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Burma* on the Brink

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Comfort bags Helping feed West Quebec: new program underway



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Moisson Outaouais has launched a new initiative, "Réconfort en sac," (Comfort bag) aimed at addressing food insecurity in the region by distributing 15,000 dehydrated soup meals to vulnerable individuals, with a particular focus on seniors. Ready to use with just the addition of water, these soups provide a warm and comforting meal for those in need. The project was made possible through a \$30,000 donation from Club Piscine Gatineau, which has been a longstanding partner of Moisson Outaouais for over a decade. Employees from Club Piscine actively participated in assembling the first batches of soups, marking the official launch of the initiative.

Marie-Pier Chaput, Director of Communications at Moisson Outaouais, explained the dual objectives of the project. "The first goal is to address food insecurity by providing a nutritious and complete meal to those who lack access to essential groceries. The second is to support our 50 partner organizations in the region that have been expressing a growing need for food products that require neither refrigeration nor extensive preparation."

While the soup meals will be available to



Moisson Outaouais' Comfort Bags (Réconfort en sac) initiative aims to distribute 15,000 dehydrated soup meals to vulnerable individuals, particularly seniors, providing an easy-to-prepare, nutritious, and comforting food option with support from Club Piscine Gatineau. (TF)

PHOTO: MOISSON OUTAOUAIS

all individuals accessing Moisson Outaouais' affiliated organizations, special attention was given to the needs of seniors when developing the initiative. "Seniors often face mobility challenges, especially in winter. Having a long-lasting, easy-to-prepare meal at home can be invaluable," said Chaput.

She also highlighted that seniors represent 20 per cent of those requesting food assistance in the region, a figure that continues to rise. The organization developed four soup varieties—L'Épicurienne, La Jardinière, La Rustique, and La Campagnarde (The Epicurean, The Gardener, The Rustic, and The Country Girl)—each offering a distinct flavour profile. La Campagnarde, for instance, features a comforting chicken broth base.

Moisson Outaouais, the largest regional food bank in the area, serves as a hub for food collection, storage, and redistribution to its network of community organizations. These partner groups include food banks, soup kitchens, shelters, and community organizations, such as youth centres and

meal programs. "We don't distribute food directly to individuals, but rather to our affiliated organizations, who then serve those in need," Chaput explained.

The organization operates with minimal government funding, with only 15 per cent of its revenues coming from public subsidies. "The majority of our funding comes from community donations and corporate sponsorships, like this one from Club Piscine Gatineau," said Chaput. To sustain its operations, Moisson Outaouais relies on fundraising campaigns, including its well-known Loto-Moisson, where supporters can purchase tickets to win prizes while contributing to food security in the region.

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A strategic partnership to propel manufacturing innovation in Gatineau




Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

A newly announced partnership between Investissement et Développement Gatineau (ID Gatineau) and the Association for the Development of Research and Innovation of Quebec (ADRIQ) is set to accelerate innovation within the region's manufacturing sector. The initiative will provide 10 selected companies with specialized support from ADRIQ's accredited

consultants, aiming to enhance their technological transformation and competitiveness.

Under this agreement, each company will receive 30 hours of strategic consulting tailored to its growth and innovation needs. With ID Gatineau covering 75% of the cost, businesses will only be required to pay a fraction of the total investment. This financial backing underscores the city's commitment to fostering a dynamic and innovative business environment.

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A strategic partnership to propel manufacturing innovation in Gatineau



This new partnership between ID Gatineau and ADRIQ, led by Sylvie Charrette, General Manager of ID Gatineau, and Frédéric Alberro, CEO of ADRIQ, aims to accelerate manufacturing innovation in Gatineau by providing strategic resources and expert support to selected companies. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ID GATINEAU AND ADRIQ

Continued from page 1

For ADRIQ, this collaboration aligns seamlessly with its core mission. “This agreement fully supports ADRIQ’s mission to guide Quebec companies along their innovation journey,” said Marilyn Rémillard, Director of Communications and Events at ADRIQ. “By joining forces with ID Gatineau, we want to offer Outaouais manufacturing businesses privileged access to experts, tools, and strategic resources to accelerate their technological transformation and competitiveness.”

Yet, the road to innovation is not without its challenges. Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) struggle with the adoption of new technologies, access to financing, and internal change management. “One of the major challenges we anticipate for selected companies is the effective adoption of new technologies and the integration of innovation into their business processes,” Rémillard added. “Often, SMEs face obstacles such as limited internal resources, difficulty securing funding, or resistance to change within their teams.

ADRIQ’s expert consultants will provide personalized diagnostics and recommendations tailored to their realities. Our approach is pragmatic: we want each company to quickly implement concrete solutions and achieve measurable returns on investment.”

The selected companies must meet ID Gatineau’s eligibility criteria, including being located within the Gatineau region and demonstrating the potential to benefit from this high-level support.

“This agreement represents a unique opportunity for Gatineau manufacturing companies to access strategic resources and high-caliber support,” said Sylvie Charrette, General Manager of ID Gatineau. “Together with ADRIQ, we aim to create an environment conducive to innovation, allowing our companies to prosper and stand out in competitive markets.”

With Quebec’s business landscape becoming increasingly competitive, public-private collaborations like this one may prove essential to ensuring that local manufacturers not only survive but thrive in an evolving global economy.

Public consultation on Outaouais forest management plans



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF) is inviting residents of the Outaouais to participate in a public consultation regarding special management plans aimed at recovering forests affected by the spruce budworm. The consultation, running from now until March 17, also includes proposed modifications to an existing integrated operational forest management plan (PAFIO) that governs activity on public lands.

The plans under review outline potential intervention zones where tree harvesting operations are scheduled to mitigate the effects of the spruce budworm outbreak. Additionally, they detail pro-

posed construction and improvements to roads and other forestry infrastructure across several development units: 071-51, 071-52, 073-51, 073-52, and 074-51. The PAFIO plan under discussion further specifies areas where harvesting and roadwork, including construction and maintenance of multi-use roads, are expected to occur in unit 071-52.

The public is encouraged to review these plans and submit feedback through the province's consultation website, Quebec.ca/consultations-foret-outaouais, before the March 17 deadline at 11:59 pm. The process is intended to gather public input, though it does not extend to re-evaluating land allocations or altering previously granted rights on public land.

To facilitate participation, the MRNF will hold a virtual information session in collaboration with the Pontiac Regional



Spruce budworm recovery efforts drive public consultation on forest management plans in Outaouais, inviting community input on tree harvesting and infrastructure improvements. (TF) PHOTO COURTESY OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA

County Municipality (MRC). Scheduled for February 27, 2025, from 12:30 - 1:30 pm, the session will provide an overview of the intervention plans and outline how residents can submit comments. A question-and-answer period will conclude the event. Interested participants must register by noon on February 26 at www.trgirto.ca/en/. Registered attendees will receive instructions and an access link via email.

For additional information or to schedule an appointment, members of the public can contact the Outaouais Forest

Management Directorate during business hours, Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to noon and from 1 - 4:30 pm, by calling 819-246-4827, extension 701449, or by emailing consultationpafi-outaouais@mrfn.gouv.qc.ca.

The consultation period provides an opportunity for the community to weigh in on forestry management strategies in the region, as authorities work to mitigate the impact of the spruce budworm while maintaining sustainable use of public forest resources.

RAWQ Quiz Night set to challenge minds and spark enjoyment



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) is hosting its annual Quiz Night, a highly anticipated event in the English-speaking community. Scheduled for 6:30 pm on March 21 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 78 rue Principale in Aylmer, the evening promises engaging trivia, hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar and a silent auction. As RAWQ's biggest fundraiser of the year, Quiz Night supports the organization's programming while bringing the community together.

Participants will compete in teams of six, answering a variety of trivia questions moderated by a seasoned quiz master. Each table of six will work together to outscore competing tables, with prizes awarded to the first and second-place teams. Tickets are priced at \$15 per person or \$80 for a full table

of six. Due to high demand, purchasing tickets early is advised, as only 90 tickets are available in total this year.

The silent auction will feature a range of donated prizes, including gift baskets, gift certificates and artwork. RAWQ is still accepting donations for the auction and encourages local businesses and individuals to contribute. "The generosity of our community makes this occasion special," event organizer Tim Foisy noted. "Every contribution helps support our programs."

Tickets can be purchased online through RAWQ's website at westquebecers.ca. For more details or to donate items for the auction, individuals and businesses can contact RAWQ's office at (819) 682-9602.

"It's a fun night and a great way to shake off the winter blues," Foisy added. "We look forward to welcoming everyone to take part in this popular event for a great cause."

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Building homes, not tin boxes



LILY Ryan

Outaouais' housing crisis has translated into a gold mine for some builders. Right across the region, municipalities have small apartment buildings springing up. This much-needed housing is clearly a positive move. Builders who make the effort to acquire permits, land, hire workers, invest real money, and ultimately provide needed housing are doing a good thing. The positives here are significant.

The challenge is in 'how'. Soundproofing, logical design, intelligent layout, efficient heating and cooling, comfortable materials and uplifting architectural details are part of building homes. These are not luxuries. The impact on mental health is direct. Study

upon study have proven the importance of mental health on a person's ability to function in society.

Living in community, such as in an apartment building, is an intimate experience. Bylaw standards are minimum requirements that a builder must follow – and a municipality must enforce. Beyond these minimums, the concept of not creating depressing architectural wastelands is a very real factor in building housing. Aesthetic factors in depressive neighbourhoods are key in planning. For anyone who doubts this, think about what happens to teens stuck in ugly neighbourhoods. Then think of teens exploring interesting ones. This isn't rocket-science – and the price difference in creating inspiring architecture is negligible, therefore not a valid argument.

Outaouais municipalities will be called upon to prove they have ensured bylaw standards have been followed during this housing build boom. Elections this fall are the perfect time to push on topics dear to voters' hearts, this may be one, although, it is disappointing to many that municipalities may need to be convinced to enforce their own rules.

Bylaws have a purpose. They were developed over time because of lived experiences. Building standards that include soundproofing for multi-family buildings exist because sound travels. Living together in a building means families hear each other. Family life can be difficult enough, under the best conditions. Add in the stress of being heard by neighbours, in moments of conflict, distress or play creates a level of

pressure that can test nerves dramatically.

For a municipality and for a builder to just wash their hands of what difficulties arise inside the privacy – or semi-privacy – of an apartment is not right. Municipal employees and elected municipal officials have a duty to ensure bylaws are followed. And builders have the responsibility to follow bylaws.

Across Outaouais there are new living conditions that are either bound to house a generation of healthy Canadians who sleep well and have interest in their communities. And there are some new buildings housing tenants who are barrelling towards depression and anger at hearing their neighbours bicker from their own lack of sleep caused by poor bylaw enforcement.

LETTERS

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

Family support organization cries out for survival after cuts at Ministère de la Famille

The Centre de ressourcement pour la famille de l'Outaouais (CRFO) recently and suddenly suffered a \$66,000 cut in provincial funding that it had been waiting for since October. What's more, future funding for the overall mission, a grant that should normally be predictable and recurring to support the organization's mission and enable it to offer support to Outaouais families, is uncertain. Over the next few years, more than \$170,000 a year in funding from the Ministère de la Famille is at stake for the CRFO.

The Ministère de la Famille's decision to cut the funding originally earmarked was announced to the organization in mid-January. The CRFO met with the Ministère de la Famille on three occasions following this announcement to try to better understand the situation, discuss the issues and reverse the decision, without success. In the meantime, the CRFO's Board of Directors has had to make the heartbreaking decision to suspend activities for families indefinitely and to lay off its entire team - nine facilitators and 3 support staff - for lack of funds to cover their salaries. For the time being,

only the interim director is being hired in an attempt to save the organization from permanent closure.

The CRFO is asking regional MPs Robert Bussière and Minister Mathieu Lacombe, as well as Family Minister Suzanne Roy, to take up the issue and intervene to find a solution that will ensure the organisation's survival. Letters and requests for meetings were sent to the three elected representatives in recent weeks. Mr Bussière has agreed to meet with the CRFO in the next few days. The organization is looking forward to this first meeting with enthusiasm and hopes that it will get things moving. In addition to its demands to elected officials, the CRFO is inviting its members and partners, as well as families and the general public, to an information and consultation session on Saturday 8 March at 10 am at Val-des-Monts town hall, 1 route du Carrefour, to discuss the situation and collectively come up with solutions.

The CRFO is an organization based in Val-des-Monts that has been providing a living environment and support for families for over 35 years. The CRFO's mission is

to support families and contribute to their well-being by creating a place where they can share and help each other, and to offer respite and rejuvenation to Outaouais families. Through its activities, the organisation aims to prevent and intervene to reduce parental exhaustion, promote mutual support and sharing, and foster parent-child contact and the well-being of families.

The organisation is in a very precarious financial situation and its survival until the next funding agreement is not assured. This situation has had and will continue to have a significant impact on families, members,

partners and communities in the Outaouais. Every year, the CRFO welcomes more than 200 children, at least 100 parents and many families and caregivers from all over the Outaouais region. The organisation offers respite care and activities for parents and children. Last year, nearly 500 people visited the CRFO. Information: 819-457-4066. (Trad.: BA)

Kim Chartrand
Interim Director
Centre de ressourcement
pour la Famille de l'Outaouais
(CRFO)

Quebec health care system needs urgent care

M. Legault's latest pronouncement on taking away "well" patients from doctors and giving them sick patients in return is not going to solve the health crisis in Quebec. People who are well today may be sick tomorrow.

Who will care for the child who has whooping cough, the young woman who finds a breast lump or the young man who gets a concussion playing hockey? Does M. Legault not realize that many people are well today because they have received prompt medical attention, at some stage, or who have received preventive medicine.

Does M. Legault think that taking away

100 well patients from family doctors and giving them 100 sick patients instead, is going to help the morale of the doctors or give them a lighter work load? What it means is that it will make it even more difficult for anyone to make an appointment.

Who will decide who is "well" and who is sick? The doctors already are overloaded and heaven help us if non medical people are making the decision. M Legault needs to look at other solutions, such as making it easier for foreign doctors to be accredited and by supporting doctors currently in practice.

Judith O'Rourke
Aylmer

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Quebec, pipelines & trade with the US



Charles S. Shaver
MD

US President Donald Trump has promoted the idea that Canada should be pushed into economic submission until it becomes the 51st state. He claims that without defense largely paid for by the US, we are not “viable as a country.” He may impose 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum on March 12 (possibly on top of 25% general ones on March 4). He is also imposing reciprocal tariffs on most countries and at least 25% tariffs on April 2 on automobiles and pharmaceuticals.

Premier Andrew Furey finds Trump’s comments “incredibly disturbing.” He reminds us that Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949 mainly because of economic necessity and without military force.

Similar tariffs in 2018 were a failure in that in the first year they created only a few new jobs in the steel industry but major job losses in manufacturing. Currently, 25% of US steel and 80% of aluminum are imported. Canada still supplies 23% of US steel imports and 60% of aluminum imports. Neil Herrington warned, “US aluminum producers have no capacity to replace imports.”

For now, we possibly still have period of relieve. While we tighten up our border controls on immigration and on fentanyl, we must support Canadian workers and businesses. We must also eliminate costly interprovincial trade and labour mobility barriers, and seek non-US markets for our energy, lumber, potash, and critical minerals.

Premiers Danielle Smith, Tim Houston, Susan Holt, and Scott Moe propose a variant of Energy East to provide us with energy security and access to European markets. Mark Carney, were he to become Prime Minister, would confer with provinces such as Quebec, convene a first ministers meeting urgently to discuss the pipeline as well as ways to reduce interprovincial barriers, and if agreeable, would accelerate approvals. Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre would repeal Bill C-69 and stated, “I’d strongly support an east-west pipeline. That particular project probably won’t be resuscitated, but the idea of selling western oil to eastern refineries is impeccable.”

Energy East was a proposed 4600 km long pipeline from Hardisty, Alberta to Saint John, New Brunswick. It would have conveyed 1.1 million barrels of oil per day. Originally proposed by Premier Frank McKenna in 2011, it was favoured by Pauline Marois. Philippe Couillard argued that Quebec, as it received equalization

payments, owed it to other provinces to help sell their products. Premier Francois Legault in 2016 indicated that he would support the pipeline if the province received royalties. Later, he and other Quebec politicians and all Federal Liberals opposed this, but a recent Angus-Reid poll showed that 79% of Canadians and even 74% of Quebecers agreed that “Canada needs to ensure that it has oil and gas pipelines running from sea to sea across the country.” A recent SOM poll for La Presse found that 61% of Quebecers favoured Energy East.

Quebecers likely recall the July 2013 Lac Megantic rail disaster that claimed 47 lives. Although pipelines are not perfect, a Fraser Institute study found that they were four times safer than transporting oil by rail.

On February 4, 2025 Premier Francois Legault stated, “There is no social acceptability for this kind of project right now in Quebec.” Yet he qualified his words by adding, “But of course, situation, the economy and what Mr. Trump is doing may change the situation in the future.”

The world will continue to need oil and gas, with peak demand just before 2030. However, Trump’s plans to increase domestic extraction of coal, oil, and gas will accelerate climate change.

Like Canadians, Americans face a housing shortage. About 30% of the lumber used by the US is imported, and 85% of imports are from Canada. As I noted, we are also a major source of steel, less expensive aluminum, and even a minor supplier of gypsum for drywall. In future, there will be an increasing need to replace American houses, office buildings, schools, shopping centres, and other buildings as well as automobiles – all lost due to fires, floods, mudslides, tornadoes, and hurricanes. For many years, the US will still rely on these resources from Canada.

Trump wants to relocate the highly-integrated auto and defense industries to cities entirely within the United States. Yet to do so would incur massive expenses and take many years. Sudden tariffs on steel and aluminum could well result in production shutdowns in a week or so.

This is becoming a war. If Canadians do not unite against an increasingly dictatorial American government, we will all suffer greatly.

Quebecers will pay in at least two additional ways. They will lose equalization payments, largely underwritten by Alberta oil. Quebec last year received 53% of equalization payments - \$13.6 billion. The total Quebec budget is \$124.3 billion. Much of this comes indirectly from Alberta. In 2022, Alberta accounted for 17.9% of Canada’s total economic growth but had only 11.6% of its population.

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Burma* on the Brink

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

If the Burmese drive General Min Aung Hlaing and his brutal military regime from power, as they seem about to do, the first thing they should do afterwards is take a leaf from Costa Rica’s book and abolish the army. Don’t reform it or downsize it; just get rid of it forever.

Burma has no foreign enemies threatening to attack it; all its security problems are domestic. What it needs is an impartial police force, not a corrupt and cruel army. The military have been a curse on the country ever since Burma got its independence in 1948.

The Tatmadaw, as the army is known, got off on the wrong foot from the start. Under British rule there was no Burmese army, but during the Second World War young Burmese nationalists sought military training from the Japanese. Quite a few fought alongside the Japanese. No surprise in that: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Japan lost the war, but those turbulent young patriots became the founding generation of Burmese military officers – and they had learned some bad lessons from the Japanese. They had learned that the army is privileged above all other institutions, and that civilians have to be led firmly. They also learned that overthrowing governments is easy and quite rewarding.

The next 75 years saw a parade of military officers seize power and impose various half-baked ideological schemes on the country. They fought one another and waged incessant military campaigns against the big minority groups. (Only two-thirds of Burma’s population are ethnic Burmese, and the soldiers see their job as keeping the other ethnicities down.)

If students and other civilians dared to protest against the economic shambles and the political repression, the military just massacred them, sometimes killing hundreds of people. Above all, they drained every last drop of value out of the economy to feather their own nests. The army effectively took over the economy and the country got ever poorer.

Burma and next-door Thailand used to be almost twins: the languages are very different, but they share almost a

thousand years of intertwined history, religion and culture. They also used to be similar in wealth, but Thailand’s GDP per capita is now \$7,000, while Burma’s is \$1,100. The army did that.

The Tatmadaw is feared but not loved, and the officer class lives in its own separate world. In 2011 a popular movement headed by Aung Sang Suu Kyi, the daughter of the army’s founder, led a largely non-violent revolution that forced the military to share political power, but in 2011 the army took it back very violently.

It was too late. People had been living in freedom and without fear for a decade, and even the economy was showing signs of recovery. The Karen, Shan, Rakhine and other minority groups, most of whom had been in revolt for a long time, went back to fighting the army, but this time the Burmese themselves joined them.

Tens of thousands of students and other young people left the cities (which are tightly controlled by the army) seeking weapons and military training. Today, three years later, the army still holds all the cities but at least half the countryside is in rebel hands.

Rebel-held territory is ruthlessly bombed by the regime’s air force, but the rebels are starting to hit back with drones. Entire military units are defecting from the army, and the regime recently declared conscription to fill the gaps.

The wild card is China, which shares a long border with northern Burma. In the past it has supported the Burmese army and was its main source of weapons, but it does not love the Burmese regime either.

The right goal for all the insurgents would be a federal and democratic state that has abolished its army, but that is very tricky to design when they are fighting a war and the rebels have divergent goals.

As the independent International Crisis Group said recently, “The [Burmese] state is fragmenting as ethnic armed groups consolidate control of their homelands, while in the country’s centre a weak regime clings to power and launches revenge air attacks on territories it has lost. Further fragmentation seems inevitable.”

Quebec emergency rooms facing high occupancy rates amid winter surge



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Santé Québec held a virtual press conference on February 21 to provide an update on the state of emergency rooms across the province. Robin-Marie Coleman, Associate Vice-President for Access Coordination and Care Pathways at Santé Québec, and Dr. Mélanie Labrosse, Pediatric Emergency Physician at CHU Sainte-Justine, addressed key concerns regarding hospital overcrowding and provided guidance on managing non-urgent medical cases.

Coleman reported that Quebec's emergency rooms continue to experience high occupancy rates, with an average ER bed occupancy of 123% across the province. This figure rises significantly in the Montreal area, where rates have climbed from 122% to 144% between February 4 and February 17. The increasing number of patients, coupled with the impact of seasonal illnesses and two recent winter storms, has placed additional pressure on healthcare facilities.

The average length of stay in emergency departments has worsened by approximately 96 minutes compared to last year. This trend is attributed to multiple factors, including an aging population, an overall increase in ER visits, and the resulting strain on

inpatient hospital units.

Dr. Labrosse highlighted a notable rise in pediatric emergency visits, which have reached 487 visits per day—100 more than the same period last year. Most of these cases are related to respiratory infections and gastroenteritis, conditions that typically do not require emergency care. However, she noted a positive development: a decline in newborn hospitalizations due to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), likely due to the implementation of new vaccination programs.

To help reduce unnecessary ER visits, Dr. Labrosse advised parents to consult alternative healthcare options such as family doctors, pharmacists, and the provincial health hotline (811). She also emphasized key strategies for at-home care, including proper fever management with alternating doses of Tylenol and Advil, and hydration techniques for children experiencing vomiting.

As spring break approaches, Santé Québec is urging the public to exercise caution during winter activities. According to Dr. Labrosse, emergency rooms typically see an increase in injuries related to skiing, snowboarding, sledding, and other outdoor sports during this period. She particularly warned against the dangers of children digging snow tunnels, citing a recent tragic

incident in which a teenager lost their life due to asphyxiation after a snow collapse.

To minimize the risk of injuries, parents are advised to ensure children wear appropriate protective gear, including helmets for winter sports. Families traveling during the break should consult travel clinics for necessary vaccinations and preventative health measures, particularly for destinations with risks such as malaria.

Despite current pressures, Coleman in-

dicated that emergency room activity is expected to plateau rather than escalate further. Public awareness and responsible healthcare-seeking behaviours remain crucial to ensuring efficient emergency services for those in urgent need.

Santé Québec expressed gratitude to healthcare workers for their dedication during this challenging period and reaffirmed their commitment to improving access to care across the province.

Quebec, pipelines & trade with the US

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Americans have never agreed to permanently accept a second language. Of note is that Hispanics are about 20% of the US population. However, Spanish has no official status in the Senate, House of Representatives, federal or state governments. The New Mexico constitution of 1912 stipulated that all laws were to be in Spanish and English, but this stopped in 1949. California and Texas provide some services in Spanish.

About 20% of the Canadian population is Francophone. If absorbed into the US, these persons would also lose Canadian protection of their language and culture, and Quebecers in particular might eventually become like the Creoles of Louisiana.

President Donald Trump should realize

the many advantages of showing respect and cooperating with his Northern neighbor, including the distinct society that is Quebec. He totally underestimates the resolve of Quebecers and other Canadians to remain free and independent politically, and if necessary, more so economically. By imposing tariffs, threatening our sovereignty, and promoting ill-will with a friend and ally, he will definitely trigger major, perhaps permanent adverse effects on citizens of his own country.

As Pierre Poilievre warned, "Never confuse kindness with weakness."

Ottawa physician Dr. Charles S. Shaver was born in Montreal. He is the Former Chair of the Section on General Internal Medicine of the Ontario Medical Association. The views here are his own.

Free tax clinics offer guidance and support for residents



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Residents of West Quebec struggling to file their taxes or navigate government services will soon have access to free tax clinics and a comprehensive Super Clinic, organized by the Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) in partnership with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and local community organizations.

The tax clinics, open from March 3rd to April 15th, will provide low-income individuals with free tax preparation services by trained volunteers. The drop-off service, available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 - 3:00 pm, does not require an appointment. "We aim to make the process as accessible as possible for those who qualify," said Tim Foisy, a volunteer coordinator with the initiative. He clarified that while the tax clinics are open to all low-income individuals, the returns must be simple, excluding complex financial scenarios like property sales or investment income. The CRA defines low-income

eligibility as earning less than \$45,000 annually.

In addition to the tax clinics, an innovative Super Clinic will be open on March 25th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Deschênes Community Centre, 55 Chemin Vanier in Aylmer. The Super Clinic is designed as a one-stop hub for essential services, offering in-person assistance from agencies such as Service Canada, Revenu Québec, and Services Québec. Attendees will be able to file tax returns, inquire about benefits like the Canada Child Benefit, Disability Tax Credit, Employment Insurance, and obtain official documents such as a Social Insurance Number. The event is open to everyone, regardless of income level, to seek guidance, gain information from these agencies or complete their taxes onsite with the assistance of professionals.

Jeanne Nivischuk, the office administrator and project coordinator, highlighted the importance of bringing these services directly to the community. "Many people face barriers in accessing these essential services, whether due to long wait times, language barriers, or lack of information. The Super Clinic is designed to remove

those obstacles and provide immediate support."

Several tax information sessions will also be offered:

- For seniors: March 13, 9:30 - 11:00 am at the Deschênes Community Centre, covering topics such as pension income, CPP recovery tax, income splitting, medical expenses, and tax credits.
- For persons with disabilities and caregivers: March 12, 1:30 - 3:00 pm at Deschênes Community Centre, discussing the Disability Tax Credit, caregiver credits, home accessibility expenses, and medical deductions.
- For newcomers and families: March 12, 6:00 - 7:30 pm at Deschênes Community Centre, focusing on tax benefits and available resources.
- For students: March 13, 12:00 - 1:00 pm at CEGEP Heritage College, with tax filing days on March 18 and April 15 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Alina Holmes, Program Director at RAWQ, emphasized the broader impact of these efforts. "The goal is not just to help people file their taxes, but to ensure they are accessing all the benefits and credits

they qualify for. Many individuals don't realize they are eligible for refunds, and we want to make sure they receive every financial support available to them."

Tim Foisy further elaborated on the tax clinic structure: "This year, we're focusing on a streamlined drop-off system to make the process even easier. People can drop off their documents, and our volunteer tax preparers will complete the returns before handing them back. This ensures efficient service while maintaining accuracy and confidentiality."

Residents interested in the tax clinics must bring proper identification, all relevant tax slips (T4, RL slips, and other income statements), a notice of assessment from the previous year, and any applicable receipts for deductions. The Super Clinic will also feature representatives who can assist with employment insurance applications, Canada Workers Benefit (CWB), Canada Learning Bond, job search support, and social assistance inquiries.

For more information on the upcoming tax clinics or the Super Clinic, residents are encouraged to contact RAWQ at 819-682-9602 or visit www.westquebecers.ca.

Gatineau council clashes in heated debate on video lottery machines



Sophie Demers
LJJ Reporter

The first city council meeting of the year started off with a bang. A resolution authorizing a Masson-Anger restaurant to add three video lottery machines to the five already installed sparked a heated debate among councillors.

The restaurant would have to move a wall slightly to accommodate the new machines. This required a minor variance that the city needed to approve.

During the preparatory caucus meeting, Buckingham councillor and President of the Economic Development Commission, Edmond Leclerc, asked that the council be vigilant when approving the resolution as it set a precedent for other requests in the future. He noted that the Committee Consultatif de L'Urbanisme (CCU) was in favor of the resolution while the city's Service d'Urbanisme was not.

Mario Aubé, Masson-Anger councillor, advocated for the approval of the resolution

in the name of supporting local businesses and highlighting the financial benefits of these machines for the business. He also noted that other businesses in Gatineau had more than five machines and that exceptions could be made for some and not others. Other councillors also voiced their unfavourable opinions related to the video lottery machines.

"The monetary argument is not usually considered in a decision," said Aubé, "but when we speak like a machine, rather than thinking with our heads, it is sometimes at that moment that we make it difficult for the merchants in our different sectors. This afternoon, I was very surprised to see that the President of the Economic Development Commission (Councillor Leclerc) opposes this kind of demand when we have merchants who have a lot of difficulty, especially in the eastern sector of the city. I will continue to defend merchants throughout the city, but especially in this sector. In Masson-Angers, over the past few years, there have been four restaurants, including two in Angers, that

burned down and no longer exist. There is one left for breakfast, and it is the one we are currently discussing."

In response, Hull-Wright Councillor Steve Morin said, "It's disappointing to think that the addition of video lottery is an economic development matter. It does not create a service. Gambling does not create prosperity. Another point, I find it deplorable that after we make a decision here, we imply that taking a position other than that of the person speaking – I'm referring to Mr. Aubé – does not speak with intelligence."

This sparked a heated argument, with councillors interrupting and talking over one another. Denis Girouard, Lac-Beauchamp councillor, stated that the discussion was unproductive because it was along party lines, while also siding with Aubé. Girouard then said the President of the Economic Development Commission should back down.

Council president, Steven Boivin, had to halt the discussion and remind councillors involved to focus on the agenda item, stop

discussions of political parties and suggest council members step down.

Aubé stated that not too far from Masson-Anger, in Buckingham there is a business that has 10 machines. Others noted that saying that these machines won't bring revenue to the business is shortsighted, as no one would argue that Casino Lac-Leamy benefits from these machines.

Before the vote Boivin stated "Dear colleagues, I remind you that it is rare that we have debates as lively as this. It is important to do it. I hope that we will continue to have these debates. I just hope that when we do it, we focus on the proposal and not get involved in the entire electoral campaign that follows."

In the end, the council approved the video lottery machines. The vote was 15 in favour and five against. Moran, despite voicing dissatisfaction with the proposal, voted in favor. The vote was not divided along party lines. A mix of independents and Action Gatineau members voted in favour, same with those who voted against.

10th edition of the Prix de la Relève Agricole



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Quebec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has launched the 10th edition of the Prix de la relève agricole, an annual award recognizing outstanding young agricultural entrepreneurs. The initiative aims to highlight innovation, sustainability, and leadership among the province's next generation of farmers, offering financial support to the winners.

The competition is open to agricultural entrepreneurs under the age of 40 who own a majority stake – at least 51 per cent – in a registered farming business that has been operational for three to ten years. Eligible applicants must have generated at least \$50,000 in gross revenue in the previous year. The award is available to entrepreneurs from all regions of Quebec.

Winners will receive a \$7,500 grant, while finalists will be awarded \$3,500. The selection process is overseen by a jury of experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, business representatives, and industry associations, evaluating applicants based on their business vision, financial performance, community involvement, and sustainability efforts.

Applications must be submitted by May 20, including a completed nomination form,

a letter of recommendation from a regional agricultural advisor, and full financial statements for the past two years. Candidates are required to work with their regional agricultural succession and establishment advisor, who will assist in verifying eligibility and providing support throughout the application process.

Last year's winners, Maude Pélouquin, Renaud Pélouquin, and Michaël Lecours, owners of Ferme de Ste-Victoire Inc. in Montérégie, were recognized for their commitment to sustainable farming and their efforts to promote innovative agricultural practices within the industry. The finalists, Emmanuelle Vincent and Simon Laflamme, who operate a dairy farm in Chaudière-Appalaches, were commended for their successful farm transfer model, which serves as an example for young farmers seeking to enter the industry.

The Prix de la relève agricole will be awarded during the official ceremony of the Ordre national du mérite agricole in the fall of 2025. More information, including application details and eligibility criteria, can be found on the official Quebec government website: <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/reconnaissance-prix/agriculture/prix-releve-agricole>. For inquiries, applicants can contact the Ministry of Agriculture at [Prix.Releve@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca](mailto: Prix.Releve@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca).

Comfort bags Helping feed West Quebec: new program underway

Continued from page 1

Beyond "Réconfort en sac," Moisson Outaouais has other initiatives aimed at addressing food insecurity. The organization runs a school meal program in partnership with La Cantine pour tous, providing hot meals to elementary school students. During the 2023-2024 school year, the initiative served 14,290 meals to 1,250 students across four schools. "Being a school meal provider is a challenge, but thanks to La Cantine pour tous, we receive crucial support, such as feedback from parents and logistical assistance, allowing us to focus on preparing nutritious meals," said David Grégoire, Director of Operations and Special Projects at Moisson Outaouais. The program operates on a sliding scale, with parents paying between one and six dollars per meal, depending on their financial situation, ensuring that children have access to healthy food regardless of their household income.

Another major initiative is the Supermarket Recovery Program, which combats food waste while providing nutritious food to those in need. By recovering unsold but still consumable perishable goods from 28 grocery stores in the region, the program redistributes over 36,000 kilograms of food

every month.

"Meat, in particular, is a precious commodity for food assistance programs because it is expensive and highly nutritious," Chaput noted. Since launching the program, Moisson Outaouais has helped partner organizations reduce their food budgets, allowing them to allocate resources to long-term food security initiatives.

The need for food assistance in Outaouais has increased dramatically in recent years. In March 2024 alone, Moisson Outaouais responded to 91,042 food assistance requests—an increase of nearly 30,000 compared to 2021. Over 4,300 households received food hampers, marking a 37.7 per cent increase from 2022. Children make up 35 per cent of those requiring food assistance, and 42 per cent of beneficiaries are families with children, including single-parent and two-parent households.

With food insecurity rising, initiatives like "Réconfort en sac" are crucial in providing immediate relief while highlighting the broader challenges faced by vulnerable populations in Outaouais. As Chaput emphasized, "Every meal we distribute is not just food, it's a gesture of solidarity and support for those who need it most."

"It's like a Joni Mitchell song, you really don't know what you've lost until it's gone."



Local news makes a difference for English-speaking communities

The importance of local media is a topic that has been the subject of many discussions in the last decade as news outlets across North America struggle to stay alive.

But nowhere is the topic more important than within the English-speaking community of Quebec.

As the provincial government has moved to systematically reduce the amount of information in English available, the need for English media becomes more vital.

"We are the only ones explaining basic services and issues," said Nikki Mantel, publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*, which covers the Gatineau hills region in western Quebec.

As elements of Bill 96 approved in 2023, which has reinforced the Charter of the French Language, are implemented and en-

forced, the amount of information in English in all sectors of Quebec is diminishing.

Quebec-based companies must now ensure that all information on their websites are in French only.

The provincial government itself has reduced information available in English.

And at the municipal level, only towns with bilingual status retain the right to provide some services and information

in both French and English. Although, this includes offering English on their websites, many reports and some documentation are often available in French only.

For English-speaking residents who live

in municipalities that do not have bilingual status, the information available to anglophones in English is disappearing.

"Now more than ever we need a place where the community comes together," Mantel said.

"It's like a Joni Mitchell song," Mantel continued. "You really don't know what you've lost until it's gone."

In this climate, ensuring that English-language media survives in these communities, she said, is that much more important now.

But it is not just information in English that is important, said Brenda O'Farrell, president of the Quebec Community News-

paper Association. It is also having journalists on the ground, doing the research, asking the questions and providing the context of what is happening at the municipal level that is crucial.

"Journalism puts issues in context," said O'Farrell, who is also the editor at three community newspapers.

"We can't lose sight of what is happening with public administration," she added. "If local media is not doing it, it simply doesn't get done, and the majority of residents will never learn about what is going on at town halls, where public money is being managed."

"It takes work," said Mantel, referring to covering town councils.

Owners and publishers of local independent newspapers don't take anything for granted. But neither should readers, said Ilka de Laat, manager of the QCNA. Especially, she explained, when we see so much of the media disappearing.

"We are the only ones explaining basic services and issues."

– Nikki Mantel, publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*

"Journalism puts issues in context."

– Brenda O'Farrell, QCNA president

Canada only G7 country where media is banned on Facebook

The cat videos are still there. The questions from new homeowners looking for recommendations for a reliable contractor pop up every so often. And posts that highlight a new chicken-and-orzo recipe continue to appear, complete with a list of ingredients in the comments. But the link to the story about the hike in your municipal tax bill is not. Neither is the link to the article about the impact on the economy of the little town of Les Cèdres, west of Montreal, in the days after Amazon announced it planned to shutter its Quebec operations.

It has been a year and a half since Meta, the owner of Facebook and Instagram, has banned news from its social media platforms, making Canada the only G7 country where news from legitimate media sources

cannot be seen.

The ban is a result of federal legislation, Bill C-18, the Online News Act, which came into force in June 2023. The aim of the legislation was to force large tech giants like Meta and Google to pay media outlets for news content shared on their platforms. But Meta opted to deny news outlets access to its social media sites, making it exempt from the new law.

The move created another hurdle for community newspapers to get over.

Meanwhile, a deal struck with Google to provide \$100 million in funding to Canadian media, will see most of the money go to large media companies.

The result is the struggle for the smallest media outlets has become more difficult, as

it no longer has the ability to engage with their readers on the biggest social media platforms.

"As a society that cares about the truth and cares about having a population that's informed to ensure better democratic outcomes and to hold politicians to account, this is extremely bad news," said Aengus Bridgman, director of Media Ecosystem Observatory, which published a study last June, marking the one-year anniversary of the Meta news ban.

"Less news is being consumed by Canadians," the report stated, which highlighted the increasing risk of Canadians being informed on politics and current affairs through a "more biased and factual lens than before."



“News no longer flows down from the big media outlets.”

Shifting the direction flow of news

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AT EPICENTRE OF A REVOLUTION

In the first 11 months of 2024, 36 local news outlets closed in Canada. Twenty-nine were community newspapers, while seven were privately owned radio stations, according to the Local News Research Project at Toronto Metropolitan University’s School of Journalism.

That is in addition to the more than 500 news outlets that have ceased operations in Canada since 2008.

For those that remain, surviving does not mean striving – not by any means. Just about every other news operation in the country that remains – from Bell Media to the CBC, Postmedia to the Torstar group of papers – have slashed jobs and pulled back on coverage.

Canadians across the country are losing their news media, bit by bit, reporter by reporter, newspaper by newspaper – except for you, at least for now.

What makes you so different from a growing number of Canadians?

The mere fact that you are reading this, means you are served by a community newspaper that is still in operation. In fact, in a few very rare instances, you are reading a newspaper that just started publishing in the last few years.

If these areas were to be located on a map, they would be identified as “the starting point.” It’s where news begins.

And this is where the one bright light in the story of the Canadian media shines. It is where a little revolution

has started to rumble. It’s the epicentre that is shifting the directional flow of news in Canada.

“News no longer flows down from the big media outlets,” said Brenda O’Farrell, the president of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association. “It flows up, from the small, independent community news operations that still have reporters in communities outside the big city areas.”

O’Farrell calls it the “Trickle Up Theory of News.”

“No longer are major news outlets covering all areas. They are only focusing on major metropolitan centres,” she explained. “But so many people live outside of those regions.”

The stories that reflect these communities – stories that are important to these Canadians – are being covered by community newspapers.

“And these stories are trickling up to the major news operations – the CBC, the nearby daily, the Bell Media or Global News television stations. They pick up on our stories,” O’Farrell explained.

If it wasn’t for community news outlets, Canada’s major media outlets would only cover the big cities and nothing else. They no longer have the resources to do it.

That is why community newspapers are so important and need support, says Ilka de Laat, manager of the QCNA.

They also deserve your support, De Laat said, adding, “Your local newspaper reflects your issues, because the

journalists live in the same community. They are your neighbours. This is how accountability and trust works. A big-city reporter being sent to your small community from a corporate media outlet, they won’t appreciate your situation.”

Which brings us to context. Local reporters understand the local context – what is important to residents and why.

But for this “trickle up” to succeed, readers in all these communities that still have a community newspaper have to buy in. They cannot take their newspaper for granted. The stories from their towns are important. Readers have to become stakeholders in the process. And the way to do that is to subscribe.

“Look at what is happening in the U.S.,” O’Farrell said. “We can’t rely on social media platforms that are ready to drop fact-checking, ban news like Meta has done in Canada, and change the name of the Gulf of Mexico as they pander to a president who will allow them to avoid regulations that could affect their bottom lines.”

And on this side of the border, in Quebec, where municipalities that do not have bilingual status will soon have to eliminate information in English from their websites as aspects of Bill 96 are enforced, access to information in English is going to become more crucial.

Having reporters cover municipal councils will be crucial for the English-speaking community. And only your local community newspaper does that.



You are here!

Buckingham Veterinary Hospital commits to a greener future



MéliSSa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

On Sunday morning, October 20, the green bend race took place, organized by the Buckingham Veterinary Hospital, with the aim of raising funds for the Carbone Boréal organization.

Several participants were there at Armand-Daddy-Lacelle Park to mark the event. The runners had to cover five km on the cycle path where some were accompanied by their 4-legged companions. The Guardian Angels of the animals were also on site to collect donations for their organization, which helps animals in need.

Both a program specialized in tree planting in deforested areas of Quebec and a research infrastructure at UQAC, Carbone Boréal aims to enable organizations and individuals to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. Tree planting is carried out, more precisely, in Quebec's boreal forests, which are naturally bare. This allows for regeneration of the ecosystem.

Furthermore, tree planting also serves as experimental research for long-term carbon sequestration. Each tree was



Participants during the Green Bend Race at Armand-Daddy-Lacelle Park. (October 20, 2024) (MG) PHOTO: MÉLISSA GÉLINAS

verified according to the protocol: ISO 14064-3 (Bureau de normalization du Québec).

Currently, forests capture a total of up to 25% of carbon. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

(IPCC), it will be possible to increase the rate of carbon sequestration by more than 15% with the continuation of the efforts put in place, and this, through very simple actions like planting trees.



BECAUSE WE HAVE YOUR ACTIVITIES AT HEART
COMMUNITY EVENTS

AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33 - March 11 at noon: Seniors & Friends Lunch followed by karaoke, dance & door prizes. Wear green, we celebrate St. Patrick's Day! Tickets are available in advance only at the Branch. -March 13 at 6 pm: ShowTime Thursday featuring Jason Coyle. -March 15 at 1 pm: Let's Get Green! The best St. Patrick's Day party in town! 3 pm: Live music with "Hey Neighbour, Mon Voisin." Doors open at noon. Please note: No reservations, seating is limited, first come, first served. Members and non-members are welcome anytime at the Aylmer Legion, 59 Rue Bancroft, Aylmer sector. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

BINGO AYDELU. 94, rue du Patrimoine, Gatineau (secteur d'Aylmer). Tous les mercredis soir / Every Wednes-

day night 18 h 45 / 6:45 p.m. Ouverture des portes 16 h / Doors open at 4 p.m. 3 800 \$ en prix / in prizes. 18 ans et plus / 18 years and older. Places limitées / Limited places. Nouveau programme / New program. Service de cantine / Canteen service. 819 684-7888 ou/or 819 230-2240.

LITTLE RAY'S NATURE CENTRE EXOTIC ANIMALS March 5 at 11 am at Galeries Aylmer! Want to liven up spring break with a captivating family outing? On March 5, meet Little Ray's Nature Centre exotic animals! Attend fascinating demonstrations with a professional educator introducing incredible creatures: ferrets, tarantulas, scorpions, and an impressive boa! Galeries Aylmer 181 Rue Principale, Gatineau, QC.

LUSKVILLE FARM UP SPRING FAIR May 3 and 4, 2025, from 10 am to 3 pm. Chemin Crégheur area, Luskville, QC. www.luskville.farm-hop.com

REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WEST QUEBECERS QUIZ NIGHT March 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 78 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer) QC. Bar, draw, prizes, silent auction. Tickets: \$15 per person, teams of 6 for \$80. \$20 at the door. To purchase tickets, call 819-682-9602. info@westquebecers.ca

SALON MIEUX-ÊTRE ET CRÉATIVITÉ UN TEMPS POUR ELLE. Le 16 mars 2025 de 10 h à 16 h au Centre Aydelu, 94, rue du Patrimoine, Gatineau, QC. Mesdames, nous vous invitons à plonger dans les énergies du

féminin sacré et vivre une expérience immersive magique. Nous vous offrons un espace pour vous retrouver, découvrir des artisans connectés et participer à des ateliers inspirants. Artistes, auteurs et créateurs passionnés, Ateliers interactifs (écriture, estime de soi, relaxation, et plus encore). Concert intuitif pour une ambiance apaisante, Espace de méditation guidée pour un recentrage profond, Massages et soins bien-être, Bijoux artisanaux et accessoires de relaxation, Henné (\$) et art corporel artistique, Cristaux, coaching et développement personnel, Cet événement sera également l'occasion d'une Grande levée de fonds en soutien à l'organisme l'Autre Chez-Soi qui vient en aide aux femmes victimes de violences conjugales. Entrée libre.

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COLLECTION OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR THE AYLMEYER FOOD CENTRE: People who want to make a difference and help our community can drop off their donations at the Aylmer Bulletin office, located in the Galeries Aylmer, from Monday to Friday during business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.). Thank you for your generosity!

JOB OFFERS

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT POSITION AVAILABLE. Help local businesses increase their visibility and sales. Interpersonal skills are essential. You must be bilingual and own a vehicle. Responsibilities: Offer innovative advertising solutions to local merchants, provide customer service to advertisers, apply different marketing strategies, and expand print and web sales. Send your résumé by email to the *Aylmer Bulletin* at pub@bulletinaylmer.com.

JOB OFFERS

CHEZ PUTTERS IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A WAITER/WAITRESS. Position available immediately. Submit your resume in person at Chez Putters, located at 181 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer), QC, or by email at info@chezputters.ca.

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O! SI NATUREL MASSAGE THERAPY & SKIN CARE All our therapists are accredited by a Massage Therapy Association and can issue receipts for insurance. Appointments are available from Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. We are located at 153 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer). Book your appointment today. 819 682-8888.

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Contribuer au succès d'un média local et au rayonnement des entreprises d'ici, ça te dit?
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- Provide customer service to advertisers
- Apply different marketing strategies
- Expand print and web sales
- Be bilingual

Do you want to contribute to the success of local media and the influence of local businesses?
APPLY NOW!

CHAT DISPARU | MISSING CAT



RUSTY

Mâle tabby orange et blanc avec 2 grandes taches blanches sur son dos

Absent du parc Champlain, à Aylmer (Gatineau) depuis le 15 août 2024. Microchipé

\$\$\$ Récompense \$\$\$

Orange and white male tabby with 2 large white spots on his back
Missing from Champlain Park, Aylmer (Gatineau) since August 15, 2024. Microchipped

\$\$\$ Reward \$\$\$



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Gatineau greenlights project to convert part of StarCity cinema into a grocery store



Digital rendering of the plans to convert part of StarCity into a grocery store. (SD)

PHOTO: COURTESY



Sophie Demers
LJI Reporter

The municipal council has approved the project during the February 18 council meeting that took place in Aylmer at

the Aydelu centre. The cinema is located at 115 boulevard du Plateau. This project will reduce the size of the cinema but expand the building to accommodate a new health food grocery store, Avril.

The commercial building was originally

built in 1999 and is valued at \$16.9 million. The project will expand the building, renovate the exterior, modify a small section of the existing parking space, and the installation of new signs. The project will eliminate 19 parking spaces.

Avril is an independent Quebec grocery store founded in 1995 in Granby. Today there are 13 stores across the province which include a home brand with 400 products. The store stocks healthy, natural, and organic products.

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