

#### **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH**

Volunteers are on the front lines of many of our local services: community health care, heritage and arts, maintenance of green space, disaster relief, volunteer fire fighting, community protection, recreation, minor sports, etc. - the list is endless. National Volunteer Week (NVW) pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who donate their time and energy. This year NVW is from April 12th-18th. An annual campaign has been created to help organizations and individuals deliver their own NVW celebrations. To help you say 'thank you' to volunteers, Volunteer Canada has developed programs to access resources and products that can be attained through their web-site: [www.volunteer.ca/nvw](http://www.volunteer.ca/nvw). Also be sure to check out: [www.getvolunteering.ca](http://www.getvolunteering.ca) or "Get Volunteering" on Facebook for information, ideas and inspiration on how to foster more volunteerism in our society. In our own area be sure to check out "Volunteer Halifax" at <http://volunteerhalifax.ca/>. This resource links people with local non-profit community organizations. It supports persons with disabilities, new Canadians, corporations and professionals by connecting them with organizations in and around the municipality. It also assists individuals with skills development to advance their careers. Connect with them through email at [info@volunteerhalifax.ca](mailto:info@volunteerhalifax.ca) or via the major social media outlets such as Facebook, Google+ & Twitter. Here are some other web-sites you can explore for recognition ideas: [www.recreationns.ca/provincial-volunteer-awards/](http://www.recreationns.ca/provincial-volunteer-awards/) & [www.halifax.ca/volunteerservices/](http://www.halifax.ca/volunteerservices/). Each year the Mayor and Regional Council recognize the extraordinary contributions of individuals and groups who volunteer their time and skills to provide services and programs in our HRM communities. This year the Eastern Shore Joint Emergency Management Team (ES-JEM) is being acknowledged for its decade of service.

#### **GOOD NEIGHBOUR ENERGY FUND**

The Good Neighbour Energy Fund (GNEF) for the 2015 heating season has been opened since January 15th and it closes on April 15th. To be considered for assistance from the Fund, the following criteria must be met: Household is low income; household is in an emergency heating situation; household members have not received GNEF assistance in the past 36 months; head of household completes & submits an application providing all requested information and supporting documents.

An application form can be downloaded at: <http://www.salvationarmy.ca/maritime/gnef/> or contact the Good Neighbour Energy Fund office at 902-422-3435 for more information.

Applications must be submitted by April 15th.

#### **LET'S CELEBRATE 45th EARTH DAY**

2015 could be the most exciting year in environmental history. A year in which economic growth and sustainability join hands when world leaders may finally pass a binding climate change treaty. A year in which citizens and organizations further divest away from fossil fuels and buy into renewable energy solutions. These are tough issues, but at stake is the future of our planet and the survival of life on earth. See what you can do on April 22nd at [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) for events and ideas. This spring, the NS Clean Foundation is kicking off the 2015 cleanup season with the Great Nova Scotia Pick-Me-Up - the province's largest litter reduction initiative. Registration is now open at [www.nspickmeup.ca](http://www.nspickmeup.ca) or by calling 902-420-3474. The Clean Foundation 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. Be sure to post before & after photos of your pick-me-up locations and post them to social media using the hashtag #GladToCleanUp.

#### **START OF FIRE SEASON DELAYED**

Due to this exceptionally long winter season, the Province has extended the start of the Open-Air Burning Season to April 15th instead of March 15th. There is an online fire index map at [www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe](http://www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe). It will ensure everyone knows the risks of wildfire in all areas of the province each day. The map will show green, red, or yellow in each county to let us know if it is safe to burn, unsafe to burn, or safe with restrictions. The map and recorded phone message will be updated daily. Call BurnSafe toll-free 1-855-564-2876. These changes affect brush burning on domestic properties, such as rural residential lots, woodlots, fishing camps and cottage lots. Commercial and industrial brush burning still requires a permit from a DNR office. For more information go to: [www.halifax.ca/fireprevention/Burning.php](http://www.halifax.ca/fireprevention/Burning.php). Be sure to follow all instructions and rules of conduct and be respectful of your neighbours when you want to burn. Be cognizant of those with any sensitivity to smoke. Please be very careful and burn safely.

#### **HRM TAX BILL DUE DATE APRIL 30th**

HRM sends out its tax bills to all property owners twice a year. The Interim bill was mailed mid-March and is due on April 30th. The final bill will be due October 31st. If you have any enquiries about your tax bill, please call the Halifax Contact Centre at 311 or go to: <http://www.halifax.ca/taxes/index.php>.

#### **HOW TO MAKE TRANSIT BETTER**

Halifax Transit's draft Moving Forward Together Plan aims to make it easier for transit users to get where they're going. The system is supposed to be simpler, smarter, more efficient and offer better connections, shorter trips and longer service days on many routes. Check out the plan, look at the new proposed route map and share your feedback. Be sure to take the survey for a chance to win an iPad mini or annual transit passes at [www.MakeTransitBetter.ca](http://www.MakeTransitBetter.ca). The online survey closes on April 24th. You can also provide input at: @hfxtransit? #HfxTransit and #MakeTransitBetter. In our area they are proposing to eliminate the #401 service along Hwy 207 in West Chezzetcook, Grand Desert and Seaforth. This service was to connect with the Express Service #370 at the Porters Lake Park & Ride Terminal.

#### **INPUT ON NS TRAILS STRATEGY**

The Nova Scotia Trails Federation (NS Trails) and the Government of Nova Scotia, through the Trails Strategy Working Group (TSWG), have a draft NS Trails Strategy/ Situation Analysis that provides a profile of the current state of trails in the province and identifies the most important opportunities and challenges to be addressed in the Trails Strategy. There was an online survey opportunity to provide input which closed March 20th. The next opportunity for involvement is to attend a regional engagement session (one of eight sessions being held across the province during the month of April) in our area to ensure you have your say on the future of trails in Nova Scotia. This session takes place on Tuesday, April 14th from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at Fairbanks Centre in Shubie Park, 54 Locks Road, Dartmouth. The discussion at these sessions will focus on establishing a vision, guiding principles, strategic directions and priorities for the Trails Strategy. Please RSVP your attendance by contacting the NS Trails at 902-425-5454 ext.325 or email Yvette d'Entremont at: [yvette@novascotiatrials.com](mailto:yvette@novascotiatrials.com) or contact the Central Regional Office of the Department of Health & Wellness (DHW) at 902-424-6608 or email: [Deborah.fram@novascotia.ca](mailto:Deborah.fram@novascotia.ca). Happy Trails!

