

Drunk driver jailed

Middlewood man will never get another licence in Nova Scotia

By LISA BROWN
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COUNTY — A Middlewood man who has enough convictions for drunk driving that he'll never again be licenced to drive in this province has been sent to jail.

Brainard Roy Battiste was sentenced to serve 90 days in custody October 13 after pleading guilty to charges of failing the breathalyser, driving while prohibited, dangerous driving and possessing hashish.

The RCMP responded to a traffic complaint about a driver travelling from Wileville to Hebbs Cross on November 7, 2008. A constable located the vehicle, driven by Mr. Battiste, on Highway 103 and pulled him over. Mr. Battiste, 44, smelled of alcohol and admitted he had no licence. The officer spotted an open beer and a liquor bottle in the car.

When the constable returned to his police car, Mr. Battiste drove off, but then lost control of the vehicle and ended up in a ditch near the Camperdown Road.

He later blew two breathalyser readings of 190 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. Police found 1.5 grams of hash in the car, along with a small

amount of marijuana.

Crown attorney Leigh-Ann Bryson told the court Mr. Battiste had three prior breathalyser convictions in 1991, another in 2000, a conviction for prohibited driving in 1991 and another breathalyser in 2006.

Defence lawyer Alan Ferrier joined the Crown in recommending the 90-day sentence, saying it's "pretty obvious" his client has had a long-standing struggle with alcohol. Mr. Battiste needs ongoing counselling, his lawyer said, and knows he must stay completely clear of alcohol.

Judge Jim Burrill agreed. "The time has come for you to put the bottle away and not drink again, because it's landed you in a peck of trouble over the years," the judge told Mr. Battiste.

In addition to the jail time, Judge Burrill placed Mr. Battiste on probation for two years, ordering him to take substance abuse counselling and stay clear of alcohol and drugs. The judge also prohibited him from driving for three years, although Mr. Ferrier said the Registrar of Motor Vehicles will never give his client another licence.

"He's in the four strikes you're out category," Mr. Ferrier said.

Local boatyards get funding assistance

By ROBERT HIRTLE
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COUNTY — Five Lunenburg County boatbuilders will be the beneficiaries of some financial assistance from the province intended to enable them to open new global markets.

ABCO Industries, Covey Island Boatworks, Norseboat Ltd. and The Dory Shop, all of Lunenburg, join Lutwick's Boat Building and Repair of Indian Point in receiving the funding, which totals \$155,002 to be shared between 15 boat-building enterprises around the province.

The money is being provided through the Community Development Trust Fund, a \$34.9 million federal government program established in 2006 to help sectors and communities experiencing economic challenges.

It is part of \$1 million in cost-shared boatbuilding funding covering two years which was announced back in April by the previous Conservative government.

Funds are being provided for existing, export-ready boatyards which are taking immediate action in developing export markets, and will allow those companies

to participate in market research and activities, as well as the development of marketing materials.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Sterling Belliveau said the long-term viability of boatbuilding is important to rural communities as well as the province's economy.

"Nova Scotia has a global reputation for boatbuilding, which is based on a strong history," Mr. Belliveau said. "This funding assists in making a strong future for the industry."

Susan Corkum-Greek, manager of The Dory Shop said the funding is "a really huge thing" for the company.

"It's assisting us to invest in some marketing material that we believe will allow us to grow our market, including a new, full-colour brochure and upgrades to The Dory Shop website," she explained.

According to government figures, more than 45 companies are involved in the boatbuilding industry in Nova Scotia, employing an estimated 650 people directly and 480 indirectly, throughout the province.

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Bell Aliant closures cut four jobs

By LISA BROWN
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BRIDGEWATER — Four local jobs will be lost when Bridgewater's Bell Aliant call centre closes next year.

The company announced October 15 that it would close 11 call centres in Atlantic Canada by next April, but will offer to transfer the affected employees to its remaining large centres.

The nearest location for those impacted here would be Halifax. Other centres which will continue to take calls are in Moncton, Saint John, Charlottetown and Mount Pearl, Newfoundland.

In addition to Bridgewater, centres in Truro, Amherst, New Glasgow and Sydney will close here in Nova Scotia.

The closures, which will begin in February, also include three centres in New Brunswick, one in Prince Edward Island and two in Newfoundland.

Bell Aliant officials said the company is attempting to cut costs and improve efficiency by centralizing work in larger centres.


The call centres it is closing all have fewer than 50 employees.

In total, about 200 unionized employees will be affected. Workers will have the option of moving to one of the main centres or taking separation offers.

Local MLAs were quick to react last week. Gary Ramey and Pam Birdsall issued a news release saying they were disappointed about the announcement. "I understand that employees and their families will be upset by this," Mr. Ramey stated in the release.

"Even one job lost is one too many," Ms. Birdsall was quoted as saying.

Bell Aliant call centres currently employ about 1,400 Atlantic Canadians.

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KEITH CORCORAN PHOTO

Tianna Backman, with cat, Princess, was one of the tenants displaced when a grease fire broke out in a third-floor apartment at 66 Pleasant Street, Bridgewater.

Grease fire forces tenants out of Bridgewater apartment building

By KEITH CORCORAN
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BRIDGEWATER — A kitchen grease fire set off a sprinkler in a 26-unit Bridgewater apartment building, temporarily forcing tenants to the cold outdoors.

All tenants of 66 Pleasant Street were expected to be allowed back home October 15, a day after, a fire official says, an unattended pot on a stove triggered water to spray down in a third-floor apartment.

People were evacuating the building when first-arriving emergency crews got to the scene. Firefighters were dispatched at 5:45 p.m. after the building's alarm engaged and someone placed a 911 call.

"There was some smoke in that apartment," said Fire Chief Wayne Thorburne, noting the sprinkler extinguished the flames. "Our main thing then was to shut that water main off" to prevent any further damage, he said. Fire damage was considered minimal.

Most tenants were temporarily evacuated for a few hours next door to a public administration office that was closed for the evening.

"Early on it was getting cold and we moved everybody to the town hall."

Chief Thorburne said.


One of the displaced tenants, Tianna Backman, told this newspaper the fire occurred in her apartment.

Standing outside the town hall entrance, barefoot, holding her cat, she suggested the sprinkler engaged while she was trying to put out a fire connected to the onion rings she was cooking. A resident of the building for about a month, she said she had difficulty locating the closest fire extinguisher. In the meantime, water came raining down in her smoke-filled apartment.

Paramedics assessed two women, one in her mid 20s, another in her 40s, for smoke inhalation, said Paul Maynard, spokesman for Emergency Health Services. The 40-year-old female was transported by ambulance to South Shore Regional Hospital, across town, as a precaution, Mr. Maynard said.

The Canadian Red Cross provided motel accommodations for one person and made emergency clothing purchases for others. Seven people had to find someplace to stay overnight. Some units sustained smoke and water damage.

Chief Thorburne said the fire is considered accidental.

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Municipality approves unbudgeted transfers

By PAULA LEVY
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COUNTY — The Municipality of Lunenburg approved the transfer of \$386,000 from its operating funds to reserve accounts.

The first transfer of \$200,000 was put into a contingency reserve fund for its employees' pension plan.


"The \$200,000 in reserve for the contingency pension plan is over and above the \$200,000 that we budgeted for in our own budget this year," said Mayor Don Downe. "That puts us in \$400,000 ... to

protect the pension in light of the downturn in the market."

Finance director Gordon Pettipas noted the contingency reserve account is now at about \$700,000 for the pension plan.

In addition, council also transferred \$186,300 from its operating funds to the landfill-closure reserve.

To help pay for the transfers from operating funds, council took \$28,279 from its operating reserves to help cover the non-budgeted transfers.

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