

QAHN at 25 and funding the future of heritage



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJ Reporter

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network marked its 25th anniversary this year, reflecting on a quarter-century of cultural advocacy while directing new support to the communities it was created to serve. Founded in Lennoxville in 2000, QAHN has grown into a province-wide network of museums, archives and historical societies devoted to preserving the heritage of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

To commemorate the milestone, QAHN released a special publication, adopted a new strategic plan, and hosted public events recognizing volunteers and long-standing contributors. These included a recent conference in Cowansville honouring heritage advocate Marion Phelps, and an awards ceremony held at Maison Louis-Joseph Forget in Montreal. Additional anniversary programming is scheduled for the autumn, including a virtual heritage summit, a heritage fair on October 4 titled *Stones and Stories in Morin Heights*, and a public screening of QAHN-produced documentaries at the Lac-Brome Museum in Knowlton on October 25 at 1:00 pm.

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Julie Miller of QAHN (second from left) visited the Pontiac Archives in Shawville, meeting with local volunteers as part of the organization's ongoing support for community heritage projects through its SHARE program. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF QAHN

Province-wide police effort with CENTAURE leads to record cocaine seizure



See story on page 3



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QAHN at 25 and funding the future of heritage

Continued from page 1

"This year has been about honouring where we've come from but also making sure we continue to serve the people and institutions doing this work across Quebec," said Matthew Farfan, QAHN's executive director.

Separate from the anniversary, QAHN also completed the first phase of its new SHARE initiative, a funding programme supported by the federal Department of Canadian Heritage. In June, more than \$300,000 in micro-grants was awarded to 25 grassroots organizations across the province working to preserve English-

speaking heritage.

In West Quebec, three groups received support through the programme: Fairbairn House in Wakefield, Aylmer Heritage Association, and the Pontiac Archives in Shawville. Each is undertaking a locally focused project rooted in storytelling, preservation and education.

At Fairbairn House, work is underway to develop educational materials for use in local classrooms, with a focus on the intertwined histories of anglophone, francophone and Indigenous communities in the Gatineau Valley. In Aylmer, heritage volunteers

are researching and sharing stories related to the town's architectural and cultural legacy. The Pontiac Archives is digitizing wartime documents and photographs, helping preserve the military history of the region's residents.

The SHARE programme will continue over the next three years, with future calls for applications planned. For Farfan, the initiative reflects QAHN's core purpose.

"We've always believed in working directly with communities," he said. "In our twenty-fifth year, that commitment feels more important than ever."

Province-wide police effort with CENTAURE leads to record cocaine seizure



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A major drug trafficking investigation has led to a record cocaine seizure and the arrest of five individuals in the Gatineau and Masson-Angers sectors.

The investigation began on July 9, when Simon-Didier Perron, 26, of Gatineau, was arrested during a vehicle stop in Montreal with the cooperation of Gatineau and Montreal Police. Officers seized nearly 40 kilograms of cocaine. Perron was released following this initial arrest.

The investigation advanced with the execution of five search warrants for two apartments and three residences in Gatineau on July 16. The raids involved the intervention group and a canine unit. Perron was arrested again at one of the search locations. He appeared in court the next day to face several charges, including trafficking a controlled substance, possession of cocaine and other substances for the purpose of trafficking, possession of a prohibited firearm, and multiple firearms-related offences.

The searches resulted in the seizure of approximately 40 kilograms of cocaine, 1,890 grams of methamphetamine, a .45 calibre pistol, ammunition, a 2021 Mercedes GLB, small quantities of GHB and cannabis, several mobile phones, and various items linked to drug distribution.



A major drug trafficking investigation in Gatineau has resulted in a record seizure of cocaine, multiple arrests, and a series of charges tied to drugs and illegal firearms. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF GATINEAU POLICE

This operation forms part of the CENTAURE strategy, a province-wide initiative aimed at disrupting organized crime and the trafficking of illegal firearms. The strategy brings together police forces across Quebec to maintain coordinated pressure at the local, regional, and provincial levels.

Gatineau Police are encouraging anyone with information related to illegal firearms or drug traffick-

ing to contact the confidential tip line at 819-243-4636, option 5. Information concerning firearms offences may also be reported to the CENTAURE line at 1-833-888-2763. Individuals worried about someone who may pose a safety risk due to firearm possession are urged to contact the prevention line "J'ai un doute, j'appelle!" at 1-800-731-4000, options 1 and 2. In an emergency, the public should call 911.

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QUEBEC ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEES will be creating the LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE OF THE WESTERN QUEBEC REGION in early September



The newly constituted QUEBEC ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEES (QALHC) will be creating the first of its twelve local history committees on Wednesday evening, September 3rd, 2025, virtually via ZOOM commencing @ 7:00 p. m.

The aptly titled LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE OF THE WESTERN QUEBEC REGION (LHCWQR) will cover the vast geographic territory now administered by the Western Quebec School Board. The WQSB now offers education in English at schools in the following municipalities: Val d'Or, Rouyn-Noranda, Témiscaming, Chapeau, Low, Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Maniwaki, Namur, Kazabazua, Quyon, Campbell's Bay, Shawville, Poltimore - Val des Monts, Wakefield, Chelsea, Buckingham, Gatineau, Hull, and Aylmer.

Launching the LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE OF THE WESTERN QUEBEC REGION virtually

over this vast geographic area is the proof of concept for this ambitious provincial project. "A proof of concept is a preliminary project or experiment designed to test whether an idea or concept is viable. It serves as a small-scale demonstration to validate the feasibility of a project, product, or business idea, allowing stakeholders to assess its potential before committing significant resources."

MISSION STATEMENT =

The Local History Committee of the Western Quebec Region brings together professors and teachers of history and social sciences, university and cegep students, parents and grandparents, community leaders, and history enthusiasts of all ages.

LHCWQR provides leadership through the members of its executive board, advisory council, and local history committee.

LHCWQR will create the participatory research laboratory of local history.

VISION STATEMENT=

The Local History Committee of the Western Quebec Region will inspire inhabitants of the region with pride in their local and regional history through activities focussing on promoting increased involvement.

Contributing to the participatory research laboratory of local history will enhance pride and involvement.

OBJECTIVE =

The Local History Committee of the Western Quebec Region plans to establish a participatory research laboratory of local history that will share the knowledge of local and regional history with community members.

INVITATIONS =

Invitations to become members of this exciting new project will be sent out virtually via ZOOM on Tuesday, August 26th. The founding meeting of the Local History Committee of the Western Quebec Region will occur via ZOOM on Wednesday evening, September 3rd, 2025, virtually commencing @ 7:00 p. m.

To receive an invitation, please send an email to: Brian ROCK of Aylmer at comech.qc.br@gmail.com with your full name, your email address, and your telephone number.

Looking forward to meeting you all virtually on Wednesday evening, September 3rd!

Local History Committee of the Western Quebec Region

LETTERS

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

Forest fires and selfish people

Watching the news has been scary and frustrating. We see bans of not only open fires, but of all terrain vehicles, drivers, even hikers in some parts of Canada where the forest is tinder dry. Why does the public get so self-righteous about not being allowed to enter high risk areas for a forest fire? Are these the same people who thumped their chests about having to wear a face mask during the Covid-19 pandemic?

How did we, as a society, get to such a radicalized place that people feel personally outraged about not being allowed to hike for a season. The loss of trust in education, caring thinkers who make decisions to cut access to fire-prone areas is alarming. These are real people making decisions

for the long-term benefit of all Canadians. Apparently, most of the forest fires in Canada have been started by people, accidentally. So, it is no surprise that people are asked to refrain from entering high-risk areas of forest fires. Like, come on, people!!! This isn't rocket-science. Just like the facemask wearing during the pandemic – not rocket-science. Air-born germs can be prevented from spreading by wearing masks. So, wear a mask! Oy – when will the age of reason return to the general population?

Is it time to make university free so we can get our people properly educated?

Lorne Smith
La Pêche

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Advertising Manager: pub@bulletinaylmer.com
Publicité / Advertising: pub@bulletinaylmer.com
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The Country Music Years



"Oh doctor, oh doctor, oh dear Dr John
Your cod liver oil is so pure and so strong
I'm afraid of my life, I'll go down in the soil
If my wife don't stop drinking your cod
liver oil."

Those lyrics of an old Irish Ditty that
are stored in my mind for over 80 years
are still remembered, along with this song:
"Hallelujah, I'm a bum
Hallelujah, bum again
Hallelujah, give us a handout
To revive us again."

As a three-year-old, I cranked up the
gramophone, placed a 78-rpm disc on the
machine and dropped the armed needle on
that spinning disc to allow 'profound' lyrics
such as those to permeate the living room.
Wilf Carter's Swiss Moonlight Lullaby and
Doc Williams' Mary of the Wild Moor
were also among those songs. In addition,
others like The Little Red Caboose Behind
the Train were part of that musical fare.

The American-born Ed McCurdy, who
sang many songs of Canada's East Coast,
became a revered voice on the CBC network
as he invited us to listen to his songs with:

"Where do you come from?
Where do you go?
Where do you come from
Old Cotton-eyed Joe?
I come for to see you
I come for to sing
I come for to show you
My diamond ring."

In my adult years, I would learn from
Doc Williams himself that it was Ed Mc-
Curdy who wrote the lyrics of Roses are
Blooming, the flip side of his Quality label
recording of Mary of the Wild Moor.

There was also the Down-East Music of
Don Messer and His Islanders; Cammie
Howard and the Western Five featured
the Smiling Balladeer, Oral Scheer. It was
broadcast live from the Chateau Laurier
on the national CBC network. The CFRA
Happy Wanderers with Ward Allen's famed
Maple Sugar fiddle tune captured my at-
tention as it did my heart.

On and on it went until in my forties,
I began writing Country Tracks in this
paper. In July 1985, at the request of then-
editor Jim Creskey, I started the column.
My intention was to write about country
music during the summer months, bank
a few stories to last until Thanksgiving
and then concentrate on my role as an
elementary school teacher.

During that summer, there were many
venues featuring live country music. There
was also the Gatineau Clog at Tucker Lake
in the Gatineau Hills. I became immersed
in the music, getting to interview and to
personally know country musicians from
the Ottawa Valley and from both sides of
the Ottawa River. What a thrill it was to
be able to share part of their stories with
readers. You might accurately conclude
that, by this time, the music was flowing
through my veins.

In subsequent years, I was also privileged
to interview country singers from other parts
of Canada and the United States. Among
them was Doc Williams, who informed me
of his connection with Ed McCurdy at a
small radio station in New Hampshire. In
the process of gathering information for the
column, I searched libraries, interviewed all
the on-air personalities at CKBY FM, and
became acquainted with every agency in the
Ottawa area that promoted country music.

Foremost among these was Ken Reynolds,
who was hired by Frank Ryan, owner of
CFRA, to start an Entertainment Bureau at
the station. Ken was also the tour manager
for both Wilf Carter and Don Messer. He
brought many American artists to Canada,
such as Hank Snow, Marty Robbins, Eddie
Arnold and Jim Reeves. Ken planned Johnny
Cash's only tour of the Maritime provinces.

This column overlapped my last twelve
years of teaching. Upon my retirement
in 1997, I was now free to travel to more
distant paces. In May 1997, Ken asked
me if I would come to the Maritimes to
document Doc Williams' Farewell Tour.

In Fredericton NB, we met up with all
the touring musicians. On one of those
occasions, while seated in the back seat of
the van with Doc, he invited me to visit him
at his home in Wheeling, West Virginia.
This I did on two occasions. I'll always
remember that last parting. Doc was 88
years old at the time and in good health.
His parting words were, "I guess this is
the last time we'll be seeing each other.
You know that we don't go on forever."
Doc Williams passed away at the age of
93 on January 31, 2007. He referred to me
as one of his younger generation of fans.

In 2010, the late Mike Fahey, one of the
Hall of Fame Directors and a country music
singer, came to my door to inform me that
I was selected to receive the Ralph Carl-
son Memorial Award at that year's Hall
of Fame Induction. The Award is given
to those who 'for an extended period of
time made an outstanding contribution
to Country Music in the Ottawa Valley.' I
am really appreciative for having received
this award.



Trump: The Least Bad Outcome

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

I would rather eat worms than write about
the current hullabaloo on the American
right over the conspiracy theories about
paedophile Jeffrey Epstein and his various
pals and accomplices. The temptation is just
to sit back and enjoy watching the MAGA
revolution devour its own children, but
Duty calls.

It is not enough just to wish that both sides
lose. (Well, all of the many sides, really.)
It is becoming clear that this scandal will
probably injure Donald Trump personally
and weaken him permanently. It doesn't
matter whether he was really implicated
in Epstein's crimes or not. As usual, it's the
attempted cover-up that does the damage.

Nobody outside the United States has
any influence on how the political storm
that is growing there comes out, but ev-
erybody has a stake in the outcome. Even
an increasingly isolationist America that
is descending into political chaos is still
the world's greatest military power and
a major economic player. What happens
there matters, but what should we hope for?

The first principle is that we should all
work to ensure that Trump remains in office
for the remaining 42 months of his four-
year term. He would only leave voluntarily
if his entanglement in the Epstein affair
grows so damning that he has to resign
in order to be pardoned by his successor,
President J.D. Vance, but that is not out
of the question.

The great virtue of Trump as candidate
for the role of first American dictator is that
he's not up to the job. The push towards
a 'soft fascist' authoritarian system is real
and quite rapid – the ever-growing ICE
is emerging as his private army – but his
instinctive preference for a state of chaos
that maximises his options is not a sound
foundation for a lasting dictatorship.

Another three-and-a-half-years of
Trump freed from all the restraints that
the 'grown-ups' put on him during his first
term will probably do great damage to the
US economy. However, it would also make
it unlikely that either a chosen successor (or
Trump himself in defiance of the Constitu-
tion) could win the presidency in 2028.

Democracy in the United States can
survive Donald Trump, and not just as a
Hungarian-style 'elective dictatorship'. The
number of people who swallow all the lies
is shocking and shaming, but they never
exceed half the population. A democratic

comeback is possible.

On the other hand democracy in the
United States would probably not survive
a 'President' Vance who took power long
enough before the 2028 election – whether
by succession to a physically incapacitated
or criminally implicated Trump or simply
by a putsch – to rig the vote.

Just look at him. You know it's true. So
put up with Trump. Within limits, of course.

The limits would include any US in-
vasion of a near-neighbour (Greenland,
Panama, Canada), but the rest of the world
has tacitly accepted US air-strikes on at least
half-a-dozen distant countries in recent
decades. Now is not the right time to get
picky about it.

Nobody should condone the slow-motion
genocide of the Palestinian population in
the Gaza Strip, but almost none of the other
traditional democracies on the 'West' openly
condemn it either.

And don't get upset if Trump flips and flops
a few more times on arms aid to Ukraine.
That's who he is, and if you prefer him to the
alternative then just make sure everybody
else in the West buys enough arms from
the US to keep the Ukrainians supplied.
Trump just wants to be paid for them.

And what about the impact on world
trade of Trump's ceaseless tampering with
tariffs? This is a self-healing wound, in the
sense that a rapidly growing number of
countries are concluding that the United
States is not a reliable trading partner. The
endless struggle to keep up with the changes
is just not worth it.

The likely outcome is that supply chains
will increasingly go around the United States
rather than to or through it. That's not a
limitless disaster for the United States, just
a handicap that can be repaired in time.

The arrival of Trump 2.0 has been a shock
to both the global trading system and the
alliance structures that had prevailed since
the 1950s, but they are adjusting fast and
fairly well to the new realities. Or at least,
it could have been a lot worse.

It could still take a turn for the worse, of
course, but that's always the case. The task
when things are threatening to fall apart is
always to decide what is really important
to preserve, and make your other choices
and goals serve that overriding objective.
Right now, that means keeping J.D. Vance
from the throne, even at the cost of putting
up with Trump.

Face à la grogne, Québec allège les coupes en éducation

Carl Hager

QUÉBEC — En juin dernier, le gouvernement du Québec a de nouveau exigé d'importantes compressions budgétaires dans les commissions scolaires publiques de la province. En décembre 2024,

celles-ci avaient déjà été contraintes de réduire leurs budgets en cours d'année. Cette fois, le gouvernement réclamait 570 millions de dollars de coupes pour l'année scolaire 2025-2026, déclenchant une vague d'indignation publique et une pétition massive. Résultat :

les compressions ont été réduites à 30 millions de dollars.

Joanne Labadie, présidente de la Commission scolaire Western Québec (CSWQ), a déclaré : « Ce sont des gestes désespérés de la part du gouvernement. On commençait à peine à se sentir bien après la pandémie, et voilà qu'une nouvelle attaque est lancée contre la sécurité du système scolaire. Les élèves ont besoin de tout le soutien possible, et le gouvernement menace les services dont ils dépendent. Il nous faut des augmentations de budget et plus de ressources, pas des compressions. »

George Singfield, directeur général de la CSWQ, a indiqué que des économies sont recherchées par l'élimination de certains postes temporaires, le non-remplacement à la retraite, et la suppression du poste de technicien en loi-

sirs, entre autres. « Nous avons subi une énorme coupe budgétaire l'année dernière et elle est maintenant récurrente. On nous interdit d'utiliser nos surplus, et nous devons produire un budget équilibré selon les nouveaux paramètres qui nous sont imposés », a-t-il expliqué au Journal.

Trouver des économies budgétaires n'est pas chose facile, car la majorité des budgets est liée à des conventions collectives négociées.

Le ministre de l'Éducation, Bernard Drainville, a affirmé que le but du gouvernement est d'inciter les commissions scolaires à gérer leurs budgets de façon rigoureuse, notamment en réduisant les dépenses administratives. « Le gouvernement a fait des investissements historiques en éducation, et nous voulons que les services aux enfants demeurent intacts. »

Les commissions scolaires anglophones, regroupées au sein de la QESBA, poursuivent actuellement le gouvernement en justice au sujet de leur autonomie financière, notamment en ce qui concerne les surplus. À un an des élections provinciales, plusieurs craignent que le gouvernement tente de s'approprier ces surplus pour améliorer son propre bilan financier.

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Increasing Requests for Help with Back-to-School Costs



Cédric Tessier, Executive Director of Centraide Outaouais with Daniel Coutu, magician, host and singer (May 1, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CENTRAIDE OUTAOUAIS



Mélissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

With the start of the school year fast approaching, more and more families in the region will be using Centraide Outaouais' Back-to-School program.

Created in 1995, the program's goal is to provide new school supplies at a reduced price to children from disadvantaged families. Since its inception, more than 57,000 children have benefited from this assistance. The program is co-managed by some 20 neighbourhood and family organizations in the Outaouais region. "People must register with the organizations that will be responsible for delivering the services," explained Cédric Tessier, Executive Director of Centraide Outaouais. Several of them will set up a "sharing store" where families can go to shop for their school supplies at 25% of the price. This year, with the rising cost of living, the organization expects to help nearly

2,500 people. According to Cédric Tessier, there has been a sustained increase in the number of applications for the program since 2021.

Across the Outaouais region, the Hull sector appears to be the area with the highest rate of extreme poverty. "This is the area where we see the most children being helped," said Tessier. "We can also see pockets of poverty in slightly wealthier areas, such as the Aylmer sector, and in all the regional county municipalities in the region."

Single-parent families and families with only one parent working appear to be those who rely most on financial assistance. "These are people who are active in society, who contribute, but who are unable to make ends meet because of ever-rising prices and wages that aren't keeping up," he said.

For more information on the program: <https://centraideoutaouais.com/que-fait-on/programmes/retour-en-classe>.

Children's clinic confronts a new crisis of youth homelessness



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A decade after opening its doors, the Centre de pédiatrie sociale de Gatineau is facing a reckoning. In its newly released 2024-2025 impact report, the organization confirms what frontline workers have increasingly observed: the needs are growing, the cases are more complex and, for the first time, children without homes are arriving at its doors.

The report documents a sharp increase in demand. Over the past year, the centre provided care to 1,115 children — more than 200 of them new — through 11,090 clinical interventions. Since its founding in 2009, more than 2,300 children have been served across its two sites in Vieux-Hull and Vieux-Gatineau. Children aged six to twelve made up the largest share of clients, followed by those under five, then adolescents.

Two key expansions shaped the year, the completion of renovations at the Vieux-Hull site and the integration of the Boîte à musique and Clinique de périnatalité sociale into upgraded facilities. The music therapy programme, now entering its third year, reached nearly 200 classrooms and centres through group workshops, and has served over 350 children since its launch. The perinatal clinic, now in its fourth year, supported 70 expectant mothers and continued postnatal follow-

up for 56 infants.

Beyond clinical care, the report outlines new collaborations with academic institutions, including an educational and artistic partnership with the Université du Québec en Outaouais that concluded with a public exhibition of children's artwork. The centre also strengthened efforts to include fathers in its care model, with new training and programming developed in partnership with provincial networks.

Fundraising efforts surpassed previous years. The 16th edition of the Guignolée des enfants raised \$236,518.78, while the centre's inaugural benefit gala, *Jeune Ensemble*, brought in an additional \$92,289. Combined, they contributed to a funding model still heavily reliant on community donations, project-based grants, and philanthropy. The report notes that 86 per cent of expenditures were directed to frontline services.

A new executive director, Chloé Martinetti, took office in January 2025, coinciding with the rollout of a three-year strategic plan. Priorities include modernizing infrastructure, improving cybersecurity, diversifying revenue streams, and responding to what the centre describes as a deepening social crisis.

"The needs on our territory continue to grow," Martinetti said. "Together, we can offer each child a space where they feel heard, supported and valued."

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A Tale of two Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Chelsea continues to stand out. In a report released earlier this year, the Institut de la statistique du Québec ranked the municipality among the province's most economically robust, citing elevated income levels, strong labour force participation and sustained demographic growth.

The Indice de vitalité économique des territoires evaluates more than 1,100 municipalities, using three core indicators: median personal income for adults aged 18 and over, the employment rate among those aged 25 to 64, and the average annual population growth over a five-year period.

Chelsea, with a population of just under 9,000, performs exceptionally well across all categories. Its residents report a median personal income of approximately \$79,500, significantly higher than the provincial average of \$45,600. The municipality also benefits from a relatively young and expanding population, as well as proximity

Chelsea ranks among Quebec's most economically dynamic municipalities, but new provincial data reveals a deepening divide between the thriving south and struggling northern communities of the Outaouais. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

to employment centres in Gatineau and Ottawa. These factors have helped Chelsea emerge as one of the most economically dynamic communities in Quebec.

Gatineau itself also performs solidly. Among Quebec's ten largest cities, it ranks

fourth in the vitality index. The city posted a median personal income of \$52,700, an employment rate above 80 per cent, and annual population growth of close to one per cent. As the main urban centre in the region, Gatineau supports a broad labour market that includes public administration, technology, education and health care. Its strong bilingual workforce and strategic location at the confluence of two provinces have made it a consistent destination for new residents and investment.

Yet, beyond this southern corridor, the outlook changes. Rural municipalities in Pontiac, Vallée-de-la-Gatineau and parts of Papineau face more difficult conditions. In the MRC Pontiac, the median personal income is closer to \$32,500 and the employment rate among adults aged 25 to 64 is substantially lower than the provincial average. These areas have experienced slower population growth or outright decline, and residents rely more heavily on government transfers such as pensions, employment insurance and income support.

The Institute's report indicates that more than half of the municipalities in northern Outaouais fall into the two lowest quintiles of economic vitality. Contributing factors include limited public infrastructure, long travel distances to major job markets, lower levels of educational attainment and a narrower economic base. Many of these communities depend on seasonal or resource-based industries such as forestry, construction and small-scale tourism, which offer limited stability and few long-term employment prospects.

Outmigration, particularly among younger adults, continues to shape the demographic

profile of the region's northern tier. School enrolments have declined in several municipalities, and local employers report growing difficulty attracting and retaining skilled workers. The population is aging, and municipal budgets are increasingly strained by the need to maintain essential services with a shrinking tax base.

The Outaouais thus presents a case of internal contrast. Municipalities like Chelsea and Cantley are among Quebec's top performers, while others in the same administrative region continue to face significant economic headwinds. This divergence reflects more than geography; it underscores enduring disparities in access to infrastructure, investment and opportunity.

The Indice de vitalité économique is used by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to inform the distribution of development funding and guide regional policy. While the index does not attempt to explain causation, it offers a clear diagnostic of where economic growth is taking place and where it is not. The 2025 edition draws on data from 2022, which represents the most recent year for which complete, validated figures were available from tax filings, census updates and demographic estimates. The findings affirm Chelsea's position at the forefront of the Outaouais and expose a deepening fault line across the region.

That divide shows no sign of narrowing on its own. Without targeted policy intervention to improve services, attract investment and retain residents in northern municipalities, the gap between the region's most and least prosperous communities is likely to grow.



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Help protect the river: Ottawa Riverkeeper launches invasive species campaign



Sophie Demers
LJJ Reporter

Ottawa Riverkeepers' invasive species campaign, launched in July, aims to educate the public on invasive species in their area. This will give the public an understanding of invasive species and how to identify and report them. The Ottawa Riverkeeper will then be able to assess what work is needed.

Elizabeth Grater, science program coordinator at the Ottawa Riverkeeper, explains that invasive species can have a significant impact on the ecosystem they invade. "What happens with invasive species is they take over an entire area; they decrease biodiversity; and they impact the ability for native species to grow and to thrive." These species can find their way into the watershed through intentional or unintentional human activity.

The campaign is targeting 15 invasive species. As part of a community monitoring program, the public can use the interactive map on the Ottawa Riverkeeper website to learn more about which invasive species are present in their area and take quizzes that teach them how to identify the species. There are also tools for locals to report the invasive species they've identified. This means that anyone can participate in community monitoring to help keep the watershed healthy.



Ottawa Riverkeeper, Comité du Bassin Versant de la Rivière du Lièvre (COBALI), and Kitigan Zibi Guardians working together to remove European Water Chestnuts in the Baie de Lochaber (SD) PHOTO: COURTESY

In the Outaouais, the Ottawa Riverkeeper is focusing on 11 invasive species:

- Eurasian Milfoil
- European Frog-bit
- Purple loosestrife
- Water Chestnut
- Japanese knotweed
- Yellow Iris
- Rusty Crayfish
- European Reed
- Himalayan Balsam
- Flowering Rush
- Zebra Mussel

"We're at the knowledge building step right now. We're trying to understand what is present and where. With that data, we're able to work with local organizations," said Grater.

The Ottawa Riverkeeper has already started working with local organizations. Recently, they worked with the Comité du Bassin Versant de la Rivière du Lièvre (COBALI), as well as the Kitigan Zibi Guardians to remove European Water Chestnuts affecting the Baie de Lochaber.

For more information about the Ottawa Riverkeeper, invasive species in the Outaouais, or to get involved, visit their website: <https://ottawariverkeeper.ca/>

Local hub to support immigrant women launched



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Association des femmes immigrantes de l'Outaouais (AFIO) has opened an in-person center, offering a new lifeline to immigrant women through a partnership with the Maison communautaire d'Aylmer and the Partenaires du Secteur Aylmer (PSA). The move comes as the Aylmer area of Outaouais sees a steady rise in newcomer families and a growing demand for culturally sensitive support close to home.

Operating out of 61 rue du Couvent, AFIO's new office brings a range of services directly to Aylmer residents, from help navigating local resources to psychosocial support and French language learning. The organization's executive director, Bettyna Bélizaire, says the expansion is part of a broader mission to reduce isolation and foster meaningful integration.

"In addition to referring families to local services, we guide them through registration processes, provide emotional and material support, and offer in-house referrals when needed," said Bélizaire. "But more than that, we create spaces where women feel seen and heard."

Programming is already underway. AFIO hosted its first "Bonjour Aylmer" meeting on July 31, for Arabic-speaking women recently arrived in the area. The session introduced participants to local institutions and services, while providing a space to ask questions and



The Association des femmes immigrantes de l'Outaouais has launched a new community hub in Aylmer to provide immigrant women with direct access to support services, language workshops, and integration programmes tailored to their needs. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY

build connections with others navigating similar experiences.

Workshops will follow throughout the summer and fall, including informal French practice sessions, mental health discussions on stress and depression, and peer-led events by immigrants with professional expertise. One upcoming session will cover graphic design using Canva, another will focus on crafting Canadian-style CVs. Sessions will be led by women who've successfully navigated these challenges themselves.

AFIO's approach is deliberately flexible. "Our work-

shops evolve with the needs we see," said Bélizaire. "We don't impose a fixed model. If we meet someone with a particular skill or concern, we build from that."

Locals familiar with Aylmer's changing demographics may already recognize some of the challenges immigrant women face: language barriers that complicate everything from job searches to school meetings, cultural gaps between generations, and the persistent strain of financial insecurity. AFIO's team works to address these with practical solutions: offering culinary workshops using food bank staples, encouraging volunteerism as a gateway to social engagement, and improving access to professional resources through targeted referrals.

The organization, now marking its 40th year, has been a key player in supporting immigrant integration across the Outaouais. Its arrival in Aylmer addresses a clear need in the community and is backed by a network of dedicated volunteers and local partners. AFIO's services focus on immigrant women and many programmes also extend to their families, including spouses and children. This inclusive approach reflects the belief that integration is most successful when it involves the entire household.

AFIO welcomes walk-ins every Thursday from 8:30 - 4:30 pm. Appointments can also be scheduled by phone at 819-776-6764 or by email at info@afio.ca.

For Bélizaire, the goal is simple: "We're building a space of trust, support, and belonging—right here in the heart of Aylmer."

Outaouais athletes make their mark at Québec Games



Tashi Farmilo

Outaouais athletes turned the 59th Finale des Jeux du Québec into a week-long display of determination, talent and poise. Facing the province's best in a charged atmosphere of competition and camaraderie, they amassed 31 medals, secured third place overall, and left a lasting impression for the way they competed and the spirit they brought to every event.

"Our road cycling team dominated the competition and won first place in the sport; our artistic swimming team earned the banner for sportsmanship; our mountain biking team claimed second place; and our closing ceremony flag bearer Mariane Boyer won a medal in every open-water swimming event she entered," said Amélie Simard of Loisir sport Outaouais.

On the road, Julia Langeveld, Olivier Drolet, Anna Mercier, Maxence Lafontaine and Vincent-Xavier Veilleux combined to take gold in the relay, with Langeveld adding three silver medals and Julianne Gauthier earning two golds



Outaouais athletes from the first block set off with excitement and determination for the 59th Finale des Jeux du Québec on July 25, 2025, ready to compete, represent their region, and make their mark. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF LOISIR SPORT OUTAOUAIS

and a silver. Jon Mercier claimed gold and bronze across road and mountain events, while Mahée Mignault left with gold and bronze. In the mountains, Benjamin Brûlé struck gold in the individual race before teaming with Mercier to win the relay, and Charlotte Wagner collected silver in her category. Adréa Beaulieu joined Wagner for bronze in the moun-

tain bike relay.

In the pool, Charly Birolleau-Sgard returned with two silvers and a gold, Aleni Brochu claimed silver, and Kinan Jasem Radhe earned bronze. On the track, Amy Roy and Robin Allard each took bronze in athletics. In BMX, Lydiane Lafleur collected two bronzes while Clément Landry secured another.

Chef de Mission Charles-André Larocque emphasized that while the results were remarkable, the Games' real value lay in their impact on the athletes: "The Games represent a significant human experience. It is an opportunity to develop connections, openness and human qualities that will leave a lasting impression."

Quyon man drowns trying to save a woman in distress



Sophie Demers

On July 27 around 5:30 pm, Daniel Desjardins, a 53-year-old man from Aylmer, jumped from a pontoon boat into the Ottawa River near Quyon and Mohr Island to rescue his girlfriend in distress. He was not wearing a lifejacket and sank beneath the surface.

The woman was rescued by others at the scene.

Boaters and firefighters from Pontiac and Ontario quickly began an intensive

search that continued overnight, but the victim was not located. After another long search, the man's body was located on July 29 at approximately 12:45 pm. The Service de police de la MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais stated that it took emergency responders an hour to bring the body to shore. His death was then confirmed.

A coroner's investigation is underway to determine the exact cause and circumstance of the drowning. Police state that, based on known facts, Desjardins' death was most likely accidental.

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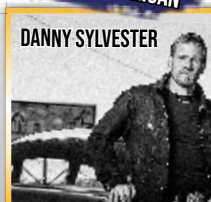
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Jeudi 28 Août
Thursday, August 28th

4pm/16h
5pm/17h
5pm/17h
6pm/18h
7pm/19h
7pm/19h
9pm/21h
10pm/22h

Entrance gates open/Ouverture des portes
Beauce Carnaval midway open/
Ouverture des manèges
Exhibits open/Ouverture des exposition
Beer Tent open/Le bar ouvre
Official opening/Ouverture officielle
Truck & Tractor Pull/ Tir de camions & tracteurs
Exhibits close/Fermeture des expositions
Indoor Concessions Close/ Exhibits close/
Fermeture des concessions intérieures
10:30pm/22h30
11pm/23h
12:30am/00h30

Vendredi 29 Août
Friday, August 29th

9am/9h
10am/10h
11am/11h
12noon/midi
12noon/midi
6pm/18h

Entrance gates open/Ouverture des portes
Exhibits open/Ouverture des exposition
Dairy Cattle Show/Division des vaches laitières - Holstein, Jersey
Beauce Carnaval midway open/Ouverture des manèges
Beer Tent open/Le bar ouvre
Horse Show (Arena)/ Concours des chevaux de trait attelés

Scène principale :

7:30pm/19h30

9pm/21h

10:30pm/22h30

9pm/21h

10pm/22h

10:30pm/22h30

11pm/23h

12:30am/00h30

Barrel House

GLASS TIGER

Barrel House

Exhibits close/Fermeture des expositions

Indoor Concessions Close/ Exhibits close/

Fermeture des concessions intérieures

Entrance gates close/ Fermeture des portes

Midway closes/Fermeture des manèges

Beer Tent Closes/Fermeture du bar

Samedi 30 Août
Saturday, August 30th

8:30am/8h30

9am/9h

9am/9h

10am/10h

10am/10h

12noon/midi

12noon/midi

12:30pm/12h30

Concours des bœufs pour les peewee

Beef Cattle Show (Arena)/ Concours des bœufs

Horse Show/ Concours des chevaux de trait attelés

Mark Mulligan (Beer Tent)

1pm/13h

2pm/14h

7:30pm/19h30

9:00pm/21h

10:30 pm/22h30

9pm/21h

10pm/22h

10:30pm/22h30

11pm/23h

12:30am/00h30

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11pm/23h

12:30am/00h30

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11pm/23h

12:30am/00h30

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Beef Cattle Show (Arena)/ Concours des bœufs

Horse Show/ Concours des chevaux de trait attelés

Mark Mulligan (Beer Tent)

Dimanche 31 Août
Sunday, August 31st

8:30am/8h30

9am/9h

9am/9h

10am/10h

12noon/midi

12noon/12h

1pm/13h

2pm/14h

3pm/15h

4pm/16h

6:30pm/18h30

7:30pm/19h30

9pm/21h

10:30pm/22h30

9pm/21h

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10:30pm/22h30

11pm/23h

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Mark Mulligan (Beer Tent)

10:30 pm/22h30

9pm/21h

10pm/22h

10:30pm/22h30

11pm/23h

12:30am/00h30

Beef Pee Wee Show/

Concours des bœufs pour les peewee

Beef Cattle Show (Arena)/ Concours des bœufs

Lundi 1 Septembre
Monday, September 1st

8am/8h

11am/11h

12noon/12h

12noon/12h

12noon/midi

12noon/midi

2pm/14h

4pm/16h

4pm/16h

5pm/17h

Entrance gates open/Ouverture des portes

Exhibits open/Ouverture des exposition

Classic Car and Bike Show/concours de

voitures et motos antiques et classiques.

Demo Derby/ Derby de démolition

Beauce Carnaval midway open/Ouverture des manèges

Beer tent open/Ouverture du bar

Jukebox (Beer Tent)/Jukebox sous la tente

Exhibits close/Fermeture des expositions

Midway closes/Fermeture des manèges

Entrance gates close/ Fermeture des portes

Beer Tent Closes/Fermeture du bar

Weekend Activities/

Activités offertes à tous les jours

• Pay-One-Price Admission/Billet tout inclu

• Agricultural Awareness zone/Sensibilisation à l'agriculture

• Family Entertainment throughout the Day/Spectacles pour toute la famille

• The Canine Circus

• Dr. Von Houligans Family Extravaganza

• Dan the One Man Band

• Magic Extravaganza featuring Aaron Matthews

• Comedy Hypnotist & Mentalist - Fernandez

• Crafts & Horticulture Displays/Expositions d'artisanat et de produits horticoles

• Small Animal Barn/Grange des petits animaux

• Fair Food and Beverage Concessions/Foire alimentaire

• Petting Farm/Mini-ferme

• Free Pony Rides Compliments of the Pontiac Agricultural Society/

Tours de poney gratuits offerts par Société d'agriculture du Pontiac

• Midway/Manèges

• Vendors and Kiosks/Kiosques des Marchands

• Draft Horse Educational Tent/ Tente des géants

• Pontiac Museum open daily

Schedule May Change Without Notice/L'horaire peut changer sans préavis