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Dear Friends,

Today, the government will bring in its third budget since being elected in June 2009.

Over the coming weeks, MLAs will examine the budget carefully. As a member of the Official Opposition, I will engage in reasonable and constructive debate with the government to hold it accountable.

We have seen some positive moves from the NDP—like a gradual lowering of the small business tax rate. However, most small businesses in Nova Scotia are not incorporated, so this has no effect on them. Meanwhile, Nova Scotians still pay among the highest personal tax rates in the country.

The Liberal Caucus, with strong leadership from Stephen McNeil, will put forward ideas this session that focus on competitiveness, fairness and accountability. This includes legislation calling for a comprehensive review of the tax system in Nova Scotia to make our province more competitive and fair.


Please let me know what you think of the budget—what you like or don't like. I appreciate your feedback on this and other issues that arise—it helps me do my job.

It's a privilege to represent Bedford – Birch Cove in the Legislature. I'll continue to listen to you, to raise your issues at Province House and to keep you informed.

Sincerely,



Find me on



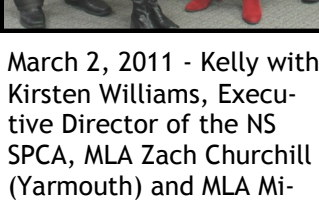
Email:
Kelly@kellyregan.ca

Phone:
407-3777

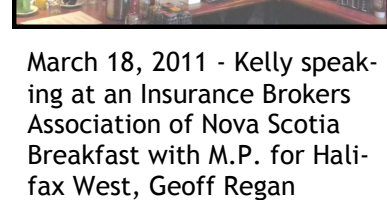
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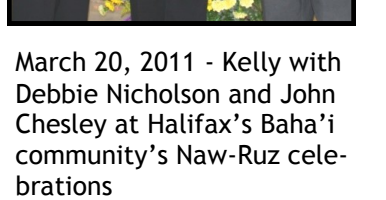
Address:
555-1550 Bedford Highway, Bedford, NS B4A 1E6



March 2, 2011 - Kelly with Kirsten Williams, Executive Director of the NS SPCA, MLA Zach Churchill (Yarmouth) and MLA Michel Samson (Richmond)



March 18, 2011 - Kelly speaking at an Insurance Brokers Association of Nova Scotia Breakfast with M.P. for Halifax West, Geoff Regan



March 20, 2011 - Kelly with Debbie Nicholson and John Chesley at Halifax's Baha'i community's Naw-Ruz celebrations

New High School Enrolment Figures and New Facilities Master Plan

New projected enrolment numbers for Charles P Allen and its replacement school are in – and as expected, they show continuing community growth.

This is of concern because Halifax Regional School Board has requested the replacement high school be built for only 1200 grade 9-12 students. The recent numbers from HRSB show the school would have 1324 grade 10-12 students on its opening day in September 2013, and 1554 students by 2018.

Your local School Advisory Council has been pressing both the Province and HRSB to build the school to size, as have I. The Province continues to say HRSB can request whatever size school it wants. HRSB says it has numbers that indicate this is the appropriate size for the school. I am hoping these new numbers will give the Department of Education and HRSB pause, and that they will re-examine the projections.

Also of note for those with children of school age is the **HRSB Facilities Master Plan**.

This report highlights a number of proposed changes to Bedford-Birch Cove Schools in the coming years.

These include the construction of the new Bedford high school to replace CP Allen, and also the construction of an additional high school in the Ravines area. **The construction of the new high school in the Ravines area would create a new family of schools, which would result in a redistribution of schools that are currently in the CP Allen and Halifax West families of schools.**

It appears to me that – according to this plan – this new high school in the Ravines would be an English-only school (no French Immersion). The information provided appears to indicate that all current Bedford students would go to the new Bedford–Hammonds Plains High School, but only French Immersion students coming from the junior high feeder schools Madeline Symonds Middle School and Fairview Junior High would attend it.

All other students from those schools (for which the elementary feeder schools are Burton Ettinger, Grosvenor Wentworth, Rockingham, Kingswood, and Hammonds Plains) **would go to the all-English Ravines High School.** I have concerns about the implications of this plan.

I have asked School Board member David Finlayson if my reading of the plan is correct and he has indicated the board would have to pass its new French Immersion policy first. (The French Immersion report link is below.)

This plan will also see the grade configurations of schools change. High schools would include grades 9-12. Junior High schools would serve students in grades 6-8. And elementary schools would be comprised of grades primary to 5.

A second elementary school for the Bedford South catchment area would not be built because Bedford South School would become a P-5 school. A new Bedford South Junior High would be built to provide grades 6-8 in that community.

The old CPA would be refurbished as a junior high school (possibly adding adult education there as well).

I invite you to look through the report and let me know your thoughts on the proposals within it. I would appreciate any feedback you might have. You can access the report here: <http://www.hrsb.ns.ca/files/Downloads/pdf/agendas/2010-2011/30-Mar-11.pdf> (CP Allen begins at p. 254, Ravines at p. 259, and the French Immersion Report is at p.140).

HRM and Province to Partner on New High School Enhancements

District 21 Councillor Tim Outhit and District 23 Councillor Peter Lund have announced that HRM Council has approved plans to partner with the province to build a community centre and regulation-sized artificial turf field. This project will be an add-on to the new Bedford high school currently being designed by the province.

The \$10.7 million project will be paid for through a combination of HRM budget allocations and the Bedford-Hammonds Plains Area Rate. Piggybacking this community centre and field on a proposed project – instead of building it as a stand-alone project – will save taxpayers \$2.6 million.

The details will be finalized as part of the upcoming 2011-2012 HRM Budget process.

NDP hikes user fees without consulting Legislature

On March 25, the NDP government announced it was raising 1400 user fees—for licensing and services provided by government departments—by 2%. The increase came without transparent justification, and was announced when the Legislature was not in session.

When in opposition, both Premier Darrell Dexter and Finance Minister Graham Steele were critical of the PC government for raising user fees—and for doing so outside of the Legislature. At that time Premier Dexter called the raises ‘across the board tax increases’ and demanded the PC government place them in the budget.

Now, the Official Opposition has asked Darrell Dexter to live up to his own standards articulated when he was in opposition. Liberal leader McNeil has called on the NDP to provide full justification for the raises. The government must tell Nova Scotians the delivery costs of each of the services so we know whether the hike in fees is fair—or whether it merely represents a cash grab by the government.

And if this government feels the need to raise user fees, those fees should be included in the budget so taxpayers get an accurate financial picture. For the NDP to do exactly what they chided the previous Conservative government for doing seems hypocritical to me.

The NDP and increased municipal taxes

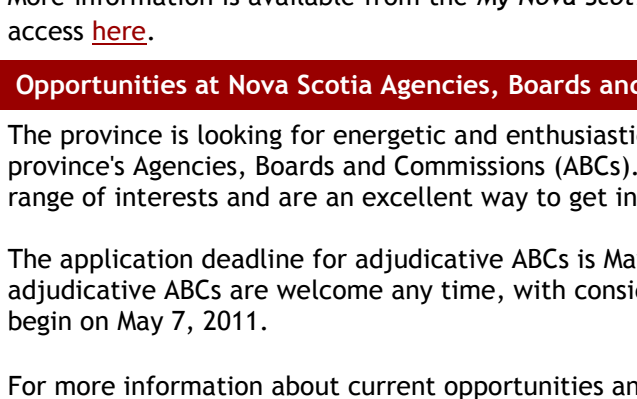
The provincial government has also announced it's ending a municipal funding agreement as of 2012-13.

The previous Conservative government signed a seven-year funding deal with municipalities in 2007. Under the agreement, the province would gradually assume municipal contributions for public housing and jails, while municipalities would limit their education contributions to the consumer price index.

Municipal taxpayers will now have to pay for \$50 million in services that were supposed to be funded by provincial tax dollars.

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities says downloading those costs will probably result in layoffs and service reductions – and even tax increases.

Volunteer Awards



Congratulations go out to Birch Cove resident Terry Kelly, who received a provincial Volunteer Award at a ceremony in Halifax today!

And many thanks go to all the volunteers honoured at the Bedford Volunteer of the Year Awards on April 3.

Carmen Lee was named Bedford Youth Volunteer of the Year and Robert Short was named Volunteer of the Year.

Robert and Carmen are pictured here in the front row—with Halifax West MP Geoff Regan, Councillor Mayor Peter Kelly and Councillor Tim Outhit.

Cobequid Community Health Foundation Bursaries

The Cobequid Community Health Foundation has bursaries available to high school and post secondary students.

The high school bursary is available to any graduating student that attends Millwood, CPA, Lockview or Sackville High who is planning to pursue post secondary education in the health/medical field.

The post secondary education bursary is available to post secondary students going into their 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of study in a program related to the health/medicine field. This bursary is available to students who have a strong connection to the Cobequid community.

The deadline to apply is May 14, 2011. Please call or email my office if you would like an application form. And for more information, please contact the Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation at 869-6128.

Bedford Residents Association

The BRA was founded in 2010 and “strives to improve the quality of life for residents and encourages a sense of belonging and pride in our community.” The BRA meets on the third Monday of each month at the Riverside Pub.

If you're interested in getting involved in this organization, please contact BRA Chair Donna Lugar at info@bedfordresidentsassociation.ca.

My Nova Scotia Contest

What's your favourite thing about Nova Scotia? The Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has launched a contest to find out what Nova Scotians love about our province.

The winning prize is a starring role in a Nova Scotia Tourism TV commercial.

How do you enter? Record a video of yourself talking about the best places and your favourite things in Nova Scotia. This can be done as the *My Nova Scotia* audition bus roles through your community, at the *My Nova Scotia* video booth at the Saltscapes Expo on April 29-May 1 at Exhibition Park, or by recording and submitting your own video to NovaScotia.com.

More information is available from the *My Nova Scotia* contest website, which you can access [here](#).

Opportunities at Nova Scotia Agencies, Boards and Commissions

The province is looking for energetic and enthusiastic Nova Scotians to serve on the province's Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs). These committees cover a wide range of interests and are an excellent way to get involved in the community.

The application deadline for adjudicative ABCs is May 16, 2011. Applications for non-adjudicative ABCs are welcome any time, with consideration for these positions set to begin on May 7, 2011.

For more information about current opportunities and the selection process please visit the Executive Council website [here](#) or contact the Executive Council Office at 902-424-4877 or execounc@gov.ns.ca.

Coady International Institute Internships

The Coady International Institute is currently recruiting Canadians who are recent college/university graduates between the ages of 19-30 to participate in its Youth In Partnership international internship program.

The program begins in August 2011 and provides interns experience working with the Coady's partners in development practice. It includes a three week orientation at the Coady Institute in Antigonish, a six-month in-country work placement, and a two week re-entry and debrief program in Canada.

The application deadline is April 25, 2011. Details, placement descriptions and application forms are available on the Coady website, which can be accessed [here](#).

Upcoming Events

April 6—Rockingham Heritage Society General Meeting Guest speaker will be teacher Andrew Strohman and students of Grosvenor–Wentworth Park School on their international award-winning heritage videos. Wednesday at St. Peter's Church Hall, 3 Dakin Drive, Halifax at 7:30pm.

April 9—Rockingham Grannies Handcrafts Sale The local Grandmothers to grandmothers group will be selling their wares in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Africa. 10-4, Lower Level Halifax Shopping Centre.

April 16—ReGenesis Coffee House, Bedford United Church 7 p.m. BUC Church Hall. Tickets (\$8) available between services or at the door.

April 30—St. Peter's Ladies Guild 9th International Tea Tickets for this fun annual event are available by calling Charlotte at 443-1820. Tea is at 2pm in St Peter's Parish Hall.

May 1—Hike for Hospice Palliative Care For more details contact Rod Doiron at the Hospice Society of Greater Halifax at 446-0929 or care@hospicehalifax.ca. The registration fee is \$10.00.

May 27—Beacon House Live Auction To donate an item or purchase a ticket (for \$5), please contact Karyn Welton at 865-5442. Event gets underway at 7p.m. with auction at 7:30 at the Kinsman Centre, 71 First Lake Drive, Lower Sackville

Please let me know if you would like me to promote an upcoming event through my E Newsletter.

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