

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH

National Volunteer Week (NVW) pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who donate their time and energy. This year, NVW is from April 14 to 20 and the theme is "Every Moment Matters" highlighting the importance of the contributions of volunteers at a time when support is needed more than ever. To help say thank you to volunteers, Volunteer Canada has developed programs to access resources and products that can be attained through their website www.volunteer.ca, via Twitter with the hashtag #NVW2024 #EveryMomentMatters or on their Facebook page @VolunteerCanada. There is plenty of information and ideas on how to foster more volunteerism in our communities. Our local community hall associations are in desperate need for more volunteers. In our area, be sure to contact Volunteer Halifax at www.volunteerhalifax.ca, who link people with local non-profit community organizations. You can also connect with them to learn more via email at info@volunteerhalifax.ca.

Each year, the Mayor and Halifax Regional Council recognize the extraordinary contributions of individuals and groups who volunteer their time and skills to provide services and programs in our communities. Due to a publication ban, this year's list of HRM Volunteers is embargoed until mid-April, so a complete list of those honourees from our district will be in my May 2024 newsletter and will also be posted online at: www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/volunteering.

CELEBRATE 54th EARTH DAY ON APRIL 22

It has been 54 years since April 22 was declared as Earth Day. Back in 1970, it mobilized millions of citizens to lobby for the protection of the planet. The first Earth Day is accredited with launching the modern environmental movement and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event. The campaign theme for 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics" demonstrating their unwavering commitment to end plastic production for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60 per cent reduction by 2040. Learn more at www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024. What will you do to reduce the amount of plastics in your home and community?

PICK ME UP LITTER CAMPAIGN

This spring, the NS Adopt A Highway (AAH) program will be kicking off its 2024 cleanup season with the Great Nova Scotia Pick-Me-Up: the province's largest litter reduction initiative. Registration opens on April 1. Call 902-843-3553 or email litterprograms@divertns.ca to register. AAH will provide groups with everything needed to run a successful litter clean-up event including supplies, information on how to coordinate your event and a data card to track results and be sure to post 'before & after' photos of your pick-me-up locations and post to social media using the hashtag #EveryLitterBitHelps. For more details visit www.nsadoptahighway.ca.

HRM ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION & PROMOTION GRANTS

HRM Active Transportation (AT) Education and Promotion Grants are intended to support projects to increase the number of people walking, bicycling, and rolling and improve the safety of people using these modes. It also supports municipal objectives for a multi-modal transportation system as described in the Integrated Mobility Plan and the Active Transportation Priorities Plan.

There are three types of projects measured in funding and reach:

- Small Community project grant under \$1,000: smaller projects (localized) in one or more communities in HRM
- Large Community project grant of \$1000 to \$5,000: larger project or event (requiring significant logistics efforts) meant to reach a broader audience in communities across HRM;
- Major project grant over \$5,000: large project with significant logistics, partnerships, and duration efforts with an intended reach across the municipality

Submissions for 2024 -2025 Spring/Summer intake opened March 1 and deadline to apply is April 8. Projects can only start after May 15 and should end before March 31, 2025. To submit a proposal, please download the Active Transportation Education and Promotion Grant Application found at www.halifax.ca/transportation/cycling-walking/active-transportation-grants-program. Complete the info requested along with required supporting documents and email to ATGrants@halifax.ca or for more details, contact Emma Martin via email at martinem@halifax.ca or by calling 902-499-6742.

SWAP MACPASS TRANSPONDER FOR ELECTRONIC STICKER

MACPASS is Halifax Harbour Bridges' (HHB) electronic tolling system that allows drivers to pass through the tolls of the Macdonald and MacKay bridges without stopping to pay with cash. MACPASS itself is free, convenient and comes with a discount over paying toll fees with cash. Using a MACPASS also helps reduce congestion and helps cut harmful emissions from idling vehicles. After 25 years, HHB is no longer giving out the hard-shell MASPASS transponder. Instead, HHB is offering a new, free and more effective sticker pass. The sticker MACPASS is smaller, works faster at the toll lanes, and will interact with new electronic tolling technology coming soon to HHB. Get your new sticker online at www.MyMACPASS.com or by visiting the MACPASS Customer Service Centre on 471 Princess Margaret Boulevard in Dartmouth. You can also call them at 902-463-3100.

HHB and the Halifax Stanfield International Airport are making travelling easier with "MACPASSplus" that allows you to use your MACPASS to pay for short and long-term parking in the airport's parkade. Drivers can reduce wait times with express payment lanes and cashless parking, as long as your MACPASS is connected to your credit card. Your MACPASS sticker can also be used at the NS Trans-Canada Hwy 104 Cobequid Pass and the PEI Confederation Bridge. To use your MACPASS with the other toll facilities in the Maritimes, simply set up a separate account with the tolling facility and ask to have your MACPASS linked.

COASTAL PROTECTION GOES LOCAL

The Government of Nova Scotia will not be proclaiming the Coastal Protection Act. Instead, the Provincial plan focuses on empowering coastal property owners to make informed decisions, supporting municipal authorities and aligning resources for better coastal protection. The full plan is available at www.novascotia.ca/coastal-plan. The Province announced a new navigator service to help coastal property owners understand potential risks and hazards on their property and what they can do to mitigate them. More than \$3M in funding from the NS Climate Plan will support some of the actions in the coastline plan.

These initiatives will empower Nova Scotians to adapt to climate change, create climate-resilient homes and communities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguard our coastal way of life. Right now, about 13.1 per cent of Nova Scotia's coastline is protected from development inside provincial parks, wilderness areas, nature reserves, national parks, national wildlife areas and in land owned and managed by conservation land trusts and Mi'kmaw organizations. The provincial government has committed to increasing this percentage as part of its goal to protect 20 per cent of the province's land and water by 2030.

RESIDENTIAL RENTAL REGISTRY

In June 2023, HRM passed By-law R-400 that required property owners to register their residential rental properties by April 1, 2024. Only rental properties that are located within HRM need to be registered. This Residential Rental Registry will provide a clearer picture of the rental landscape in HRM. Currently, the accuracy and detail of available building information is limited. A complete record of rental properties is expected to provide significant benefits for residents occupying these buildings by enhancing the municipality's ability to provide services where needed. Over time, the registry will help the municipality proactively identify maintenance issues, reduce complaints and non-compliance, and improve the safety and overall living conditions for renters across the region. More details can be found at www.halifax.ca/business/doing-business-halifax/residential-rental-registry.

JEDDORE SOBEYS / FOODLAND PUBLIC HEARING

HRM Harbour East - Marine Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) will be having a public hearing to consider a proposed development agreement to allow for a commercial building (grocery store) that exceeds 5,000 square feet. The meeting will be on Thursday, April 4 at 6 p.m. at the HEMDCC Chambers at Alderney Gate, by the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal. For more information, visit <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/community-councils/240307hemdcc1411.pdf>.

LOCAL CHB WELLNESS FUNDS

Community Health Board's (CHB) Wellness Funds are for non-profit groups working to improve health in their communities and must address the health priorities identified by the local CHBs in their current plans. You can learn more by visiting: www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca/chb-health-plans. www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca/wellness-funds.

HRM TAX BILL DUE APRIL 30

The Halifax Regional Municipality sends out its tax bills to all property owners twice a year. The Interim bill was mailed mid-March and is due on Tuesday, April 30. The final bill will be due October 31. If you have any enquiries about your tax bill, please call the HRM Contact Centre at 311 or online by visiting www.halifax.ca/home-property/property-taxes.



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