council aims to encourage cultural diversity and sustain creativity in communities that often work outside the spotlight of major urban centres.

"This prize gives me the breath to keep creating and resisting."



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Centre culturel du Vieux-Aylmer

MARCHÉ DE NOËL

Vendredi 5 décembre

- 16h à 20h Marché de Noël
- 17h à 19h Noël avec les chants de Valérie Latreille
- 18h à 20h Atelier de confection de bougie (\$)

Samedi 6 décembre

- 10h à 20h Marché de Noël
- 10h à 16h Marché du bas de Noël à Aydelu
- 10h à 11h45 Atelier de fabrication de cartes de Noël (\$)
- 11h à 15h50 Train extérieur
- 11h30 à 12h30 Noël en chorale - Shout Sister Choir
- 13h à 15h Le musicien, Gabor Desmond Hegedus
- 13h à 14h30 Atelier de confection de 4 savons (\$)
- 13h30 à 14h30 Café tricot autour des foyers
- 16h à 18h Noël avec la musique de Jérémy Flynn

Dimanche 7 décembre

- 10h à 16h Marché de Noël
- 10h à 16h Marché du bas de Noël à Aydelu
- 10h à 12h Atelier de confection de couronnes de fleurs séchées (\$)
- 10h30 à 10h50 Les Contes de Luana autour des foyers
- 10h30 Patinage avec le Père Noël à la patinoire de la Marina
- 11h30 à 11h50 Les Contes de Luana autour des foyers
- 11h à 15h50 Train extérieur
- 13h à 15h Noël en chanson avec Mat Beausoleil
- 13h à 15h Macramé avec Geneviève - Jardinière de Noël (\$)

(\$) Inscription nécessaire au www.paradehohoho.com



ANDRÉ FORTIN
DÉPUTÉ DE PONTIAC



Perkins loses post office at La Villa



The Canada Post outlet at Dépanneur La Villa in Perkins, Val-des-Monts, will permanently close on December 5, 2025, and all postal services will temporarily move to the Buckingham post office while the Municipality works to restore local service. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY



The Municipality of Val-des-Monts is letting residents know that the Canada Post office in Perkins, located at 1428 Route du Carrefour inside Dépanneur La Villa, will permanently close on December 5. The current business partner operating the post office has decided to stop offering postal services. Canada Post says this decision was not made by them and is beyond their control.

Until a new partner is found, all mail ser-

vices for Perkins residents will temporarily move to the Canada Post office in Buckingham. That office is at 166 Lépine Avenue, Gatineau, and it is open Monday to Friday, from 9:30 to 5:00 pm.

The Municipality is working with Canada Post to find a new local business in Perkins that can take over and reopen a post office in the area. They hope to have services back in Perkins in the coming weeks. More updates will be shared when available.

Any local business owner interested in hosting the post office can contact Canada Post at 1-800-267-1177 for more details.

Have your say: Outaouais Development Observatory launches region-wide surveys to update Community Portrait



L'Observatoire du développement de l'Outaouais (ODO) is once again doing citizen consultations as part of its Community Portrait project. The observatory is focused on learning about the development in the Outaouais region. The Community Portrait project was a founding research project for the organization. The aim is to

offer a comprehensive and detailed view of local communities.

Previous editions of the project were conducted in 2021 and in 2016. The data from this research is available on the ODO website. It is compiled in a document as well as on an interactive map.

The first step of the project was consultation with community stakeholders that allowed the observatory to define 115 communities across the Outaouais.

Continued on page 7

Operation Red Nose cancelled in Outaouais due to volunteer shortage



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

For the first time in four decades, Operation Red Nose will not be available in the Outaouais during the holiday season. The Pat Burns Foundation, which had organized the program locally for the past five years, has withdrawn from the 2025 edition due to a shortage of volunteer support.

The Foundation stated that while its operations are entirely volunteer-run, running Operation Red Nose requires an additional team specifically devoted to the campaign. "Organizing Operation Red Nose also requires an additional volunteer team dedicated to fully coordinating the service. That added burden was no longer feasible this year," said Elodie Brault, Vice-President of the Foundation.

Providing this seasonal service involves more than dispatching volunteer drivers. It calls for a dedicated coordinator or team to oversee planning, volunteer management, logistics, and partnerships. Without that structure in place, it was not possible to safely and effectively deliver the service this year.

In an effort to salvage the 2025 edition, the Foundation reached out to local organizations, sports groups, and institutions to explore shared leadership or a possible transition. "Despite the goodwill of several actors, no structure could be confirmed in time to allow for a 2025 edition," Brault said.

The cancellation affects hundreds of potential users in the region. In 2024 alone, nearly 600 residents used Operation Red Nose in the Outaouais to get home safely after a night out. While the service will still be active in 42 regions across Quebec this year, including for 84 percent of the province's population, Outaouais residents will need to make alternate plans.

The Foundation encourages the public to take precautions when celebrating during the holidays and to plan for safe transportation options such as taxis, designated drivers, public transit, or private ride services.

"Road safety remains a collective responsibility, especially during the holiday season. We understand the community's attachment to this service and share the hope of seeing it return to Outaouais," said Brault.



Operation Red Nose will not operate in the Outaouais region this holiday season for the first time since 1985, as the Pat Burns Foundation cites a lack of volunteer resources to run the service safely and effectively. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY

12 Days, 12 Voices: Combating violence against women



Mélissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

The Gatineau Police Service (SPVG) has decided to take action by participating in the 12 Days, 12 Voices initiative to raise public awareness of the various resources available to combat violence against women. This campaign will run from November 25 to December 6, 2025.

It should be noted that the United Nations declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, while December 6 commemorates the 14 women who were murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. The campaign is also known internationally, with different dates selected for it.

In a press release, Nicolas Côté, head of the SPVG's Research, Development and Organizational Strategy Division, stated:



Campaign poster: 12 Days, 12 Voices (November 25, 2025) (MG) PHOTO: GATINEAU POLICE

"This campaign aims to raise public awareness and remind everyone that resources are available. Behind every statistic, there is a voice, a person, a story," he added. "With this campaign, we want to humanize the fight against domestic violence and emphasize that no one should suffer in silence."

To demonstrate their commitment to

this cause, the SPVG unveiled a banner in front of their stations during a press conference. Numerous organizations were invited to SPVG headquarters to discuss the issue.

In addition, to highlight the initiative, inspiring quotes and messages will

be posted daily on the SPVG's Facebook page, website, and in select public spaces.

OTHER MOBILIZATIONS

On the other hand, the Assembly of Regional Women's Intervention Groups (AGIR) and its members will organize a series of awareness-raising activities throughout the Outaouais region during the 12 days of the campaign, including informal gatherings, training sessions, artistic projects, self-defence classes, and more. For more information: facebook.com/agir.outaouais.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

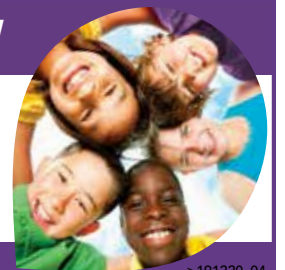
- To highlight the stakeholders and partners involved in the fight against violence against women,
- To break the isolation,
- To support victims, and
- To raise public awareness.

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AI local newspapers? Fake news at a whole new level



LILY Ryan

Imagine that! Two new local newspapers in Quebec have been making waves. One in Sherbrooke, one in a borough of Montreal, both entirely created by generative AI (artificial intelligence).

By all appearances these two new weekly newspapers seem legitimate – but they are simple examples of what people can do with AI, and the real danger of unchecked generative artificial intelligence.

Over the past few years, Canada has been rocked by fake news, foreign interference in elections by way of fake social media posts, bot farms and the dark possibilities of deep fake production.

There has been a fascinating volley of protectionist laws (the online news act being one) and reactions from various web companies. Meta blocked news media entirely rather than follow Canadian laws and Google opted to follow the law, providing a bit of newsroom funding to make up for their hoovering of Canadian advertising dollars.

The ad revenue shifting online has meant the culling of local newspapers across Canada. In equal amounts, the in-



crease of fake news has proliferated. Yet the hunger for real news is as widespread as ever within the general population. Many people don't pay enough attention to the reliability of news sources.

Enter this new phase of a wildly evolving Canadian news landscape: generative AI-produced newspapers. Not just an article here or there. Entire newspapers are fakes, created by a web-crawling computer program that has been learning

from local newspapers. As a sidenote, the West Quebec Post has a strict policy of zero tolerance for AI-generated articles.

Grasp the irony – if over 400 local newspapers have closed since social media companies swept the ad market, these dead newspapers actually taught AI programs how to write, layout, promote, design for newspaper style.

In the realest way possible: local newspapers followed the counsel of political advisors in capital cities saying publishers

must all have open news websites. Newspapers across Canada invested their last pennies into their digital publishing to 'keep up with the times'. Result? Generative AI learned the fine art of newspaper publishing and got to work. This, while the print copies flew off stands because of their popularity.

Sherbrooke was the first hit, with an entirely fake newspaper. Montreal was next. Coming to Danford Lake soon, and every one of West Quebec's

neighbourhoods are new 'journals', 'reports' and 'weeklies'.

Dear reader, just be wary of headlines with flying pigs. Subscribe to your human-produced newspapers today – and as many as possible, to keep humans behind the typewriter in Quebec.

Images: Screenshots of fake newspapers produced entirely by generative AI, yet easily available online with no disclaimer as to the provenance of content.



Photo: Capture d'écran «Le Journal de Sherbrooke» «Mais à quoi s'abreuveront les fameuses IA et les faux médias comme celui de Sherbrooke, s'il n'y a plus de journalistes pour vérifier et valider ce qui se passe pour vrai dans nos villes et nos quartiers?», écrit l'auteur.

LETTERS

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

What if we took health and education out of the hands of politicians?

Every election in Quebec follows the same pattern: a new minister, a new reform, a new slogan. Meanwhile, our hospitals are overflowing, our schools are falling apart, and those who work there are exhausted. We can no longer rebuild the house every time there is a change of government. It is time to protect what we hold most dear: health and education, two pillars that short-sighted politics have been wearing down and disfiguring for too long.

Yet we have the resources, the talent,

and the technology to build a modern and humane system. But these forces are often paralyzed by elected officials tied to an electoral calendar. We entrust public health and education to politicians with no training or experience in these areas, who impose reforms guided by promises and an electoral agenda rather than by the reality on the ground or scientific data.

Decade after decade, it's the same story. Every two or four years, everything starts from scratch. And then we're surprised

when our systems collapse. What we need is stability, a genuine willingness to listen to the field, and a long-term vision led by those who understand the issues: our experts, teachers, and caregivers.

Imagine a Quebec where health and education are managed by independent boards made up of experts. Institutions protected by law, guided by a 20- to 30-year vision, periodically revised as needed—based on knowledge, science, and human experience, rather than on the opportunities of the moment.

Other countries have understood this: Finland plans its education system over 20 years, Norway protects its collective wealth through a sovereign wealth fund, and the United Kingdom entrusts the planning of

its health care system to an autonomous public body. -Why not us?

Quebec deserves stable, competent institutions that are immune to short-term political considerations. Our children, our seniors, our families, and future generations deserve better than reforms improvised by people with no experience or expertise in the field. And this vision must belong to those who care, teach, and build, for the good of all.

It is time to stop playing the sorcerer's apprentice with what we hold most dear. We have all the means to initiate this change. All that is missing is the courage to do so. (Trans.: BA)

**Philippe Blanchette,
Gatineau**

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

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 Gélinais

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
Web Content Manager: Alana Repstock
Delivery: Denise Lepine, Melissa Mercer

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Musings from the darker side



Bliss Carmen, who was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, is one of Canada's most revered poets. The unusual first name is that of his mother whose name he chose as a writer. Carmen, who died in 1929, wrote many outstanding poems, including *Revelation*, from which *Live in Friendship* was set to a choral arrangement by Gary Ewer. This arrangement, commissioned by the Nova Scotia Choral Federation on its 25th Anniversary, begins:

"Live in Friendship with the seasons,
and their skill shall make thee whole.
Take the bird's song and the wind's note
for they're tonic to thy soul."

Ewer's choral arrangement, set to eight-part harmony, is a beautiful piece of music that entices both choristers and listeners to fall in love with the seasons. It is how I feel when I am singing the words, yet there's always an exception. That deviation occurs every time I step outside into a cold, grey, dreary November day.

Sunshine coaxes smiles; November has little of either. If heaven is paradise, then November is limbo. Sunset, when you rarely see it, is early afternoon. As the temperature hovers around the freezing mark, 10 am resembles 2 pm. All is silent, there's no birdsong, no flowers, butterflies or bees. Leafless tree branches are silhouetted against a grey sky. November coaxes feelings of emptiness, of hope for something better. That hope happens around Christmas, which is now dubbed the Holiday Season.

Yet, as the old year passes, there is that time when all the media pronounces on its highlights, its wars, victories and disasters. In your kindness, please forgive me as I highlight a few from 2025.

You will remember June 22nd, when in what was dubbed Operation Midnight Hammer, the U.S. Air Force and Navy attacked Iran's nuclear facilities with Bunker Buster Bombs.

On another occasion, Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev, a former Russian President, mentioned the Soviet nuclear strike option. U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the redeployment of nuclear submarines to regions closer to Russia.

Another story mentioned Russia's opposition to Germany's plans to launch satellites as part of an escalating cycle of geopolitical tensions over military competition in space. These satellites are for

early warning reconnaissance and communication with potentially offensive capabilities.

A November 28 front-page story in the *Ottawa Citizen* concerned a Department of National Defence plan to acquire 1,620 hectares of farmland near Camp Borden for a new radar system that would be a part of the Trump Administration's Golden Dome missile defense shield.

Readers may also be aware of the testing of drones over the nation's capital that occurred weeks ago.

All the above events, as well as China's increased activity in the South China Sea near Taiwan, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the Middle East conflict hang over our heads as the grey clouds of a lifeless November day. Each of these happenings certainly detracts from what Bliss Carmen exhorted us to do; to live in friendship with the seasons. This is what prompted me to write my own little poem to express my feelings. These are admittedly dark thoughts, ominous in nature. Like the bleak November weather, they most certainly taint the joy of Christmas and Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.

As the afternoon sun surrenders to darkness
the chilled air grows ever colder.
Frost settles on roofs, the fields and fences.
The roadside pond freezes over.
Silenced now is that pond's twilight chorus;
no birdsong awakens the day,
for the birds have left for the southlands,
wildflowers have withered away.

The old year is slowly dying
A white shroud spreads over its pall
Its victories, wars and disasters
are at history's beckoning call.

Soon we'll make our New Year's resolutions
forgetting the lessons we've learned.
Glowing embers turn into cold ashes
After the fire has burned.

We have only to gaze at the labyrinth
where the message is written in stars
though Peace on Earth is our credo,
we destroy our planet with wars.

Then, one day bright flashes above us,
our buildings will crumble and fall.
There'll be no birdsong to awaken
just a grey shroud to cover us all.



Sudan: Civil War and Partition?

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

The ceasefire in Gaza, however shaky, is freeing up some bandwidth for the world's media to fret about other ongoing massacres, and UN Secretary General António Guterres wasted no time in turning the spotlight on Sudan. "The horrifying crisis in Sudan ... is spiraling out of control," he said on Monday (3 November), but the civil war may really be coming to an end.

The biggest city in western Sudan, El Fasher, fell to the nastier of two brutal rivals last month after a two-year siege. That was followed by the worst massacre in a civil war that has already killed 150,000 people and made one-third of the population refugees, but with luck it may be the last such event in the current cycle.

Sudan has never really had a government worthy of respect. Only two years after it got independence in 1956 it had its first military coup, and in 1962 the mainly Christian population in the south revolted against the rule of the Muslim majority in the north. Three million dead and six military coups later, South Sudan got its independence in 2011.

Eight years later the rump 'Sudan', now a country of only fifty million people, toppled a cruel thirty-year dictatorship and embarked on a brave experiment in civilian democratic rule in 2019. It lasted for almost two years before the military seized power again.

The civil war began in 2023, when the two leading generals split over who was going to run the military regime. The obvious choice was the head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan. His rival was General Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo, also known as Hemedti.

Hemedti was an outsider, a former camel trader from the sparsely populated and mostly desert west of the country. He had created a genocidal paramilitary group known as the Janjaweed that the former dictator, Omar al-Bashir, adopted as a counterweight to the regular army.

In its early days the Janjaweed was a camel-mounted militia massacring non-Arab tribes for Bashir in the western region called Darfur, but in recent years it has grown into a well-equipped military organisation called the Rapid Support Force (RSF). Nevertheless it should have been beaten easily by the regular army (SAF) once the split happened.

How did it grow instead into a force that controls the whole western half of the country? Gold.

Most of Sudan's gold comes from illegal 'artisanal' gold mines in RSF-controlled Darfur. Ninety percent of it ends up in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where it is re-melted, re-branded and sold onwards.

The UAE has long since stopped being just another one-trick Gulf oil state. It has become a country of 11 million people, its annual Gross Domestic Product is over half a trillion dollars (about the same as Singapore or Sweden), and only a third of its income comes from oil.

True, most of those 11 million people (80%-90%) are the skilled and unskilled foreign workers, most of them male, who keep the UAE economy going. In that respect, it's a typical Gulf state. But in foreign affairs it's a big, grown-up country with all the usual ambitions, and it has become a major independent player in the region's strategy and politics.

The region covers not just the Middle East but also northeast Africa, including Sudan – and Hemedti has long had a close relationship with the UAE. Indeed, the UAE has hired RSF fighters as mercenaries for its interventions in Yemen, Libya, and elsewhere.

But the main deal that keeps the war in Sudan going is Darfur's gold in exchange for the weapons that the UAE sources from all over the world.

Those weapons made the RSF a force that could stand up to the Sudanese regular army. It has now nailed down all of Darfur, admittedly the poorer and more sparsely populated half of the country but the part where most of the gold is. And Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran are being generous enough with their aid to ensure that the SAF can keep fighting too.

The RSF has now set up its own rival government in Darfur and says it is open to a partition of the country. Last Thursday (6 November) Hemedti announced he would accept a ceasefire on the existing lines, which in practice would mean a Darfur ruled by the RSF and a second partition of the old Sudan. Its 'friends' did something like that to neighbouring Libya, so why not?

The African Union's historic ban on changing the former colonial borders of African states in order to avoid endless border wars is fading with the rest of the 'rules-based international order', so it could easily come to that. Last stop the Disunited States of Sudan – but first, probably, some more slaughters of the innocent.

"No Bill 2!" Shawville rallies

Clifford **Welsh**

A demonstration was held outside Pontiac Community Hospital in Shawville on November 30 in protest of Quebec's Bill 2 and in support of doctors. Participants gathered at the hospital entrance with signs and chants directed at the provincial government. The rally, organized by Pontiac Voice, was one of several held across the region as the legislation continues to move toward implementation.

Bill 2, adopted on October 25, restructures physician compensation in Quebec by shifting toward a model based on patient enrolment and performance targets rather than fee-for-service. Medical associations including the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ) have raised concerns about the model, noting that some regions like the Outaouais could experience increased difficulty retaining or recruiting doctors under the new structure.

In the Outaouais, multiple physicians have stepped down



PHOTO: CLIFFORD WELSH

from leadership positions following the bill's adoption, and healthcare advocates warn that further resignations could affect service availability, particularly in rural areas like Pontiac. Residents at the Shawville protest gathered to reg-

ister their opposition to the changes and to draw attention to local pressures already facing the healthcare system.

The legislation is currently moving toward rollout, though legal and professional challenges remain active.

Head-on collision with one fatality and one seriously injured

Mélissa **Gélinas**
LJ Reporter

A 77-year-old woman tragically succumbed to her injuries following a violent head-on collision at the intersection of Lorrain Boulevard and Valiquette Road in Gatineau. Upon arriving at the scene shortly after 7 pm on November 22, officers from the Gatineau Police Service (SPVG) found that two collisions had occurred, both involving a 37-year-old driver named Rock St-Pierre of Val-des-Monts. The first was minor, followed by a second, fatal head-on collision. Both impacts occurred in rapid succession.

According to the SPVG, the driver involved in the first accident was uninjured. However, the couple involved in the second collision were transported to the hospital with severe injuries, where the woman was pronounced dead. Her partner remains hospitalized in stable condition.

The driver was also taken to the hospital for treatment. After being released, he was taken to the Gatineau police station to meet with investigators. Police then arrested him.

He was detained and appeared in court via videoconference on November 25, where he faced three charges: impaired driving causing death and bodily harm, and possession of controlled substances.

Stabbing in Aylmer under police investigation

Tashi **Farmilo**
LJ Reporter

An armed assault on the morning of November 21 at 181 rue Principale in Aylmer sent one person to hospital with serious injuries. Gatineau police responded to the call at around 1 am and found the victim suffering from a lower body wound. Officers provided immediate care until paramedics arrived and transported the individual

to hospital. The incident reportedly followed an altercation that occurred outside the premises. A security perimeter was established, and investigators, along with forensic technicians, examined the area. Three individuals were taken to the Gatineau police station for questioning. The investigation remains ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the INFO line at 819-243-4636, option 5. All information will be treated confidentially.

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Commissioner Th  berge highlights progress on Official Languages in Canada, urges action on language plan



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Commissioner of Official Languages Raymond Th  berge released his final community-focused report on November 25 in Dieppe, New Brunswick, offering a midterm review of Canada's current five-year plan to support English and French minority-language communities. The report, *Taking Action for Strong and Resilient Communities*, evaluates how well the federal government's \$4.1 billion Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028 is being carried out.

While the Commissioner noted improvements in areas like immigration, health care and employment services, he warned that chronic delays, complex funding rules and poor coordination continue to limit how well communities benefit from federal support.

The Commissioner of Official Languages is an independent officer of Parliament who ensures that federal institutions follow the Official Languages Act. This law guarantees Canadians the right to receive federal services in either English or French, no matter where they live. The Commissioner's office also investigates complaints, conducts audits and reports to Parliament. These activities help make sure that language rights are respected in daily life, especially in places where one official language is in the minority.

Th  berge's report is based on meetings and interviews held throughout 2025 with federal departments and community groups. He said that, while there is clear federal commitment, many programs fall short



(From left) Judith O'Rourke addresses Commissioner Raymond Th  berge during a 2024 public question period (O'Rourke is a Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) board member); RAWQ president David Gillespie; Charles Taker, Commissioner's representative for Quebec and Nunavut; Commissioner of Official Languages for Canada, Raymond Th  berge. (LR)

PHOTO: LILY RYAN

in practice. Community organizations, particularly smaller ones, often face funding that arrives late, rules that are difficult to navigate and little guidance on how to apply. Many have had to delay or cancel projects, run deficits or reduce services because they cannot rely on timely support.

At the press conference, Th  berge also spoke about the state of local newspapers in minority-language communities, describing them as essential to civic life. He said these outlets help keep people informed, connected and engaged in public life. Without targeted support, many are at risk of shutting down. Losing them would not only limit access to information but also weaken local identity and democracy.

The report also draws attention to Eng-

lish-speaking communities in Quebec, especially those near the Ontario border. These communities often struggle to access federal support because of provincial regulations. Under Quebec's Bill M-30, community organisations that receive most of their funding from the province must get provincial approval before signing agreements with the federal government. Th  berge said this has caused major delays in rolling out programs intended for English-speaking Quebecers. He urged the federal government to work

more closely with provinces to ensure that funding reaches the communities it is meant to support. "It's one thing to allocate funding," he said. "It's another to ensure it reaches the people it's meant to serve."

With Parliament preparing to appoint a new Commissioner and planning already underway for the next phase beyond 2028, the report serves as both a progress report and a caution. For communities like Aylmer, where both French and English cultures shape daily life, the Commissioner's work is a reminder that language rights are not self-sustaining. They require active support from all levels of government.

As his term nears its end, Th  berge thanked those working in the field and urged continued vigilance. "Resilience cannot be expected only from communities," he said. "It must be matched by sustained, thoughtful action from institutions."

Photo: Commissioner Raymond Th  berge released his final report assessing Canada's official languages strategy, highlighting progress in health, education, and immigration support for minority-language communities, while urging stronger accountability and faster action to ensure lasting impact. (TF) Photo: Livestream screenshot of Commissioner Raymond Th  berge's press conference in Dieppe, New Brunswick, on November 25, 2025

Have your say: Outaouais Development Observatory launches region-wide surveys to update Community Portrait

Continued from page 2

The next step in citizen consultations will be conducted across the region in each community. The observatory will also have consultations with community and neighbourhood organizations. This will allow them to get more detailed data on the realities, strengths, and challenges in each area of the Outaouais.

"These consultations aim to better understand the realities of citizens in order to help organizations, municipalities, and decision-makers guide their actions for community development based on the data we will gather," said Joani Vallespir, information officer with ODO.

The project is focused on a variety of aspects in each community. Specifically, population age, labour market, demographics, changes in crime, housing, poverty, immigration, life expectancy, health and social services, education, and culture.

Residents across the region are invited to

participate in gathering information about their community. Everyone can participate by filling out a survey about their neighbourhood. Vallespir says that the more people making their voices heard, the better the data they can have, which directly feeds the community. She said that, for ODO, this project is collective mobilization that will have an impact on election officials at every level of government.

Various community surveys are open for residents and more will be rolled out over the next few months. To participate in the Community Portrait project, visit: https://sunsetporch-b12.notion.site/Appel-la-participation-citoyenne-28e976ecc1948068b3bbeb726c34630?source=copy_link

The ODO is funded by the City of Gatineau, Centre int  gr   de sant   et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais (CISSSO), Centraide and Minist  re des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH).



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Quebec relaunches major clean transport push



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Government of Quebec has reinstated its Ecocamionnage program as of December 2025, injecting \$145.4 million to help businesses across the province, including those in the Outaouais region, transition to cleaner freight transport technologies in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and modernize the sector.

The Ecocamionnage program, which had been suspended in 2024 due to budget constraints, is now funded through 2028 under the province's climate strategy, the Plan pour une économie verte. It provides financial support for companies operating heavy-duty vehicles to adopt electric or hybrid trucks, install energy-saving equipment, or reconfigure their logistics to reduce fuel use and emissions.

In the Outaouais, where a mix of urban and rural transportation needs intersect, the program could prove particularly relevant to local freight operators, municipalities, and cooperatives looking to modernize their fleets and cut operating costs over time. Eligible participants must have vehicles reg-



Quebec's renewed Ecocamionnage program brings \$145.4 million in support for cleaner freight transport across the province, a move welcomed by CCAQ president and CEO Ian P. Sam Yue Chi, who called for stable, sector-wide policies to ensure a successful energy transition. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY

istered in Quebec and primarily used for transporting goods or delivering services.

While the Corporation des concessionnaires automobiles du Québec (CCAQ) welcomed the return of the program, it also used the announcement to highlight what it sees as regulatory inconsistencies between sectors. According to the association, new vehicle dealers are subject to a far more stringent regulatory environment under Quebec's Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) standard. For model year 2026, 32.5 percent of all new passenger vehicles sold must be electric. Non-compliance carries penalties, and at the same time, government rebates for EV buyers are being phased out.

The CCAQ has expressed concern that while heavy-duty transport is now receiving targeted financial support, other segments of the automotive industry are being left to navigate an uneven regulatory and economic landscape. The organization has called for a more coordinated approach that aligns environmental goals with practical, sector-wide policy design.

"We welcome the reopening of Ecocamionnage, a program that helps the heavy transport sector reduce its emissions," said CCAQ president and CEO Ian P. Sam Yue Chi. "But for the energy transition to be successful, we need a comprehensive vision and stable conditions that allow both businesses and consumers to adapt."

Quebec Bar sounds alarm on threat to legal rights



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Quebec Bar Association is warning that a trio of proposed laws could quietly shift the province away from democratic norms and into more authoritarian territory by limiting residents' and institutions' ability to challenge government actions. The Association says Bills 1, 2 and 3, currently before the National Assembly, introduce provisions that weaken key legal protections and erode the rule of law.

Bar Vice-President Rémi Bourget says the concern is not just legal. It is about the foundation of Quebec's democratic society. "When we vote for a government, we don't elect a king," he said. "We elect leaders who must still be held accountable under the law. That's what the rule of law is about. Checks and balances."

The most serious alarm raised by the Bar relates to Bill 1, the proposed Quebec Constitution. Article 5 of this bill would prohibit publicly funded organizations from challenging the constitutionality of a Quebec law. That includes groups like the Bar itself, the Human Rights Commission and professional orders. Bourget said this would mean the very institutions that exist to uphold rights would no longer be able to

take legal action when those rights are threatened.

If those organizations choose to challenge the government anyway, their board members could be held personally responsible for the cost of the legal proceedings. "If we vote as directors to go to court, even in good faith, we could personally be forced to repay hundreds of thousands of dollars," Bourget said. "You could lose your house. That's not an exaggeration."

Bill 3 targets unions and workplace associations, including teacher and healthcare worker unions that have challenged government legislation in recent years. If passed, the law would impose fines of up to \$50,000 on associations that take steps considered contrary to the law's new limits. The Bar sees this as a direct attack on the ability of unions to defend their members' rights in court.

Bill 2 includes new powers for government-appointed investigators in the health sector. These investigators would be allowed to prevent doctors from discussing certain matters even with their family, under threat of sanction, without a court order. Bourget said this level of control over speech is unprecedented in Quebec law. "If we lose doctors because they are under stress or surveillance, we also lose access to care. That affects everyone."

The Bar is asking the government to remove several pro-

visions from all three bills. These include Article 5 of Bill 1, Articles 7 and 9 of Bill 3 and sections 141 to 163 and 173 of Bill 2. Although the Minister of Health has said some parts of Bill 2 will not be enforced, the Bar insists that verbal promises are not enough.

For the average person, Bourget said the impact may not be felt immediately, but the consequences are serious. "Most people can't afford to spend ten years and a million dollars fighting their government in court. That's why we have unions, associations, and professional orders. They pool resources to defend individual rights. These bills are targeting those support systems."

He compared the erosion of legal protections to losing your health. "You take breathing for granted until one day you can't. That's how the rule of law works too. You don't feel its loss until it's too late."

The Bar has formally submitted briefs and called for the government of Quebec to withdraw the most concerning elements of the legislation. It hopes to be heard before the bills are adopted.

"What is at stake," Bourget said, "is not only the ability to enforce rights, but also the basic structure that allows people to do so. We are not just targeting rights themselves but the conditions that make it possible to exercise them."

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Liza Frulla honoured for lifetime of public service



Liza Frulla, Director General of the ITHQ and former cabinet minister, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Université du Québec en Outaouais for her contributions to culture, education, and public service; the ceremony featured, from left to right, Alexandre Cloutier, President of the Université du Québec, Liza Frulla, Louise Beaudoin, and Murielle Laberge, Rector of the UQO. (TF)

PHOTO: MARIE-ANDRÉ BLAIS - UQO



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Liza Frulla, Director General of the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ), has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the Université du Québec en Outaouais. The recognition was presented on November 22 at the university's 2025 graduation ceremony held at the Palais des Congrès in Gatineau.

The award highlights Frulla's lasting impact on Quebec's public institutions, particularly in the areas of culture, education, and tourism. She was honoured alongside former minister Louise Beaudoin, both celebrated for their influence on Quebec's cultural and political development. The university described them as "builders and ambassadors" whose work will continue to inspire future generations.

Frulla's career spans several decades and sectors. She began in sports journalism and radio before entering politics, where she served as Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communications and later as Canada's Minister of Canadian Heritage. Her contributions include the creation

of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles, and Canada's role in leading the adoption of UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Since 2015, Frulla has led the ITHQ, where she has promoted innovation and strengthened the school's position as a leader in hospitality and tourism education. The institute offers programs at the professional, technical, and university levels, and includes training facilities such as a teaching hotel, two restaurants, and a bar. It also supports research and development through its GastronomiQc Lab and ExperiSens units.

During her speech, Frulla acknowledged the symbolic weight of receiving this recognition from a university that shares her values around knowledge and transmission. She also emphasized her faith in the province's youth, citing their energy and talent as a source of optimism.

"It's a tribute I share with everyone who believes in the strength of dialogue, in curiosity, and in building a Quebec that is open, creative, and forward-looking."



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AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33 -Nov. 29 at 7 p.m.: Dance party with "4 Better Times Band". -NEW! Thursday Dec. 4 at 7 p.m.: Live Jam Experience with Jesse James. -Sunday Dec. 7 at 1 p.m.: Santa Claus is coming to the Legion! Games & activities for little ones and a visit with Santa. Advance registration of children is required. Please contact our elf, Lianne, by email at cnslr3000@hotmail.com. *Children must be accompanied by adults. -Dec. 20 at 6 p.m.: Christmas dinner fundraiser and musical evening with "4 Better Times Band", tickets available in advance only; space is limited. Call Denise now at 613-614-7847 to get your tickets. -Dec. 21 at 1 pm: Euchre Tournament. The Legion is open to all. 59 Bancroft Street, in Old Aylmer, QC. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

FOOD DRIVE AT THE PROMENADES GATINEAU. During this time of year, marked by generosity and sharing, we are pleased to launch our second annual non-perishable food drive to help families and individuals in need during the holidays, in collaboration with Moisson Outaouais. Collection dates: November 15 to December 24, 2025. Food drop-off location: Customer service kiosk near the food court. Food items needed (suggestions): Baby food and products, snacks, and breakfast foods (granola bars, fruit compotes, fruit salads, cereal, oatmeal, etc.). Filling, protein-rich foods: pasta, rice,

canned tuna, etc. Hygiene products: sanitary napkins, diapers, shampoo, etc. Every contribution will have a big impact and help spread a little warmth and hope this holiday season. 1100 Maloney Boulevard West, Gatineau, QC.

LUANA'S STORYTIME, FREE ACTIVITY FOR THE LITTLE ONES. Sunday, December 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. and from 11:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. Come listen to Luana's Tales, short magical stories told in a gentle voice, specially designed to enchant children. In front of the La Basoche Cultural Center, around the cozy fire pits. 120 Principale Street, Gatineau, QC.

SHOUT SISTER CHOIR SINGS CHRISTMAS - FREE. Saturday, December 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. A wonderful group of women united by their love of music who get together every week to sing and share their passion. You may have heard them this summer at the Marché du Vieux-Aylmer. We are happy to welcome them in front of the fireplaces! 120 Rue Principale, Gatineau, QC.

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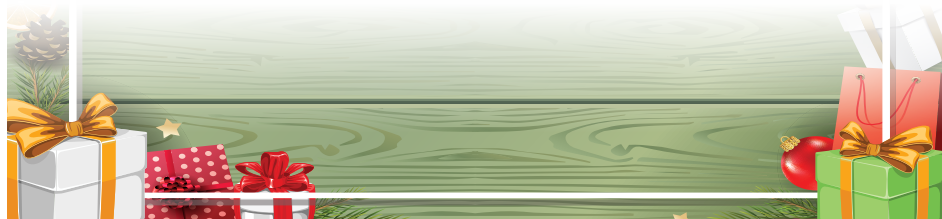
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MARCHÉ DE NOËL DE VAL-DES-MONTS ÉDITION 2025 les 6 et 7 décembre 2025, de 10 h à 16 h, à l'école du Sommet, située au 2197, montée Paiement, Val-Des-Monts, QC. L'endroit parfait pour dénicher tous vos cadeaux de Noël. Les kiosques sur place sont nombreux et uniques! Plusieurs marchands locaux et des environs se rassemblent le temps d'un week-end afin de vous faire découvrir leurs créations. Le site propose une ambiance féerique du temps des Fêtes. Plusieurs nouveautés vous seront proposées cette année! Qui dit 50e anniversaire, dit 50 kiosques!

OUTDOOR, EUROPEAN-INSPIRED HOLIDAY MARKET IN WAKEFIELD, QUÉBEC. Saturday, December 6, from 10 am to 4 pm at Centre Wakefield La Pêche, 38 Ch. De la Vallée de Wakefield, Wakefield, QC.

More than 60 local vendors selling handmade, homemade arts, crafts and food. Again, this year, there will be more wonderful vendors inside, in Gwen Shea Hall. Tickets are \$5 per person (12 years +), kids under 12 are free. All proceeds will go to local organizations. Don't forget to bring a non-perishable food item for the Wakefield Food Pantry!

OLD AYLMER CHRISTMAS MARKET WEEK 2. Over 55 vendors await you! Friday, December 5: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.- Christmas Market, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.- Christmas with songs by Valérie Latreille, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.- Candle-making workshop (\$). Saturday, December 6: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Christmas Market, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas Market at AYDELU, 10 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Christmas card-making workshop (\$), 11 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. Outdoor train, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Musician 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. 4 soap-making workshop (\$), 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Knitting café around the fireplaces, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Christmas with music by Jérémy Flynn. Sunday, December 7: 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Breakfast with Santa at Galeries Aylmer (\$), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas market, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Christmas market at AYDELU, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Dried flower wreath-making workshop (\$), 10:30 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. Luana's Tales, 11:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. Luana's Tales, 11 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. Outdoor train, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Musician. 120 Principale Street, Gatineau (Old Aylmer).



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