



Green MLAs charge mileage for electric cars

By Josh Lewis

josh@peicanada.com

The provincial Treasury Board pays the same mileage rates to MLAs driving gas-powered or electric vehicles. Expense records show three Green Party MLAs with personally owned EVs who claimed fuel costs during the 2021-22 fiscal year.

However, the Opposition caucus says it supports making an adjustment to mileage rates to reflect the disparity in costs between fuel and electricity.

“(We) will be pressuring government to make this change,” the Green caucus said in a statement to The Graphic.

Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke MLA Trish Altass, who drives a Nissan

Leaf, claimed \$6,205.97 in fuel expenses from April 2021 to March 2022.

Summerside-South Drive MLA Stephen Howard (Mitsubishi i-MiEV) claimed \$4,850.51 during the same period, while Charlottetown-Victoria Park MLA Karla Bernard (Hyundai Kona), whose downtown district contains the Legislative Assembly, claimed \$87.22.

Along with mileage from the member’s home to the legislature during sessions and committee meetings, MLAs can claim mileage for up to five return trips per month when the House is not in session.

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Town says up and at ‘em

The Town of Souris is one of 41 communities across PEI participating in the Participation Community Better Challenge in June. Mayor Joanne Dunphy encourages everyone in the area to join in by downloading the free Participation app to track their physical activity and add it to the town’s total. The month-long event, funded by the federal government and Saputo, supplies prizes for the communities most active. The national winner will receive \$100,000 while provincial winners get \$7,500 - \$15,000. As of last week Souris was in fourth place provincially and last year Three Rivers won provincially. From left are Councillor Ian MacDonald, Mayor Dunphy, Councillor Wanda Bailey, CAO Shelley LaVie, and Councillor Thelma MacDonald with Councillor Frankie Chaisson, front.

Charlotte MacAulay photo



When therapy and mental health services haven’t been consistent, Chris Taylor has spiralled into near-death mental health emergencies requiring critical care. To prevent future crisis he can only hope the best services he has ever received, at Serene View Ranch, will not be cut. Rachel Collier photo

Province to axe funding to mental health treatment ranch

By Rachel Collier

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

rcollier@peicanada.com

Health PEI is moving to cut funding for specialized mental health treatment at Serene View Ranch, a decision that will impact more than 60 Islanders.

“HPEI is responsible for public funds and therefore we are working closely with Serene View Ranch to safely transition clients currently receiving ser-

vices back to the publicly-funded services,” said an email statement from Health PEI to The Graphic.

Psychologist Caroline LeBlanc owns the mental health centre in Stratford. It provides cutting-edge treatment, particularly geared for people with issues related to trauma and

PTSD. Its work is unique in PEI. It attracts highly-qualified professionals and boasts little staff turnover.

Ms LeBlanc withheld comment at this time.

HPEI estimates between \$50,000 and \$75,000 in savings per month if all patients return to the public system.

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Souris doctor pushes for local RCW course

By Charlotte MacAulay

charlotte@peicanada.com

Staff shortages at Colville Manor in Souris can’t be fixed in one fell swoop, but for Doctor Craig Malone even a small step forward is progress.

Holland College president Sandy MacDonald said the plan is to offer a Resident Care Worker, RCW, course in Souris in January 2023.

The province has yet to give the proposal the green light.

In a statement to The Graphic on whether or not the course will go ahead, a spokesperson from the Department of Health said, “Government welcomes proposals to train needed health care workers, and would review any proposals prior to making decisions about any proposed training programs and locations.”

The statement stops short in confirming the January course will go ahead.

Doctor Malone, one of three family physicians who work in Souris, has been part of a team of local advocates lobbying the health department to offer the course. The push began last fall

when eight beds were closed to new admissions at Colville Manor.

Dr Malone said the course would be a great first step in fixing the chronic problem of closing beds in long-term care.

There is a chain reaction that affects the entire health care system when beds are closed, he said.

“When beds at Colville Manor go unfilled it restricts our ability to provide acute care services at Souris Hospital.

“This translates into more strain on EMS services, longer wait times in the ER and overcapacity concerns at urban hospitals. In essence, it affects all Islanders who are accessing health care.”

It frustrates Dr Malone that acute care beds in Souris Hospital are not all being used for acute care patients.

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The Cardigan Constituency
office of
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay,
P.C., M.P.
M.P. for Cardigan
Can be reached at 902-838-4139
Lawrence.macaulay.c1@parl.gc.ca



https://lawrencemacaulay.libparl.ca