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Brenda Campbell
president of the Prince
Edward Island Shellfish
Association

Digital divide

Libraries come to the rescue to help P.E.I. shellfishers apply for licences online

Rightly or wrongly, fishers do not have a reputation of being the most technologically savvy people in the business world. “There’s not much need for a computer on a dory,” jokes Brenda Campbell, president of the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association.

But the times are indeed a-changing. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada now requires fishers to use a national online system to apply for a licence to harvest shellfish in P.E.I. Previously, shellfishers could fill out an application in person at a DFO office.

However, change isn’t always embraced and early this past winter Campbell says the DFO informed her that as of Dec. 31, 2013, only 400 fishers in P.E.I., New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had registered for licences online. Campbell says P.E.I. alone has 1,275 coastal fishers.

So with the spring shellfish season quickly approaching (it runs from May

1 to July 15), the Association decided it had to do something to help its membership navigate the Internet age. The solution it hit upon was to use P.E.I.’s public libraries and their staff to lend the fishers a helping hand.

With the assistance of P.E.I.’s department of Tourism and Culture, which operates all 26 public libraries in the province, library staff were made available to help shellfishers apply online. The staff would guide applicants to the proper web page and help them fill out the correct form.

As this magazine went to press, Campbell says the system was working out fairly well for her computer-shy membership. “It’s not a complicated process, but there is a fear of the unknown,” she says of some shellfishers’ aversion to applying for licences online. “But it is 2014 and we have to expect these changes. We just had to figure out how to make it more accessible.”

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Fiscal follies

Sadly, misuse of taxpayer dollars is all too common in Atlantic Canada

Businesses pay a lot of taxes. It comes with the territory. But the dollars they pay into the public purse aren't always put to the best of use.

Atlantic Canada is no different, and with the help of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's Atlantic Canada director, Kevin Lacey, we've come up with some notable examples of the public sector's fiscal blunders.



Hangargate

Newfoundland and Labrador's auditor general found that government staff

used two aircraft hangars in Gander intended for storage of government-owned aircraft to house personal items: automobiles, campers, motorcycles, boats, golf carts, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles.

The government paid \$1.58 million to lease the two hangars in 2013.

"I'm not sure how the carts were getting from the hangar to the golf course, but there you have it," Lacey says.

The unwanted

A new \$19-million city-funded parking garage isn't proving popular with Saint John motorists. In December of 2013, the CBC found



the seven-story garage in New Brunswick's biggest city had just 13 cars using the lot one day even though it has 446 spaces. The CBC also said the garage was over 90 per cent empty on most days.

"This was intended to help bring more business to downtown Saint John. It's become a real boondoggle instead," Lacey says. "This is a lot of money for the city, which has been facing some serious financial hardships."

Disappearing act

In April of 2013, Summerside, P.E.I.'s town council dropped its legal action against



a California-based promoter in an attempt to recover \$1.3 million it paid her agency to put on a Michael Jackson tribute concert that never happened.

"It was supposed to be a big pop show and it turned out to be a really big fraud," Lacey says. "That's one of the issues with this type of economic development. They are high risk."

Roadkill

The Federation found that the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation road crews cost taxpayers \$7,397.97 per kilometer of completed work instead of \$3,669.59 per kilometer of work that the government (the ousted New Democratic Party) originally budgeted for.

"In this case, the government got involved in something to solve a problem and made it worse," Lacey says.

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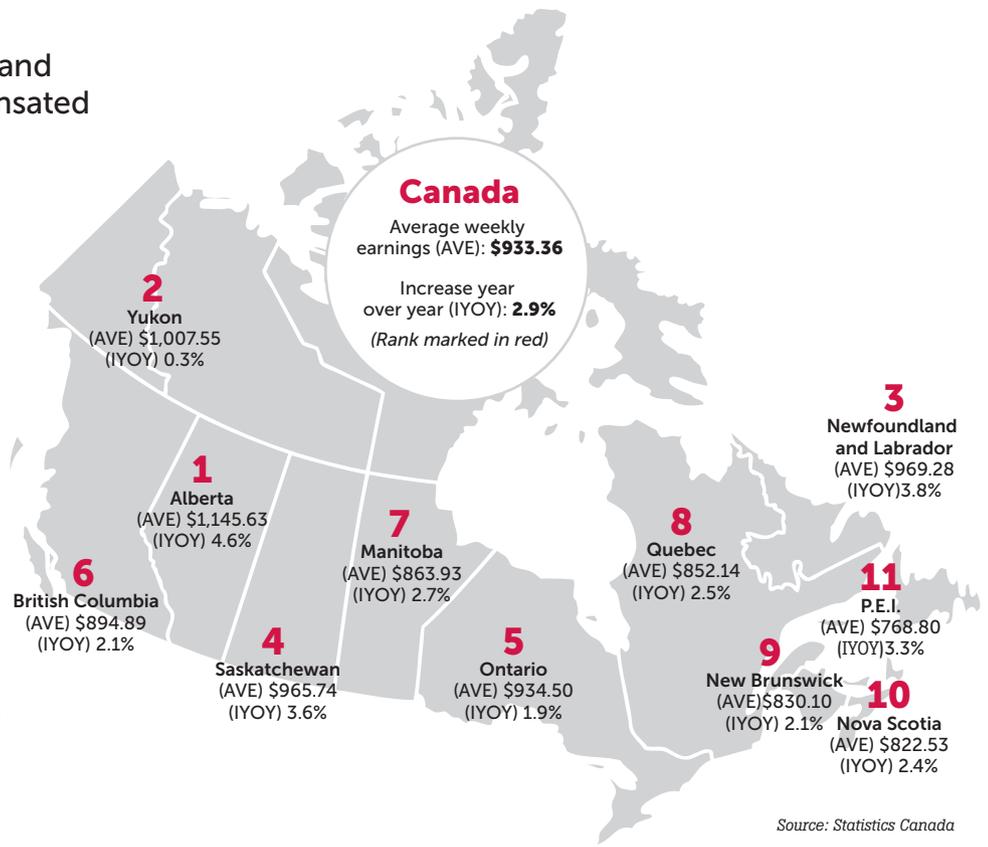
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Deep pockets

Employees in Newfoundland and Labrador are compensated well for their work

Once upon a time, you could expect the average weekly earnings of a worker in all four Atlantic Canadian provinces to bring up the rear in Canada. That's still the case, with one notable exception. Mining and offshore oil activity has made the wallets of workers in Newfoundland and Labrador a lot thicker than they used to be. The latest figures from Statistics Canada show that the average weekly wage in Newfoundland and Labrador as of December of 2013 was \$969.28.

That was the third highest total among the 11 provinces and territories listed in Statistics Canada's earnings stats (no figures were provided for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut), higher than Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. As for the three other Atlantic provinces, the news isn't as good.



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The PCL family of companies congratulates John Volcko on being recognized among the business leaders on the list of the Top 50 CEOs of Atlantic Canada.

Food for thought

Employees losing the battle of the bulge is potentially bad for your business

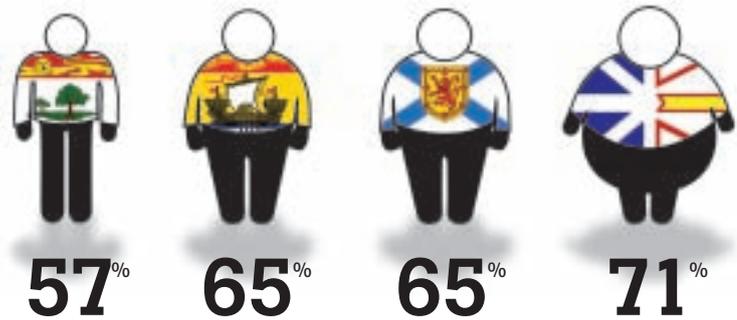
Have you noticed the waistlines of Canadians are getting bigger? A 2014 study co-authored by Laurie Twells, an associate professor in the school of pharmacy and medicine at Memorial University in St. John's found that from 1985 to 2011, adults who are overweight in Canada grew by 21 per cent and those who are obese grew by 200 per cent. The study also predicts that by 2019 most of Canada's adults (55.4 per cent) will be either overweight or obese.

So why are we writing about a health issue in a business magazine? Because it's not just a health issue. A 2011 study on obesity by the Canadian Institute for Health Information stated the economic burden of obesity was between \$4.6 billion and \$7.1 billion. That burden was defined by direct costs to the health care system such as hospital care as well as indirect costs to productivity through premature death and short and long-term disability.

Some businesses are recognizing the risks this weighty problem could pose to their bottom line. One example is Canship Uglund Limited, a company that manages crude oil shuttle tankers for Newfoundland and Labrador's three offshore oil fields. It has health incentive programs for its employees and even has exercise rooms on most of its fleet of nine ships. Peter Collins, the health, safety and environment manager for the company's St. John's office, says the goal is to help their employees live long healthy lives, but it's also good business to encourage its workers to be active and healthy so they don't miss time for health reasons. "When you have to replace a trained worker with somebody new, then you have to train them and that costs you time and money," Collins says.

More businesses in Atlantic Canada might want to follow Canship Uglund's lead. The Memorial University study's data shows adults in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are already among the most overweight in Canada and won't be getting any thinner by 2019.

Percentage of Atlantic Canadian adults predicted to be overweight or obese by 2019 *Source: CMAJ Open*



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Cheers!

In-store brewing could soon be a legal business opportunity in Canada's Ocean Playground

Nova Scotia's Liberal government plans to introduce legislation to legalize beer brewing and winemaking at small retailers.

Nova Scotia is on the cusp of becoming an in-store brewing friendly jurisdiction.

The province's Liberal government was planning to introduce legislation in its spring session, which started on March 27, to legalize beer brewing and winemaking at small retailers. The issue has been a toxic one for the government over the past year. In January of 2013, the Crown-owned liquor agency, the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, filed an injunction against retailers offering the service, saying it was unregulated and unsafe.

But the move backfired. The public viewed the injunction as an example of the government bullying small businesses and the governing party at the time, the New Democratic Party, ordered the Commission

to drop the campaign a few weeks later. The NDP lost the provincial election to the Liberal Party in October, and the new government has taken a different tact in dealing with the issue. It has started doing the legwork to make in-store brewing legal.

The legwork included consultations with the brewing industry that began in January and ended on Feb. 10 to help develop regulations and standards for in-store brewing. The proposed legislation was expected to be introduced during the spring session of the Legislative Assembly.

If Nova Scotia does make in-store brewing legal, it will be the third Atlantic province to do so. New Brunswick and P.E.I. already allow it and a number of businesses are offering the service in those provinces.

Brew Crew

Number of in-store brewing licences in Atlantic Canada



Sources: P.E.I. Liquor Control Commission; New Brunswick Gaming Control Branch

Stark International

When the team at Stark International heard that Scott MacEachern was selected as an Atlantic Canada Top 50 CEO, we weren't surprised. After all, we work with him every day.

Under Scott's leadership, we have all watched Stark International grow and develop into a company that stands out as an industry leader in transformer installation, maintenance, and repair services. His continued commitment and drive, as well as his dedication to our team, ensures a great future for Stark.

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Kingpin

New Brunswick grabs top spot in Fraser Institute's mining rankings, but Newfoundland and Labrador still gets all the investment

For the second straight year, New Brunswick is the top-ranked Atlantic Canadian province in the Fraser Institute's annual *Survey of Mining Companies*.

The Canadian-based public policy think tank's survey looks at what global jurisdictions are regarded as the best and worst places to invest in by the mining industry. New Brunswick's ranking dropped three spots to seventh overall in 2013 from fourth overall in 2012, but that still put it two spots ahead of Newfoundland and Labrador. Canada's eastern-most province came in ninth place (out of 112 jurisdictions) after placing 18th overall in the 2012 survey.

Nova Scotia didn't fare nearly as well as its neighbours, dropping from 12th overall in 2012 to 29th in the 2013 rankings. The Fraser Institute said the drop was in large part due to worsening perceptions of uncertainty concerning the administration, interpretation, and enforcement of existing regulations; quality of the geological database and security (huh?). P.E.I. was not included in the survey because the Fraser Institute did not receive at least 10 responses regarding how desirable, or not, the province is viewed as a mining destination – the minimum number required in order to be ranked.

New Brunswick might be the mining industry's investment darling in the Fraser Institute's rankings, but when it comes to actual investment, Newfoundland and Labrador is the belle of the ball, as the statistics above show.

Exploration and deposit appraisal expenditures

(p) preliminary estimates (i) spending intentions

Source: Natural Resources Canada



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Cruise control

Saint John looks to up its cruise ship tourism game

It doesn't have the name recognition of destinations like Nassau, Bahamas or Juneau, Alaska, but cruise ship tourism is alive and well in Saint John, New Brunswick.

In 2013, 64 cruise ships carrying 166,616 passengers visited this city of 70,000 people and cruise ship tourism contributes an estimated \$25-to-\$30 million annually to the local economy. The provincial government is keen to see cruise ship traffic, and the economic impact it generates, increase here. In February, the government announced it would provide \$100,000 annually to the Port of Saint John from 2014-2016 to help it become a home port for cruise ships. In March, the port got some more good news as Rhode Island-based Blount Small Ship Adventures announced it will start a Bay of Fundy cruise from Saint John's port in the summer of 2015.

Blount is the first company to make Saint John its home port, meaning it will serve as a base to support

Cruise ship traffic in Saint John

Source: Port of Saint John

	 SHIPS	 CREW	 PASSENGERS
2009	72	72,533	186,538
2010	76	77,840	205,883
2011	66	68,007	184,790
2012	75	71,899	187,901
2013	64	63,318	166,616

the operation of a ship, for what are called expedition-class ships. The vessels differ from the giant ships that typically visit the city carrying up to 3,000 passengers in that they normally carry 50 to 200 passengers and are often geared toward adventurers with specific interests.

While there aren't nearly as many people on expedition-class vessels as the bigger cruise ships, they tend to spend twice as much in the home port. According to a recent feasibility study examining the possibility

of making Saint John a home port for cruise ships (commissioned by the Port of Saint John and New Brunswick's Department of Tourism), during a typical eight-to-10 hour stop passengers spend an average of \$60 to \$80 in the city. However, the study says when passengers start their journey in Saint John they spend up to twice these amounts because they often stay at least one night in a hotel and incur expenses related to meals and other incidentals.

Trapping profits

Is better branding the key to unlocking more value from Atlantic Canada's lobster?

In late March, the fisheries ministers from Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia met to talk about instituting a fee which lobster fishers, buyers and processors would pay to fund marketing of the region's lobsters.

But one industry organization is already looking to market lobsters differently. Bedford, Nova Scotia-based Canadian Atlantic Lobster, Inc. has developed silicon, branded bands that go around the lobster claws. The bands feature Canadian Atlantic Lobster's logo and its website with a prominent Canadian maple leaf and would replace rubber bands that currently go on lobster claws.

Patrick Swim, CEO, Canadian Atlantic Lobster, says the band is just one marketing effort his organization is pursuing to increase the "it" factor of Atlantic Canada's lobsters. "There is Maine lobster and they do a hell of a good job marketing it," Swim says. "We assume that people know Nova Scotia and that it's a lobster producer. In actual fact, around the world they

don't even know where we are."

Swim says 73 per cent of the 160 million pounds of lobster caught annually in Atlantic Canada are exported to the United States. But once they reach the U.S. market, they aren't necessarily sold as Canadian lobster. The Canadian Atlantic Lobster website says over 50 per cent of the catch that makes it stateside is then sold as "Maine" or "Product of the USA" lobster.

That's a problem for anyone involved in the lobster fishing industry in Atlantic Canada, which includes 25,000 fishers and 30,000 participants in total. It's a problem because the industry isn't getting top dollar for a product Swim says is as good or better than any lobsters in the world. And part of the reason, Swim says, is because Atlantic Canadian lobsters are not marketed as well as those caught in Maine and New England. "It's all about brand, whether it's Red Bull or Starbucks. We need to make our lobsters prettier. Let the world know we've got the Mercedes Benz of lobster," Swim says.

"We assume that people know Nova Scotia and that it's a lobster producer. In actual fact, around the world they don't even know where we are."

Patrick Swim
CEO
Canadian
Atlantic Lobster