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Page 3

Reactions to 2024 federal budget



\$100,000 for École Sauvé playground renovation

Page 5

Students of École Sauvé proudly showcase their new playground! Pictured from left to right: Micheline Groulx Stabile, City Councillor, City of Deux-Montagnes; Denis Martin, Mayor of Deux-Montagnes; Martin Lafrenière, Principal of École Sauvé; Anyk Berger, Assistant Principal of École Sauvé; Jean-Philippe Bélair, Physical Education Teacher at École Sauvé.

Page 7



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\$800K for five AI pilot projects in municipalities

MARIA DIAMANTIS

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The MRC (Regional County Municipality) of Thérèse-De Blainville, led by Eric Westram, Prefect and Mayor of Rosemère, alongside Julie Boivin, Deputy Prefect and Mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, and other council members, unveiled the inaugural projects chosen for the “Signature Innovation” initiative, marking a significant stride in the application of artificial intelligence (AI) within municipal operations.

The initiative has attracted considerable attention, distributing nearly \$800,000 across five pilot projects from a total fund of \$2.3 million. These projects, rooted in AI, aim to tackle various municipal challenges, including climate change adaptation. The funding, part of a larger \$3 million agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH), underscores the region's commitment to innovative municipal solutions. The projects will be supported by IVÉO, an organization dedicated to assisting small and medium-sized cities in implementing innovative solutions.

Innovative projects on the horizon

The selected startups will undertake ambitious projects designed to enhance municipal infrastructure and services. Among them, the projects include:

Niosense: Focused on sustainable mobility, this initiative aims to enhance transportation efficiency by reducing unnecessary stops at traffic lights through improved synchronization.

Civilia: Another project aimed at sustainable mobility, Civilia will develop advanced modeling of existing cycling networks to create a platform



that measures the impact of construction work on sustainable mobility.

XEOS and K2 Geospatial: Concentrating on environmental and climate change issues, this project will monitor urban heat islands and air quality, while also developing predictive analytics for tree health.

CANN Forecast: Dedicated to water economy, this project will diagnose the condition of water mains and predict water consumption patterns using machine learning techniques for predictive maintenance.

Acara Climate: This initiative focuses on public policy and climate risk management, offering software that supports resilient land use planning and assesses future vulnerability

to climate impacts.

A pioneering effort in municipal AI

The MRC of Thérèse-De Blainville aims to be at the forefront of integrating AI into municipal operations to address unprecedented challenges such as climate change, aging infrastructure, economic complexities, and labor shortages.

“The projects selected will contribute in their own unique ways to making the municipalities of the MRC of Thérèse-De Blainville more innovative and resilient in combating climate change. Whether focusing on water protection, enhancing sustainable mobility, energy

recovery, or environmental protection, their outcomes will positively impact the community,” stated Andrée Laforest, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

This initiative not only supports the regional economy by allowing local businesses to develop and test new technologies but also encourages public-private partnerships that generate solutions beneficial to all municipalities within the environmental sector.

With a second round of project proposals already underway and expected to be announced by fall 2024, the MRC of Thérèse-De Blainville is keen to continue building its reputation as an innovative and resilient leader in the face of climate challenges.



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Federal budget 2024 paves way for enhanced real estate opportunities for Canadian Muslims

(NEWSWIRE) - The 2024 federal budget includes possible new measures to enhance equity in the tax code and unlock homeownership for observant Muslims through coming consultations on possible tax and regulatory changes to facilitate Halal mortgages. Manzil, Canada's pioneering digital Islamic financial institution, applauds these long-awaited policy changes, which will support Canadian Muslims in the real estate market.

"This inclusion in the federal budget is a momentous occasion for all Canadian Muslims. It recognizes the significance of Islamic finance and actively supports our community's needs. We are proud to have advocated for these changes, ensuring that financial products and services align with our values and ethics," said Dr.

Mohamad Sawwaf, Founder and CEO of Manzil. "The steps included in the budget go a long way to recognizing the 5% of Canadians who adhere to Islamic principles in their financial decisions. Most Muslims in Canada remain renters (almost double the national average) rather than homeowners because of policy and regulatory issues with accessing financial services that are compliant with our faith. But the 2024 budget can facilitate more accessible access to property ownership for our community, underscoring Canada's commitment to equity and economic inclusivity," said Dr. Sawwaf.

"We sincerely thank the Liberal government for its efforts in the 2024 spring budget to facilitate Halal mortgages. The government has committed to fostering a more equitable

and inclusive society by recognizing the need for policy changes to facilitate Halal financial products better. We commend their dedication to promoting diversity and ensuring equal opportunities for all Canadians.

"We look forward to engaging in the consultative process to bring this dream to fruition," said Dr. Sawwaf.

About Halal Mortgages

Because observant Muslims cannot pay or charge interest, Halal mortgages are currently facilitated in one of two ways. With 'Murabaha', the lender buys and resells the property to the buyer at an agreed-upon profit margin, and with 'Musharaka', a partnership is formed, with the buyer eventually owning the property after

purchasing shares from the financier. If permitted, all Ontarians, regardless of faith, would have access to Halal financial products through the province's financial institutions.

Homeownership is a cornerstone of wealth creation, offering Muslims a tangible pathway toward financial stability and prosperity. In Islam, the concept of owning a home is not only about shelter but also about establishing roots, stability, and a sense of belonging. By investing in property ownership, Muslims can build equity over time, securing their financial future and providing a legacy for future generations. Beyond personal gain, owning a home empowers Muslims to create safe and nurturing environments for their families, fostering a sense of security and well-being.

Ottawa's capital gains changes make winners and losers, says CFIB

Small business lobby sees progress on \$2.5 billion in carbon tax rebates

MARTIN C. BARRY
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The 2024 federal budget changes on capital gains will create many winners, but also losers among Canada's entrepreneurs, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), which issued a detailed analysis of the budget following its release last month.

Carbon tax rebates

However, the CFIB is optimistic on another issue that's impacting small businesses, noting important budget progress in unlocking \$2.5 billion in carbon tax rebates for SMEs.

In a recent survey of the needs of small businesses leading up to budget day April 16, the CFIB found that over three-quarters (77 per cent) of the country's small business owners felt that addressing rising prices and the cost of doing business should be a top priority for government this year, while another 74 per cent wanted to see government reduce the overall tax burden.

CFIB made several recommendations to the federal government, urging it to focus on reducing the cost of doing business by:

- Returning the \$2.5 billion in carbon tax revenues owed to all small businesses, not just certain sectors;
- Lowering the federal small business tax rate from 9 per cent to 8 per cent, at least for the next two years;
- Increasing the small business deduction threshold (e.g., to \$700,000) and indexing it to inflation going forward;
- Lowering Employment Insurance (EI) premiums for smaller employers;
- Introducing a timeline to balance the budget;
- Reducing red tape.

Capital gains advantages

After the release of the Trudeau government's 2024 budget, CFIB president Dan Kelly had the following to say. "The big surprise for small business is a series of changes to capital gains taxation," said Kelly.

"Our early assessment is that most small business owners will come out ahead or be unaffected by today's changes as a result of a boost in the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption from \$1 million to \$1.25 million and a new Canadian Entrepreneurs' Incentive for some sectors which will lower the capital gains inclusion rate to 33.3 per cent on the next \$2 million when fully phased in."

However, the capital gains inclusion rate

increase to 66.7 per cent will create many net losers, he added, including owners of medium-sized businesses.

'Demotivating' changes

In addition, owners of professional corporations (such as doctors), financial, insurance, food and accommodation, arts, recreation, entertainment and personal care services firms will be excluded from accessing the new Canadian Entrepreneurs' Incentive and will be hit with more taxes on capital gains for sales of small business shares above \$2.25 million.

"What worries me the most about the capital gains changes is the potential to demotivate Canadians from getting into business in the first place or working hard to grow a small business to a medium-sized business," continued Kelly.

"CFIB will be pushing back against any increase in the capital gains inclusion rate for all small- and medium-sized business owners. It seems bizarre that government would single out some sectors of Canada's SME community for higher taxes, including many of those hardest hit by pandemic restrictions like restaurants and arts and recreation firms.

Long overdue rebates

"Carbon tax rebates owed to small businesses have been a long time coming, but we're glad to see the government making progress on it," added Kelly. "Most importantly, it is good to see government broaden its eligibility rules to include most small and medium-sized firms."

The Trudeau government has said it will urgently return over \$2.5 billion owed to an estimated 600,000 businesses with fewer than 500 employees. Responding, CFIB says it "understands all Canadian Controlled Private Corporations (CCPCs) that issue T4s in the eight provinces will receive a rebate cheque based on their number of employees."

"Many details of the size, scope and timing of carbon tax rebates for SMEs remains unclear," commented Kelly, maintaining that CFIB will continue to call on government to ensure the \$2.5 billion is returned in 2024 with meaningful rebates for the smallest businesses and to raise the share of future SME rebates back to 9 per cent of carbon tax revenue or more.

Budget not yet balanced

"It is important to note that 82 per cent of small firms now want the consumer carbon tax regime scrapped altogether," he said. In the meantime, the CFIB says the federal government hasn't introduced a plan to bring the budget back to balance, while it continues to project huge deficits for the foreseeable future.

Commenting on other budget measures:

- CFIB said it is encouraged to see Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance to allow businesses to immediately write off the full cost of innovation and productivity enhancing assets, such as computers and data infrastructure, starting today to January 1, 2027.
- The lobby group also said the 2024 budget made important progress on Employee Ownerships Trusts, allowing business owners to access a special capital gains exemption of up to \$10 million when selling a business to employees.



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OPINION & Editorial



All Quebecers have a responsibility to preserve, protect and promote the French language

Mark Twain famously wrote there are three kinds of lies: Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics – expressing his frustration at how the selective use of statistics prove almost anything, including opposing viewpoints.

The Coalition Avenir Québec government, language hardliners, and those who seek to achieve Quebec's independence, have relied on certain statistics to cement the notion that the French language in Quebec, especially in Montreal, is in peril.

This becomes the justification for harsh legislative measures to “protect” French by curtailing English, restricting access to services in English – including health, education and justice – and damaging “English” institutions like McGill, Concordia and Bishop's University.

In a propitious bit of timing, the same day the Quebec Community Groups Network held a conference to discuss the status of French here, no less an authority than the Office Québécoise de la langue française, reported the proportion of Quebec's population using French in public HAS BEEN STABLE in Quebec since 2007 at about 80 per cent. And the proportion of those using English only in the public sphere has

dropped over the same period, it said.

In other words, the draconian measures contained in Bill 96 haven't changed anything, weren't necessary and missed the target.

The QCGN has been arguing this for some time.

Featuring one of the editors and two contributors to an increasingly widely read book *Le Français en déclin ? Repenser la francophonie Québécoise*, the conference heard that while French will always be fragile because of its minority status in a sea of North American English, the statistics the government emphasizes – mother-tongue language and language spoken at home – don't reflect the reality of Quebec's public sphere. The OQLF numbers do.

The percentage of mother-tongue francophones has declined, along with the birth rate among historic Québécois descendants, while immigration has soared in recent years, said Jean-Pierre Corbeil, a Sociology professor at Université Laval, and one of the book's editors. So focusing on Quebec's English-speaking population is an error, he said.

The evening of the event was slushy and

snowy, on a night filled with nuance-appropriate, because there are no hard and fast, cut-and-dried answers to most questions about language.

It was heartening to see the degree to which the speakers shared the QCGN view that ALL Quebecers, regardless of mother tongue or origin, have a responsibility to preserve, protect and promote the French language – and that doing so does not require the repression of English, which will always be a part of Quebec society, as it has been for more than 300 years.

It was also encouraging to sense that this event marked a positive step in the necessary effort to find common cause between all Quebecers, a harmonious place where all rights and privileges are respected, where no one is less a citizen because of the language they were born speaking.

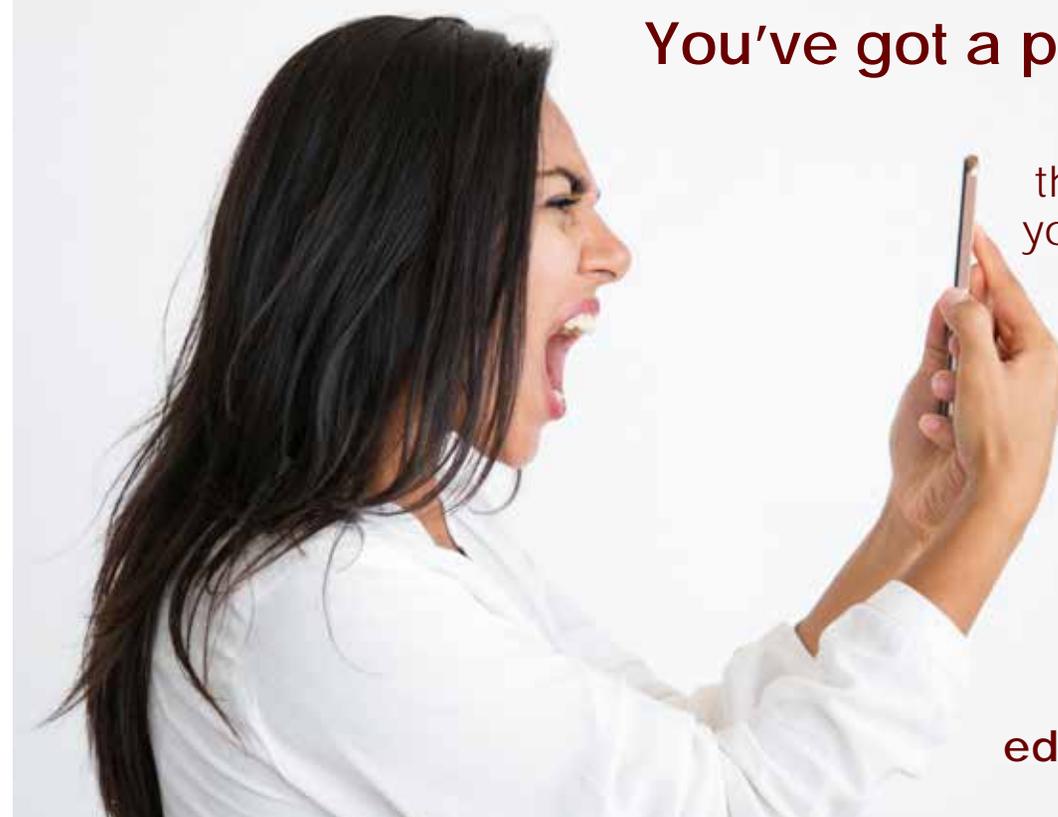
Because, as full-fledged Quebecers, English speakers also have a vested interest in this essential element of Quebecers' identity.

Eva Ludvig
President of the Quebec Community
Groups Network

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Deux-Montagnes invests \$100,000 in renovation of École Sauvé playground

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The city of Deux-Montagnes supported the renovation project for the new playground at École Sauvé, which has already brought great joy to its students. The city's contribution of \$100,000 played a crucial role in providing a new adventure play module for the children.

The renovated playground offers a vibrant

environment for the students of École Sauvé and serves as a multi-functional play area for all the youth in Deux-Montagnes, accessible even outside school hours. "The new courtyard provides a beautiful setting for the students of École Sauvé and allows all young people from Deux-Montagnes to enjoy a wonderful multi-functional play area outside of school hours," stated Mayor Denis Martin.

The project included landscaping work, refurbishment of play equipment, and a reorganiza-

tion of the space to better serve the needs of the children. Special congratulations are extended to Mr. Martin Lafrenière, the principal of École Sauvé, and his team for their dedication to this project.

The community's investment in such projects underscores the importance of providing safe

and engaging outdoor spaces for children, which are essential for their physical and mental development. The new playground not only enhances the school environment but also enriches the community by providing a well-equipped space for active play and social interaction among children.





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Rosemère town council takes steps towards mixed-use development

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In a pivotal move to rejuvenate its regional hub, the Rosemère Town Council passed a resolution directing the General Manager's office to draft a request for amending the MRC de Thérèse-De Blainville's land use and development plan. This amendment seeks to incorporate mixed commercial and residential use in specific zones of the town, namely C-03, C-139, and C-140, areas central to Rosemère's urban strategy.

As the local retail sector faces a downturn, Rosemère is experiencing a concerning drop in tax revenues, a scenario that is exacerbating the financial burden on residential taxpayers. The Council's strategy aims to leverage this situation by optimizing land use in the regional hub to align with broader redevelopment objectives. This would involve the integration of additional green spaces near Place Rosemère, currently the town's most significant heat island, and enhancing the area's resilience to climate change.

Furthermore, the Council is committed to addressing the social and demographic needs of

Rosemère's residents by diversifying the housing options available within the community. This approach not only aims to cater to a broader range of residents but also to invigorate the community with new vitality and connectivity.

Earlier in February, the town took a preparatory step by commissioning a technical study to explore the feasibility of integrating certain urban infrastructure systems. This study is crucial in ensuring that any forthcoming projects are backed by thorough data and analysis, thereby supporting informed decision-making by the town's leadership.

To steer these initiatives, the Council has established a working committee chaired by Councillor Marie-Élaine Pitre, with Mayor Eric Westram and key municipal staff as members. The committee is tasked with monitoring the progress of major projects emerging from these redevelopment efforts, ensuring that each step aligns with the town's long-term vision for growth and sustainability.

This strategic pivot marks a significant chapter in Rosemère's urban planning, as it looks to a future where commercial vitality and residential well-being are closely intertwined, creating a more dynamic and sustainable community.

Marie-Andrée Bonneau wins municipal council seat in Rosemère

MARIA DIAMANTIS

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Marie-Andrée Bonneau has been elected to the municipal council of Rosemère following a special election held last Sunday.

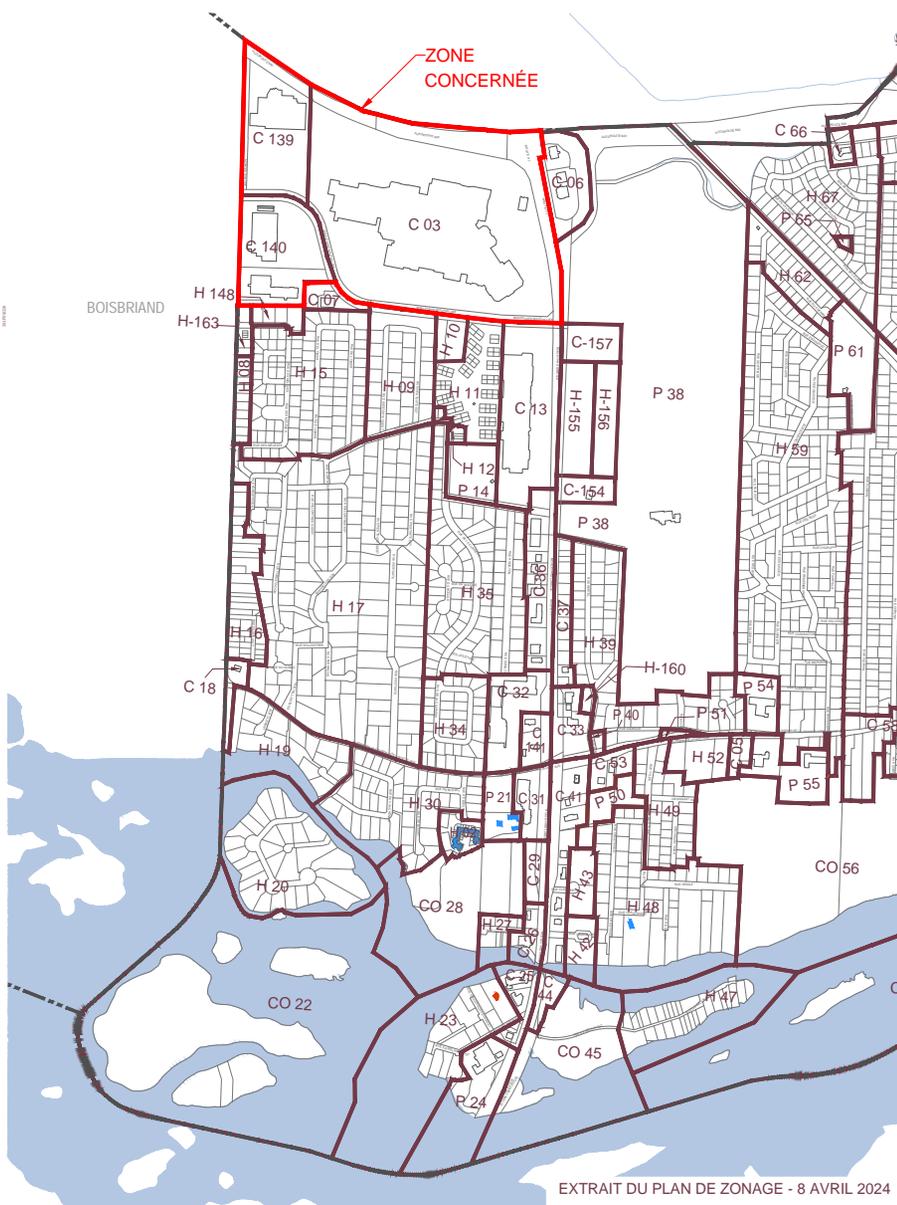
The election came about to fill the seat vacated by Councillor Carla Brown, who resigned in January. Bonneau and another candidate, Alexandre Raymond from the InnovAction+ party, contended for the position.

Bonneau, running as an independent, secured the council seat with a significant lead, outpacing Raymond by 161 votes. Her victory marks her as the second independent voice on the council, a detail she is particularly proud of.

Reflecting on her campaign strategy, Bonneau highlighted her grassroots approach. "I ran as an independent and sparked a debate. I campaigned without any spending, relying solely on word-of-mouth," she stated shortly after the final vote counts were revealed.

Bonneau also expressed a deep understanding of her constituents' concerns and a commitment to represent their voices in the city council. "People want to be heard. Since 2021, things have not progressed. Now, with two independent voices, we hope to initiate healthy debate and push forward on important issues," she asserted.

She concluded her victory speech with gratitude, saying, "I am very happy and would like to thank all the citizens who turned out to vote," before ending the evening's celebrations.



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Happy Mother's Day!

This Mother's Day, find the right words to express your love

Do you want to celebrate Mother's Day with a sentimental card expressing your unconditional love? Here are some ideas to help inspire your inner poet.

There are a million ways to tell your darling mother just how much you love her.

For example, you could let her know that you're proud to call her your mum; that you look up to her in every way; that you're honoured to have inherited her amazing qualities, etc. You could also thank her for always being there when

you need her most or for being a part of your most cherished childhood memories. If you're not the sentimental type – and that's just fine – opt for some comic relief! Remind your mom of your most petty arguments and underline your gratitude for her unwavering patience.

Remember, Mother's Day is a celebration of *all* mothers. Give a thoughtful card to your grandmother, to a daughter who has children of her own, to an expecting friend or to someone who has served as a mother figure in your life. And men, don't forget to show your appreciation to the mother of your children on this special day!

Do you have a strained relationship with your mother?

Granted, we don't all have easy-going relationships with our mothers. Remember, you don't need to inundate her with compliments or super-sentimental thoughts to show your appreciation. It's important to remain sincere. Simply tell her that you're thinking of her and wish her a wonderful day – it's guaranteed to put a smile on her face!

Five ways to spoil Mom on Mother's Day

When you ask your mom what she'd like for Mother's Day, is the answer always "nothing"? Well, this year, why not take things into your own hands? Here are a few ways to spoil your mother (whether she likes it or not!):

1. Clean her fridge or wash her car (it's free and highly appreciated)
2. Kindly forbid her from cooking (and order from her favourite restaurant instead)
3. Be her chauffeur for the day ("We're going wherever you want to go and listening to the music you want to hear")
4. Take her to the movies (and order whatever drinks or snacks she'd like)
5. Give her a gift card for a massage, a manicure or a professional make-over (especially if she's not one to treat herself very often).

Make sure Mom knows that she's the star on Mother's Day and that she deserves to be pampered accordingly.



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Happy Mother's Day!

Rosemère Town Council members wish a

happy Mother's Day to all biological and adoptive Moms and Moms-at-heart.

May this day bring you sweet and grateful moments.

Québec solidaire hopes to fix construction sector labour shortage

Proposed program would fill nearly a third of 7,800-worker shortfall, says QS

MARTIN C. BARRY
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Québec solidaire, which holds a dozen of the 125 seats in the Quebec National Assembly, is urging the Coalition Avenir Québec government to implement a pilot program that would fast-track potential immigration candidates into the province's lagging construction sector.

"We will never be able to fix the housing crisis if we don't build more houses and living units," says the left-wing party's official spokesperson (and de facto leader) Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois.

Fast-track immigration

"The labour shortage is slowing our construction industry," he continued. "We are proposing the creation of an express lane towards permanent immigration in order to attract more workers for the industry – persons who are already here, who speak French and who can help us

to build more. It's win-win."

Guillaume Cliche-Rivard, the QS MNA for Montreal's Saint-Henri-Sainte-Anne riding, who is the party's spokesperson for immigration issues, notes that similar programs have been implemented in recent years to make up for labour shortages in sectors like food production, development of artificial intelligence and nursing assistance.

"And that's exactly what we seek to duplicate here," he says. "Effectively, this type of program could make up for nearly a third of the 7,800 workers currently lacking in the construction industry."

Under the QS proposal:

- The program would grant access to a Quebec Access Certificate (CSQ), leading eventually to obtaining permanent resident status.
- It is addressed specifically to non-permanent

residents who are already living in Quebec, particularly asylum seekers, those with work permits for the construction industry, or persons with open work permits.

- Participants would have to meet certain criteria:
- Must have been employed and on salary in the residential construction sector in Quebec for at least 12 of the 24 months preceding their application (required work experience will be cumulative and not consecutive, the reason being the seasonal nature of many of the jobs in question);
- Must have an Apprentice Competency Certificate from the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ);
- Must make a commitment to obtain a certificate of training for a construction skill recognized by the Government of Quebec within 24 months – in other words,



"The labour shortage is slowing our construction industry," says Québec solidaire spokesperson and leader Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois. (Photo: Courtesy of Québec solidaire)

an Attestation of Professional Studies or a Diploma of Professional Studies;

- Must also have a knowledge of spoken French equivalent to level 7 on the Quebec Scale of Competencies in French.



Sex predator arrested

He would stick out his penis in bus shelters or city buses to masturbate in front of women. Then, in the middle of the night, he broke into the home of a stranger who was sleeping peacefully to sexually assault her.

Blainville police have caught an alleged sexual predator in recent days but fear the 37-year-old may have had other victims.

Over the past few weeks, Maxime Chapdelaine-Villeneuve seemed to have taken pleasure – in every sense of the word – in showing off his genitals in front of women who had asked for absolutely nothing.

Chapdelaine-Villeneuve allegedly masturbated in front of them, not only in bus shelters in Blainville, but also on city buses.

Even before the police were made aware of the suspect's deviant activities, he allegedly broke into the home of a sleeping woman in the middle of the night to sexually assault her.

Several police officers were then assigned to this case to find this alleged predator.

Maxime Chapdelaine-Villeneuve was finally arrested on April 12.

The suspect appeared at the Saint-Jérôme courthouse on charges of sexual assault, forcible confinement, break and enter, indecent acts and breach of conditions.

He will remain in custody until his trial, law enforcement officials said.

Maxime Chapdelaine-Villeneuve had just regained his freedom a few months ago, following convictions for sex crimes.

He was sentenced to 30 months in prison just last year for several indecent acts committed in public, as well as possession of child pornography.

In 2013, he was also sentenced to two years' probation after pleading guilty to voyeurism.

Chapdelaine-Villeneuve was newly established in Blainville.

Anyone who may have been a victim of this individual is invited to contact the investigator at 450-434-5305 ext. 7248.

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WHY?

Q I met Sean a year and a half ago in a crowd of 50,000 people. We struck up a conversation and really hit it off. He gave me his number, which I forgot. I thought about tracking him down, but figured if it was meant to be we would meet again. Three weeks later I got a phone call from him, and we have been together ever since, until about a month ago.

I left my friends and my life that I was used to. Everything was fantastic, we were in love, we thought we were going to get married. We just mentioned it a few times, but it wasn't really a topic of conversation. Anyway, something changed in Sean two months ago.

He didn't cheat that I know of, but in a week's time he broke up with me, demoted himself from a high ranked position at his job, and became depressed. He went to the doctor and is doing better now, but I am confused. How can everything be so great and all of a sudden he changes his mind about everything in his life?

He still likes to have sex and hang out with me sometimes, but doesn't have any interest in getting back together. I need to stop showing

interest in him, I think, and get on with my life, but I am having a hard time doing this. Why is he acting this way, and is there any way we will be together again?

Jessica

A Jessica, most people never find out the true why behind another's actions. Everyone wants the imaginary 'closure,' but the closure they want is to have what they want. That is why almost no one gets closure.

As a psychological concept, closure doesn't work. When a relationship ends, people don't want to learn why, they want to learn why not. They want to fix it. But if a man used a woman for sex, how will learning the truth give her closure? If a woman never loved the man, how can that truth give him closure?

You are not in a relationship with Sean, but he is having sex with you. He sounds like somebody with a plan for himself. Friendship sex is not in your best interest. You need to stop having sex with him and move on. Asking why only traps you.

Wayne & Tamara

WINNOWING

Q I am a female, 19. I am more mature than my age, and sometimes I feel I am trapped with an old soul in a young body. I fell in love with a man, 38. We were in a long-distance relationship for six months, but two months ago we decided I would move to New York to be with him and build my life there.

We had a bad time. I couldn't find myself, and he was occupied with his business. I was very unhappy and we argued constantly. Now I am back in Israel, and he is there. He decided it would be easier for me to build my life here, and it would be good for us to take a break. He is afraid I might regret marrying him because I haven't experienced life yet.

Is this kind of relationship possible, or am I

holding on to something which is doomed from the start?

Leah

A Leah, why do you need to mention age difference or other factors? When you were with him in New York, you were unhappy and argued constantly. Why can't that be the truth of the matter? You gave it a try, it didn't work, he pulled away.

Every man is not your future husband. Most men you will date until you see the relationship isn't going anywhere. That's what dating is all about—not snaring a man, but separating the wheat from the chaff. He's chaff. You're looking for wheat. Keep sifting.

Wayne & Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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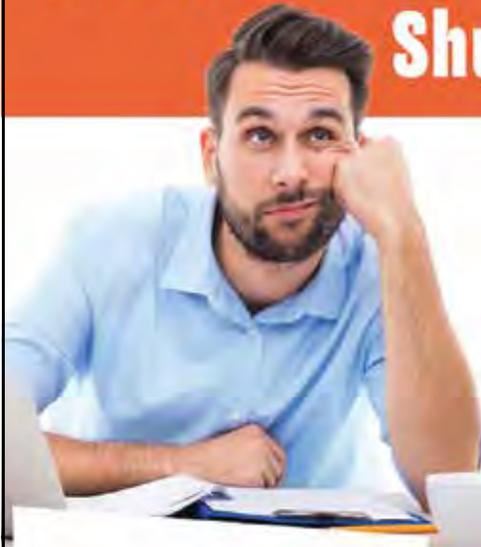
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Quebec to spend \$603M to help French remain vital in the province

Bill on Quebec French-language streaming content in the works: culture minister

(NEWSFIRST) - Quebec will spend \$603 million over five years to reverse what the province's French language minister describes as the decline of French.

At a news conference Sunday, French Language Minister Jean-François Roberge said a total of 21 measures — some of which are already in place — would help improve the vitality of Quebec's official language in the coming months.

Roberge added that “in a difficult budgetary context like ours,” the funding reflects the government’s “great commitment” to the French language.

The sum discussed Sunday is mainly comprised of expenses included in Quebec's 2024-25 budget, such as \$320 million allocated over five years to boost the offering of French-language courses — the most costly initiative of the language plan.

The measures are based on nine government priorities, which include monitoring indicators of the linguistic situation in Quebec annually and making a dashboard available to the public.

Culture Minister Mathieu Lacombe said Sunday that Quebecers could expect the government to table a bill in the next year to make Quebec French-language content on streaming websites like Netflix and Disney readily discoverable.

He said the government is working with local producers so they could “speak the same language” as the streaming giants and ensure Quebec content properly classified.

Higher Education Minister Pascale Déry said at the news conference that it would take between two to three years to get a picture of the province's linguistic situation based on the government's indicators.

In a statement published Sunday, Déry said the government took “strong action” by raising tuition fees for Canadian out-of-province students attending Quebec English-language universities as part of the government's goal to attract and retain a greater number of French-speaking students and students who come from a culture or region with affinities to French. Also, Quebec is working to speed up the process for international students graduating from French-language programs to obtain permanent residency in the province.

The government says it plans to grow the percentage of people from economic immigration who know French, improve temporary foreign workers' and asylum seekers' knowledge of the language as well as the mastery of French among students and strengthen Quebecers' attachment to French.

Use of French in public spaces stable: Quebec's language watchdog

Despite Roberge saying in a statement Sunday that “all indicators point to an increasingly pronounced decline of French” in Quebec, the

use of French in public spaces has remained stable in Quebec since 2007, according to a study by Quebec's language watchdog, the *Office québécois de la langue française* (OQLF), published in April.

About 79 per cent of Quebecers in 2022 used French most often in public spaces, the OQLF found.

The study is based on data from a survey of 7,171 Quebecers conducted between March and May 2022 and on focus groups to expand on the survey results.

But the latest plan from the Legault government takes into account five indicators which have had “the greatest impact on the vitality of French in Quebec in recent years,” said the French Language Ministry in a news release published Sunday.

They are the growth and linguistic profile of the immigrant population, the prominence of English-language digital platforms, attendance at English-language higher education institutions, the low level of mastery of French among students and how active people are at rallying around the use of French.

Liberal MNA and official opposition critic of education Madwa-Nika Cadet called the plan “disappointing and sorely lacking in ambition and vision,” saying it “doesn't bring anything new to the table.”

She said the \$65-million investment in French-language proficiency in schools is “insufficient.” “The lack of a timetable and targets, as well as



the omission of the literacy rate, underline the plan's lack of seriousness,” she said.

Cadet also said she was concerned by the failure to address the issue of French proficiency at college level, despite a government-commissioned study.

Québec Solidaire MNA for Mercier Ruba Ghazal said in a statement emailed Sunday that she welcomed the announcement but was disappointed by the lack of structural measures to reinforce French as the language of the workplace, which she says is “the most important indicator that Minister Roberge should follow to measure the vitality of our language.”

Ghazal called for the government to set up a mandatory French-language program during work hours.

She said Quebec's Labour Ministry “was not part of Minister Roberge's working group, and it shows.”



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HOROSCOPE

Week of MAY 5 TO 11, 2024

The luckiest signs this week:
GEMINI, CANCER AND LEO



ARIES

Take time to rest to regain your energy and enthusiasm. You'll follow your intuition to discover a new spiritual path, pushing you to adopt a more exciting lifestyle.



TAURUS

Your vivid imagination could lead you to undertake a successful artistic project. Make an effort to arrange a festive get-together with your friends. It will be well worth it. Be mindful of distractions at work.



GEMINI

You'll be tasked with organizing a social event or an important meeting as part of your job. You'll overcome your shyness and discover your more extroverted side to excel in this role.



CANCER

You'll be given new and stimulating responsibilities at work. These tasks will allow you to discover and develop skills you didn't know you had, leading to a raise in the coming weeks.



LEO

You'll be given the opportunity to embark on a surprising adventure, such as a spiritual journey. This experience will broaden your horizons and guide your personal and professional development. It could also reveal itself through a sporting activity.



VIRGO

You'll be filled with a range of emotions that will lead you to a significant transformation. Consider making drastic changes, such as moving to a new home, exploring new horizons or changing jobs.



LIBRA

You'll be faced with an agonizing choice. Think carefully before deciding. Rushing into a decision you have to reconsider is a waste of time. Balance is the key. Know how to weigh the pros and cons.



SCORPIO

You'll have a lot of work to do this week. You could be entrusted with a confidential file with a significant financial payoff. You could also consider starting your own business, which will be very rewarding.



SAGITTARIUS

You may experience love at first sight and connect with a potential soulmate. You'll have an instant connection. However, family considerations could complicate things before fully investing in the relationship.



CAPRICORN

Watch what you say, especially around certain people who can't hold their tongues. You're planning a move and will spend time decorating to personalize your new space.



AQUARIUS

Someone may tell you a confusing secret. You'll wonder whether revealing it to the people involved would be the right thing to do. You may need to re-evaluate your circle of friends, especially if debt or betrayal are involved.



PISCES

Getting a promotion could solve some of your financial problems. Having a conversation with your boss could lead to this advancement, paving the way for a more promising future. Talking to your better half ensures you're both getting what you want from the relationship.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 172

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15			16					17		
			18				19			
20	21	22		23	24					
25			26	27				28	29	30
31			32				33			
34				35				36		
			37					38		
39	40	41			42	43	44			
45				46				47	48	49
50				51				52		
53				54				55		

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ACROSS

- Mom's fellow
- Love seat
- Push
- Keats poem
- Challenging
- Rant
- Inhibited
- Farm measure
- Model
- Levees
- Pale
- Recipe instruction
- Pasture sound
- Supplies
- Runaway groom
- Hi-fi
- Infamy
- "_____ About You"
- Oceanic movement
- Talking bird
- Expect
- Annoy
- Submarine sandwich

DOWN

- One of Snow White's seven
- Lemon refresher
- Hideaway
- Scram!
- Rowing blades
- Most liberated
- Total up
- Grassland
- Hat stand
- Monster of folklore
- Poor marks
- Undercover agent
- Stained
- Cleanliness
- Kitchen hot box
- Actress Tuesday
- Hawaiian handout
- Affirmatives
- Mineral resources
- Greeted
- Final word in prayer
- Alone
- Owl's comment
- Sample
- Worthiness
- Parched
- Service branch
- Scrawny
- Soft drink
- Love tonics
- Creepier
- Chess pieces
- Sailor's greeting
- "_____ Only Just Begun"
- Realm
- Total up
- Not busy
- Jar tops
- "Tea for _____"
- Kind of tree
- Catch sight of
- Have a seat

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

PUZZLE NO. 897

				7	1		6	
		2			5		3	
	5			1			4	
		3		2	1		6	
	6		8			5	9	
5								
2	3			6				
		7						
			1			8		

Last Issue's Answers

CROSSWORDS

N	A	B		C	R	O	P		T	H	U	D					
E	Y	E		R	A	V	E		R	O	S	E					
T	E	E	N	A	G	E	R		O	P	E	N					
				O	M	E	N	S		W	E	D	S				
S	L	O	O	P	S				I	C	E						
H	A	W	K						I	S	O	L	A	T	E		
O	D	E		S	A	L	T	Y				V	O	W			
O	D	D	B	A	L	L						P	I	N	E		
				A	X	E			A	B	O	D	E	S			
S	C	A	R						R	A	R	E	R				
T	A	L	L						T	W	I	S	T	E	R	S	
E	L	S	E						E	A	S	T			R	U	T
P	L	O	Y						D	Y	E	S			A	N	Y

Sudoku

9	7	4	1	5	8	3	6	2
2	5	6	7	3	9	4	1	8
8	3	1	4	6	2	5	7	9
6	8	3	9	2	4	1	5	7
4	9	5	3	1	7	2	8	6
1	2	7	6	8	5	9	3	4
7	1	9	5	4	6	8	2	3
5	4	8	2	7	3	6	9	1
3	6	2	8	9	1	7	4	5



Doctor Dan Munteanu

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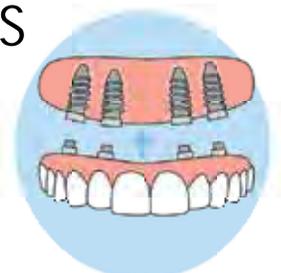
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Snap-on removable (Novaloc)

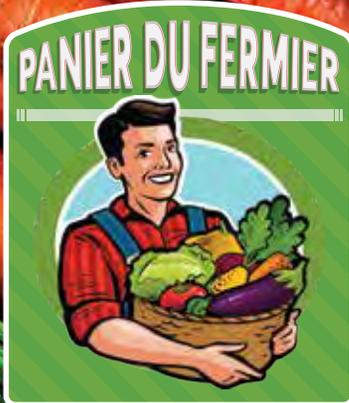
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- Mushrooms
- Eggplant
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- Oranges (3)
- Bananas (4)
- Cucumber
- Tomatoes (7-8)

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