

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL

I'd like to welcome all students back to school. Please stay alert and keep following NS Public Health Orders to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 Coronavirus. Your education is important for you to succeed in life. All motorists need to be extra careful with students walking, cycling, commuting or travelling by school bus.

2021 HRM RESIDENT SURVEY

The 2021 HRM Resident Survey will be an invitation-based survey only, using a random sampling methodology that will allow the municipality to gather data with a high level of confidence in the results. This approach was selected because a random-sampling approach is the only way generate a margin of error which allows the results to be generalized to the whole population of the municipality. This approach was selected versus conducting a survey that is open to all residents where we cannot control who takes the survey, or how frequently. An open survey does not provide a margin of error for the results, and we cannot be confident the data reflects the sentiment of the general population. This invitation-based method will use HRM's civic address database to randomly select 20,000 single family and multi-unit residential households across the municipality. Selected households will receive an invitation letter requesting them to complete the survey. To ensure fair and equitable representation, the number of invitations per district is based on the population in each district, as a percentage of the total population in the regional municipality. This methodology was used for the 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2018 citizen surveys.

For the 2021 Resident Survey, HRM has chosen to increase the number of invitations to reduce the margin of error and increase the confidence that the results accurately represent the entire population of the municipality. Anyone wishing to know more about this and past surveys can go to www.halifax.ca/citizensurvey. The launch of the 2021 HRM Citizens Survey will be Sept. 1st and the deadline for replies will be Sept. 24th. If you get an invitation, your participation will be appreciated. Thank you for your input and insight.

AFFORDABLE ACCESS PROGRAM

The HRM Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Program is now part of a combined Affordable Access Program. If you need help paying your property taxes, HRM offers a few choices. You can apply for Rebate, Deferral or Payment Plan:

Rebate: If your household income is less than \$34,000, the Municipality will pay a portion of your property taxes. The amount of rebate varies with income and residential taxes billed.

Rebate and a Deferral: After the rebate has been applied to your tax account you can postpone payment of the remaining current year taxes. The interest rate is Prime -2% for customers in the program and Prime +2% for those who did not reapply.

Deferral of local improvement charges: Local improvement charges may be added as a lien against a property for services such as sewer, water, or road work. These charges are paid once a year. If you need help paying for a local improvement charge, you can set up a payment plan or apply to defer the charges.

A payment plan: Rather than two large semi-annual payments, you can pay in smaller monthly amounts.

More details can be found at: www.halifax.ca/home-property/property-taxes/exemptions and www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/affordable-access-program

NS SENIORS PROPERTY TAX REBATE

The Nova Scotia Property Tax Rebate program is for seniors who have been receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement in January of the application year. Criteria requires you to have paid your property taxes from the prior year in full. A receipt from the municipality showing property taxes are paid in full is required by the program. Applicants to this program receive a rebate on half of their taxes paid up to a maximum of \$800. Applications are accepted from July 1st to December 31st when the program closes. For further information please visit www.novascotia.ca/sns/access/individuals/consumer-awareness/property-tax-rebate-for-seniors.asp

Applications must be post marked by December 31st and are available from Service Nova Scotia by calling 902-424-5200 or toll free at 1-800-670-4357, or at any Access Nova Scotia Centre.

SOME ROADS TRANSFER TO HRM

Starting in June 2022, the Province is expected to transfer some roads over to HRM for full street maintenance responsibility. HRM has been doing a street inventory assessment of the quantity and quality of the roadways within the areas being transferred over to the municipality in Districts 2 and 13. In our District, the communities affected by this pending transfer are East Preston, Lake Echo, Mineville and the area in Lawrencetown west of the Mineville Road. But the cost of extending municipal-related road maintenance services to these affected areas will have to be recovered from all taxpayers through the general tax rate.

The municipal general tax burden will increase by approximately \$9 million to \$11 Million in 2022/23. That may equate to \$38 per property owner for all in HRM. Then there will be an annual "Ditch Tax" charge of \$40 per properties within the affected areas for a HRM Stormwater Road Right of Way Surcharge. Plus, there will be a direct per property Site-Related Stormwater Charge that could range from \$14 to \$81 per year, based upon the impervious surface area of each respective property. Stormwater is the water from rain, melted snow and ice, that runs off roofs, parking lots, driveways, and other hard surfaces. Halifax Water provides stormwater

services to thousands of customers already throughout urban Halifax Regional Municipality. Hence, those properties affected by this road transfer will be getting an invoice from Halifax Water for the maintenance of the neighbourhood stormwater infrastructure that is the ditches, catch-basins, underground pipes and culverts to help prevent flooding and property damage. For more information about this matter, please refer to: www.halifax.ca/transportation/streets-sidewalks/transfer-roads-province-nova-scotia-halifax-regional-municipality

LOCAL ROADS TO BE PAVED

With the pending transfer of local roads from the Province over to HRM, there is a limited opportunity to take advantage of any cost-share paving with the NS Department of Transportation for this fiscal year. Therefore HRM had to switch around its priority list for streets targeted for paving in order to be still eligible for 50% cost-sharing from the Province. This year two streets in the East Preston area will be paved: Lake Eagle Drive (.84 kms) from Brooks Drive to Lakemist Court, and Lakemist Court (.26 kms) from Lake Eagle Drive to end of cul de sac. The cost-share formula is 1/2 from the Province, 1/3 from the property owners and 1/6 from HRM. The Province has issued Tender #2021-148 and the work is expected to be done by October 31st as weather conditions permit.

41st ANNUAL TERRY FOX RUN

Back in 1980, Terry Fox took his Marathon of Hope through our Eastern Shore communities along Highway #7. Now we can keep his dream alive that cancer can be beaten. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be "virtual runs" on Sunday, Sept. 19th in Lake Echo, Musquodoboit Harbour and Sheet Harbour. This year there will be a special tribute to the late MaryAnne Bailey who was one of Team Terry Fox Heroes and ambassador. Register at: www.terryfox.org. If you can't make it to a run, please sponsor someone who will be participating. Or you can text "terryfox" to 45678 to donate \$5.

CRAIG'S CAUSE 15th ANNUAL TREK

Craig's Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society will have its 15th Annual NS Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Walk – Run – Bike Trek, in support of Pancreatic Cancer education, awareness and research. Come out to the Porters Lake Provincial Park on Saturday, Sept. 25th. Registration opens at 9 AM and event starts at 10 AM. This event is for all ages and abilities. For more details, call Toll-Free: 1-877-212-9582 or go to: www.craigscase.ca/events.



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