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REM inaugurated in Deux-Montagnes



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Rosemère council sworn in



Rosemère's new mayor, Marie-Élaine Pitre, signing the official oath-of-office register.
(Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)

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Colombian delegation visits Deux-Montagnes



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Reaction mostly positive to Carney Liberal government's Budget 2025

**Unionists pleased with Ottawa's investments, while seniors
complain they were left out**

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

From labour unions, to associations representing the interests of senior citizens, to trade groups and special interest lobbyists, the overall response to the federal budget tabled by Liberal Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne in Ottawa on November 4 was generally positive – with a few notable exceptions.

According to an outline of the 2025 budget released by Prime Minister Marc Carney, the Liberal government's plan is to transform Canada's economy from one that has traditionally been reliant on a single trade partner (that being the U.S.), to one that is more self-sufficient and resilient to global economic shocks.

The 2025 budget contains a plan by Ottawa to make \$1 trillion in targeted investments over the next five years, with a "Buy Canadian" policy serving as overall guide. The Liberal government plans to spend an initial \$186 million in new funding to implement the Buy Canadian strategy.

"Budget 2025 is our plan to build Canada Strong – with major infrastructure projects, millions more homes, new defence industries and thousands of new high-quality careers all

across our country," said Carney. "As we build big and bold, we will build Canadian and buy Canadian. We will be our own best customer, creating new orders, more business, and new careers in our industries across the country."

Seniors left out, claims AQDR

In spite of the government's optimism, the AQDR (Quebec Association for Senior Citizens) reacted with less enthusiasm, noting that seniors in Quebec and across Canada were largely overlooked in the budget.

"While inflationary pressures have had a significant impact on the country's most vulnerable seniors, they have been left behind," the AQDR, which has 30,000 members across Quebec, said in a statement.

"Furthermore, although the government wants to accelerate housing construction, there is no mention of units specifically for seniors to suggest that this is a priority, a worrying sign for the future," they added.

"We have been repeating this message year after year: the income of the most vulnerable seniors – those who rely solely on basic federal public benefits – is well below the minimum wage," stated Pierre Lynch, the AQDR's president.

"Aside from a few marginal changes or those

with limited impact, the federal government is forgetting that building the Canada of tomorrow is what we have been doing over the past decades," he continued. "We must not forget this past and we must take care of our seniors."

While maintaining its disappointment with the lack of structural measures for seniors, the AQDR noted the government's commitment to intensifying the fight against fraud, particularly through the development of a National Anti-Fraud Strategy.

The association said it hoped this endeavour would allow for the rapid implementation of measures and a safety net for seniors who are victims of increasingly sophisticated frauds.

"The federal government has a responsibility to look to the future, but it must not forget those who have worked all their lives and who deserve a dignified retirement," said Lynch. "We therefore urge the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to be more sensitive to this issue and to remember that the collective wealth we create must also be used to reduce inequalities and support vulnerable seniors across the country."

Capital investments welcome: Unifor

In Ottawa, the Canadian labour union Unifor, representing around 310,000 auto-manufacturing, communications and industrial workers, said that major capital investments in procurement, infrastructure and housing were "welcome advancements in Budget 2025 but must translate into Canadian jobs, Canadian content and Canadian production underpinned by strong sectoral industrial strategies."

"Building a resilient economy means ensuring that the commitments outlined in the federal budget translate into good union jobs for Canadian workers," said Unifor national president Lana Payne, while adding that "Trump's tariffs are an existential threat, and Canada must fight back to protect working families and industries alike."

Unifor welcomed federal commitments to key sectors, such as forestry, as well as a \$13 billion "Build Canada Homes" made-in-Canada housing program, tied to a federal Buy Canadian strategy for lumber inputs.

"Budget 2025 includes announcements that could benefit manufacturing, including our aerospace and forestry sectors," said Daniel Cloutier, director of Unifor Quebec. "However, the government must follow through on its promises and deliver on strategies to protect

workers from the impacts of U.S. tariffs," he added.

But Unifor was also critical of Ottawa's 2025 budget, noting that it was missing any commitment to fortify West-East energy rail links, including by shipping products using Canadian-made tanker cars, as had been recommended by Unifor.

"Unfortunately, this budget also hits critical public services hard," added Payne. "Austerity and privatization – including persistent threats of selling off public agencies, as well as airports – are the wrong moves, especially in times of crisis. Strong public services keep working people and our economy afloat."

'We are pleased,' says airports council

The Canadian Airports Council (CAC), a trade association representing Canada's airports, welcomed the new budget, praising its focus on trade diversification, infrastructure and economic growth.

"Airports are at the heart of Canada's growth story," said Monette Pasher, the CAC's president. "We are pleased to see the federal government's recognition of airports' role in trade diversification and economic resilience. Investments in trade and infrastructure will help strengthen our competitiveness and create opportunities across every region of the country."

In the early 1990s, Canada's airports were privatized to local control, divested from direct federal operation and placed under the management of local airport authorities as independent corporations. CAC said it would be interested to hear more on the federal government's willingness to consider options for the further privatization of airports.

The CAC applauded the federal government's increased support of \$55 million for the Airports Capital Assistance Program (ACAP), which is the only dedicated federal funding source for essential infrastructure at small and regional airports. "With ACAP funding largely unchanged for 25 years, this boost is critical to ensure safety, reliability, and long-term sustainability at regional airports," said the council.

"With continued partnership and investment, Canada's airports can drive growth, enhance connectivity and strengthen our role as gateways to global trade," Pasher added. "We look forward to working with the government to ensure our airports remain safe, competitive, and ready to meet the needs of Canadians."



The overall response to the federal budget tabled by Liberal Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne in Ottawa on November 4 was generally positive. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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Struggling small businesses out of luck in federal budget, CFIB claims

'Missed opportunity to provide meaningful tax relief,' says group's Dan Kelly

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, small business owners across Canada were looking to the 2025 budget to provide critical cost relief and to improve Canada's tax competitiveness to jump start the economy.

Instead, the CFIB contends, most of the budget's economic measures were reannouncements from the previous year's budget.

Missed opportunity

"Today was a missed opportunity to provide meaningful tax relief to Canada's employers," said Dan Kelly, the CFIB's president.

"The government could have taken the reins by reducing the small business corporate tax rate, freeing up millions of dollars for investment in employees, technology and operations," he added.

"Government finances are a mess, but the budget just slows the growth in program spending with overall deficits above \$50 billion per year as far as the eye can see," said Kelly. "Small firms have learned the hard way that today's deficits are tomorrow's taxes."

Budget concerns

In addition to the lack of tax relief and giant

fiscal deficits, many of the measures meant to stimulate the economy or insulate Canadians from the impact of tariffs appear to exclude small firms, Kelly noted. Here are some of the CFIB's observations:



- The \$51-billion Building Communities Fund is to focus on projects using unionized labour, which would effectively exclude 90 per cent of small businesses.
- The \$1-billion Regional Tariff Response Initiative delivered by Regional Development Agencies misses the mark and excludes over half of small businesses that will be deemed too small or in the wrong sector.
- The Canadian Entrepreneurs' Incentive announced in budget 2024, repeated in the Fall Economic Statement and confirmed as recently as January 2025, has now been officially cancelled.

Focus on these highlights

- Government is reintroducing the Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance on most capital assets and immediate expensing provisions. The budget also extends immediate expensing to manufacturing and processing buildings. This is a sound way to improve productivity among many Canadian SMEs.
- Legislation to increase the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption to \$1.25 million has been confirmed. This is an important measure to help with small business succession plans.
- Legislation to remove income taxes from the Canada Carbon Rebate (CCR) for Small Business and to extend the deadline will be introduced. CFIB has also confirmed with



CFIB president, Dan Kelly.

government sources that the \$623 million in CCR payments for 2024/25 will be distributed before the end of the year.

"Small business confidence in the economy remains incredibly low given the massive uncertainty over tariffs from the U.S., China and now India," said CFIB executive vice-president of advocacy Corinne Pohlmann. "While progress was made on a few fronts, there were very few new measures that will offer immediate help for small business owners trying to keep the lights on."

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Publishers:

George Bakoyannis
George S. Guzman

General Director:

George Bakoyannis

VP Sales & Marketing:

George S. Guzman
sales@newsfirst.ca

Graphic Design:

Lareine Zakhour
Elena Molter
Thomas Bakoyannis

Advertising:

George S. Guzman

Editorial Staff:

Martin C. Barry
Matthew Daldalian
Dimitris Ilias
Maria Diamantis
Renata Isopo

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OPINION & Editorial



Older workers are vital to Canada's economy, but employers rarely take advantage of what they offer

Canada's labour market is being held together by older workers, yet our institutions still behave as if everyone checks out at 65. We built our retirement systems for a much shorter life-span, and the result is predictable: the people keeping the country running are the same ones many employers still treat as expendable.

Canadians are living well into their 80s, yet many assumptions about work and retirement still come from a time when hitting 70 was a rarity. The tidy three-stage life of school, work and retire belongs to another era. People shift careers, retrain and often hit their stride later in life, but a surprising number of workplaces act as if this evolution never happened.

This disconnect is creating pressure across the labour market. Younger workers face housing costs and wage stagnation. Older workers, who want or need to stay employed, are brushed aside by hiring practices stuck in the 1990s. That combination does not lead to a resilient labour market; it leads to frustration on all sides.

Employers in almost every sector complain about labour shortages. Canada still has more than half a million job vacancies, including 505,900 in the second quarter of 2025, with health care, the skilled trades and transportation consistently short of staff. Those numbers make employers' reluctance to consider a qualified 68- or 72-year-old applicant almost impossible to justify.

Canadians aged 55 and older now represent more than one-fifth of the entire workforce. Our worker-to-retiree ratio has fallen from nearly

seven to one in the 1970s to about three to one today, and it is expected to move closer to two to one in the coming decade. Older Canadians are already holding up a big piece of the labour market whether employers acknowledge it or not.

The stereotype of the cranky curmudgeon waiting for the early-bird special has not made sense for years. Many people in their late 60s and 70s are working, volunteering, building businesses or caring for family, often while coping with higher expenses and shrinking retirement expectations.

The financial reality is harder to ignore. Many older Canadians simply cannot afford to retire. The Canada Pension Plan replaces about a quarter of the average worker's income. Old Age Security tops out at just over \$700 a month for those aged 65 to 74 and just over \$800 for those 75 and over, depending on income. These programs do not, and were never intended to, fund a comfortable retirement.

Add inflation, housing costs and interest rates, and it is no mystery why so many keep working.

But financial necessity is not the whole story. Many older workers also discover something that challenges the old myths. They are not finished at 60. Not even close. Most people never wanted a decades-long idle retirement in the first place.

This is where employers should pay attention. Older workers carry vast amounts of institutional knowledge that many organizations have never bothered to capture. They hold the

practical know-how, the problem-solving habits and the memory of what has been tried before and what failed. When that knowledge walks out the door through retirement, companies often discover too late that no one left behind knows how the place actually works.

Replacing that experience is expensive. Studies estimate the cost of losing a long-tenured employee at 50 to 200 per cent of their annual salary. The belief that hiring younger is always cheaper dissolves quickly once the training bills and preventable mistakes start rolling in.

However, modern knowledge management is not just about documenting procedures. It depends on judgment, the ability to read a situation because you have seen it before, and the instincts that come only from long experience. Their judgment, perspective and steadying influence help organizations avoid costly errors and give younger employees something we do not talk enough about: mentorship from people who know what they are doing.

And none of what older workers contribute is hard for employers to tap into. Flexible schedules, phased retirement options, cross-generational teams and structured mentoring programs go a long way. Employers just have to stop pretending that talent automatically expires at a particular birthday.

We can keep clinging to a retirement model built for a different century, or we can accept the reality in front of us. Older workers are not a stopgap; they are a cornerstone.

Dana Wilson

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Rosemère gathers to honour veterans in solemn Remembrance Day tribute



MARIA DIAMANTIS
info@newsfirst.ca

In a moving ceremony held earlier this week, the Town of Rosemère reaffirmed its commitment to honouring Canada's veterans, pausing to reflect on the sacrifices made in the name of freedom, peace, and democratic values. The municipal council, accompanied by residents, dignitaries, and members of the Royal Canadian Legion, gathered outside Town Hall for a Remembrance Day commemoration steeped in gratitude and quiet reverence.

Although modest in scale, the ceremony mirrored a nationwide tradition that has been observed every November for more than a century. Communities across Canada, from major cities to small municipalities, held similar tributes, uniting the country in remembrance of those who served in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and in numerous peacekeeping and NATO missions.

Local leaders pay tribute

Mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre led the Rosemère delegation, accompanied by councillors Stéphanie Nantel, Sébastien Jacquet, and Jean-François Gagnière. Together, they welcomed citizens who had gathered despite the brisk November weather to show their respect.

Representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion, Messrs. Réal Marcotte and Marcel Comeau, joined the ceremony, embodying the long-standing link between local communities and the national veterans' network. The Legion, founded in 1925, has been central to preserving the memory of Canada's fallen and supporting veterans and their families, an effort that remains as vital today as ever.

A moment of silence was observed, echoing the two-minute pause held across the country every November 11 at 11 a.m. This tradition began following the Armistice of 1918, when hostilities ended in the First World War. Today, it serves as a collective act of reflection on the cost of conflict and the importance of peace.

A tradition rooted in canadian history

Across Quebec, Remembrance Day has taken on renewed visibility in recent years. Schools, municipalities, and veterans' organizations have been working to reinforce the import-

ance of historical memory, particularly among younger generations. Canada's sacrifice in global conflicts remains significant: more than 66,000 Canadians died in the First World War, over 45,000 in the Second World War, and thousands more in subsequent missions.

Rosemère's ceremony, though simple and intimate, fits within this broader national context. The town has long collaborated with local veterans' branches for commemorative events, educational outreach, and public awareness. While not every community holds a large parade or elaborate service, these smaller gatherings are central to keeping remembrance alive.

Community presence and civic reflection

For many in attendance, the ceremony provided an opportunity not only to honour those who served, but also to reflect on the values their sacrifices defended, freedom, democracy, and the pursuit of peace. These themes resonate strongly today, as global conflicts continue to shape international relations and humanitarian crises. Canadian Armed Forces members remain active in peacekeeping, disaster relief, and NATO operations, ensuring that the tradition of service continues.

Residents who attended the Rosemère ceremony expressed quiet but heartfelt gratitude, standing alongside elected officials and Legion representatives in a show of community solidarity. While no musical performances or military contingents were present, common in larger ceremonies, the simplicity of the gathering heightened its emotional impact.

"Lest we forget" in rosemère

The message at the heart of the event was clear and deeply Canadian: "We will remember them."

Rosemère's municipal council issued thanks to the Royal Canadian Legion representatives and to all citizens who joined the tribute. Their presence, the council emphasized, helps sustain a culture of remembrance that extends beyond a single day and speaks to the values shared by the community.

As the last poppies fall and the November cold settles in, the town's ceremony stands as a modest yet meaningful reminder that remembrance is not an obligation but a collective privilege, one that Rosemère continues to uphold with dignity.

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Historic day for Quebec Transit: REM inaugurated in Deux-Montagnes

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A new era of public transportation dawned today as the Réseau express métropolitain (REM) officially opened its doors in Deux-Montagnes, marking one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in Quebec's history.

The inauguration ceremony drew high-profile leaders, including **Prime Minister Mark Carney**, **Premier François Legault**, and **Member of Parliament Linda Lapointe**, who gathered to

celebrate the launch of the fully automated light rail system that promises to transform commuting across The Island of Greater Montreal.

"This is more than a train; it's a symbol of progress," said Prime Minister Carney during his address. "The REM will connect communities, reduce congestion, and help us meet our climate goals by offering a sustainable alternative to car travel."

Premier Legault echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the economic and environmental benefits: "This project represents billions in investment



Ribbon cutting at the REM inauguration ceremony in Deux-Montagnes.



MP Linda Lapointe and Deux-Montagnes mayor Denis Martin with REM passengers.

and thousands of jobs. It's a game-changer for mobility and for our fight against greenhouse gas emissions."

The REM's Deux-Montagnes branch is a critical component of the 67-kilometer network, linking the North Shore to downtown Montreal with sleek, driverless trains operating every few minutes. The system is designed to integrate seamlessly with existing transit, offering commuters faster, greener, and more reliable service.

MP Lapointe highlighted the local impact: "For residents of Deux-Montagnes, this means shorter travel times and better access to opportunities across the region. It's a proud day for our community."

The REM project, spearheaded by CDPQ Infra, has been years in the making, overcoming logistical challenges and pandemic-related delays. Today's launch signals the beginning of phased openings across the network, with full completion expected in the coming years.

As the first trains departed under clear skies, crowds of residents and officials applauded, capturing photos of the sleek, modern cars gliding along elevated tracks. For many, the moment represented not just improved transit, but a bold

step toward a more connected and sustainable future for Quebec.



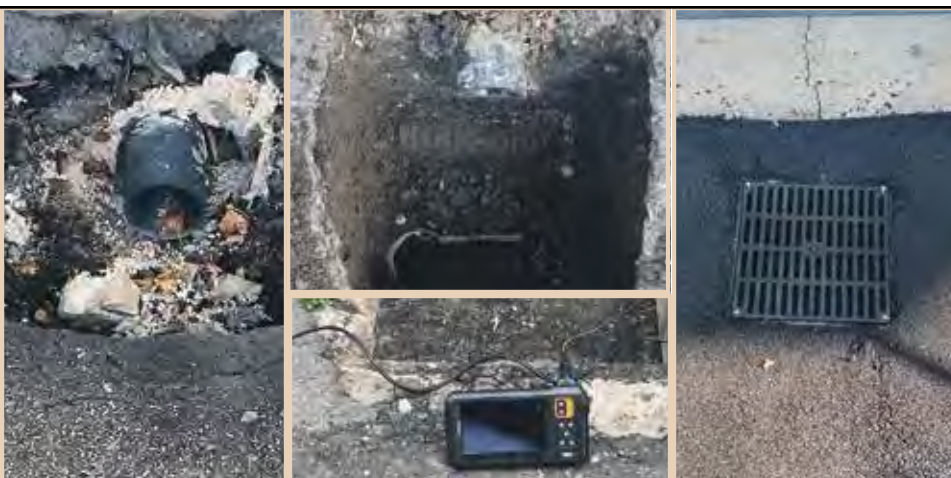
Premier François Legault, Prime Minister Mark Carney, MP Linda Lapointe, and mayor Denis Martin on the escalator.

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Riding the REM's new Deux-Montagnes branch: A first-day look

Riders huddled to the new Deux-Montagnes station for a free-fare weekend



The newly reopened Deux-Montagnes REM station (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

Saturday Nov. 15, the line to enter the brand-new REM station snaked around the building all morning — long, cold, but moving quickly.

The REM, or the Réseau Express Métropolitain, is a fully automated, electric light-rail system that runs driverless trains on a dedicated right-of-way. It's designed to move riders every few minutes, making it closer to a rapid-transit network than the old commuter rail it replaces.

Staff handed out warm drinks, paper “passports” to stamp at each stop, and small cardboard REM trains for kids to assemble. It felt less like the launch of a transit line and more like a community event.

I joined the crowd at Deux-Montagnes, boarding one of the first north-shore trains to head all the way to downtown Montreal, for the first time since the EXO line shut down in 2020 when CDPQ Infra, a primary contractor for major public infrastructure projects, took over the former line and closed it for conversion to the REM.

Now, rail service is back and people showed up to test it out.

‘We’re here just for the opening’

One of the first riders I met wasn’t local.

For Alex Reyes, who travelled from New York with his wife specifically for the opening, the moment felt rare. “We got here just in time,” he said.

Reyes said new rapid-transit projects are unusual on the U.S. east coast. “There isn’t really much new transit popping up,” he added, noting the most recent major project was New York’s Grand Central Madison concourse in 2023.

He said Montreal’s driverless trains and rebuilt stations are impressive adding he was intrigued by the Île-Bigras stop.

Inside the station, families came close against the glass to watch the first automated trains glide in,



silent except for the electric hum. The platform screens counted down the next departures: two minutes, then one.

The ride

Once on board, the train felt airy and bright, not packed until further down the line. Kids sat on parents’ laps, some riders filming, others flipping through their stamp passports.

“I really like how quick it is and that it’s automated,” Reyes told me after we rode. “And the fact everything is brand new, that’s a lot of fun.”

The REM’s technology is hard to ignore: driverless trains, platform screen doors, and service every few minutes once the system is at full frequency. For now, the Deux-Montagnes branch runs on a restricted schedule, with testing continuing ahead of the Anse-à-l’Orme opening next spring.

The Deux-Montagnes branch adds 14 stations and links with the orange, green and blue métro lines, as well as the Mascouche commuter rail line. It introduces several new stops that didn’t exist on the former EXO route it replaces.

The trip to Central Station took under an hour — give or take 40 minutes. The ride was smooth, though not flawless; a brief slowdown approaching Côte-de-Liesse prompted a few grumbles.

After previous reporting on overcrowding and shutdowns on the South Shore branch, riders told me they expected “hiccups.”

Still, on opening day, nobody seemed genuinely bothered.

Locals return to rail — at last

At the entrance, I met Lisa Mailhot, bundled up with her young son, both smiling despite the cold.

Mailhot said her family relied heavily on the old commuter train and felt the absence. “My family is in Montreal, so we used it a lot,” she said of the old line. “We were really excited to see [the REM] running.”

Mailhot, who came with her young son, said the modernized platforms and signage looked promising. “Honestly, I haven’t taken it yet, but when I look at it, it’s impressive,” she said. “It looks well-indicated. It looks good.”



Passengers crowd into one of the first REM trains departing from Deux-Montagnes during the free-fare opening weekend. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)



Lisa Mailhot and her son pose outside Deux-Montagnes station after testing the new REM service on opening day. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)

Deux-Montagnes to grow alongside the new infrastructure. “More activities would help,” she added.

A view from the tracks

From inside the train, the REM delivers what its builders promised: a quiet, modern ride with smooth acceleration and crisp, bright interiors.

But on the platforms, opening day revealed some early realities. Crowds thickened as the morning went on, with families packing into cars as the line approached the busiest stations.

And for now, the newly opened branch still operates on limited hours, with service to Deux-Montagnes ending at around 9:30 p.m. as testing continues.

The excitement of opening day remained high, but the system now faces pressure to deliver consistently after years of delays and criticism directed at CDPQ Infra.

Despite that, the trip into downtown was undeniably fast: no traffic, no transfers, no big delays beyond minor slowdowns. When the entire system is fully operational, that speed will matter even more.

A new chapter begins

Stepping off at each station, Reyes and his wife immediately head for their next stamp.

“This is just fun,” he said. “It’s cool to see something new actually open.”

The sentiment was shared up and down the platforms: relief, excitement, curiosity — and for many, a sense of getting back a connection they lost years ago.

The next few months will reveal how well the REM holds up beyond its opening-day crowds.

‘There’s nothing around here’

Not everyone lining up was focused only on the train.

Michelle Archambault, a nearby resident, said the REM’s return fills a mobility gap, but the neighbourhood around the terminal is still bare.

The elderly North-Shorite said the new trains restored an important connection, but the neighbourhood still lacks community spaces. “In general, I always go to Laval because there’s nothing around here,” she said.

Archambault said she wants Rosemère and

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Rosemère's new council sworn in

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

Mayor-elect Marie-Élaine Pitre and six councillors were officially sworn into office Monday Nov. 10 at Rosemère Town Hall, marking the start of a new political chapter for the North Shore city.



Rosemère's new mayor, Marie-Élaine Pitre, speaking to the ceremony's attendees. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)



Rosemère's new City Council (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)

Residents, supporters and family members filled the small chamber at 100 rue Charbonneau, where the newly elected officials took the oath of office under the supervision of the city's clerk.

The event was hosted by Daniel Grenier, the town's Director of Communications, Public Affairs and Citizen Relations, who framed the night as a symbolic transition for the community. "We are witnessing a turning point for our community, a new breath that is about to shape the decisions guiding the Rosemère of tomorrow," he told attendees.

Pitre, who previously served as a councillor, was the last to be sworn in after each of her team members. She also took a few minutes to introduce and thank every councillor individually, receiving warm applause from the room.

Speaking after the ceremony, Pitre said stepping into the mayor's role still felt slightly unreal. "Honestly, it's a bit surreal," she said. "But I'm very happy because I'm really happy about the team that we put together, and I really feel that everyone here [...] is happy about the situation."

Pitre, who ran alongside the Vision Rosemère slate, said her interest in municipal leadership has always been grounded in a sense of momentum and purpose.

"I'm really passionate about everything I do in life," she said. "It wasn't like forced or anything. It was just the right path."

Her administration now turns its attention to the 2026 budget cycle and several major local files, including the redevelopment of Place Rosemère, climate-resilience planning and citizen services.

While Vision Rosemère holds every council seat, Pitre emphasized the importance of consensus and respectful debate.

Among the newly elected is Elmer van der Vlugt, councillor for Seat 6, who said the moment brought "a mix of pride, honour and humility." A Rosemère resident since 2021, he immigrated from the Netherlands and has worked in municipal economics.

He said running for office felt like a natural extension of his attachment to the town.

"When I came to Rosemère for the first time, I fell in love immediately," he said. "It's a beautiful place... great people, great community."

Van der Vlugt said he views the upcoming mandate as an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to Rosemère's future. "I've always had this mantra of leaving the world a better place if I can," he said. "I felt this was a great opportunity

to try and do so."

Looking ahead, he identified several issues that will shape early council discussions, including longstanding debates over the former golf-course land. As an economist, he said financial stewardship will also be critical.

"It's very important to keep track of the finances, make sure that we have the means to pay for our projects but without increasing the tax burden," he said.

Van der Vlugt added that his personal priority is expanding active mobility infrastructure, an interest rooted in his Dutch background.

"Cycling is in my blood and DNA for sure," he said. "I'd really like to accelerate where I can and help bring a fresh new view with different experiences from all over the globe."

The ceremony closed with families and guests gathered for photos and small celebrations. The new council will hold its first official meeting later this month.



Elmer van der Vlugt, councillor for Seat 6, said the moment brought "a mix of pride, honour and humility." (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, North Shore News)



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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

SPEED DATING

Q I am a 19-year-old college freshman who has never been married. I am actually dating my first boyfriend, but that is by choice, because I never wanted to be a part of the high school drama scene. I wanted a mature relationship that transcended all that.

However, I seem to have gotten myself far too deeply into something I am not ready for. I have been dating my boyfriend for almost three months. He's 21, and we get along wonderfully. I am not his first girlfriend, but the first girlfriend he "really wanted."

Just a few days into our relationship, he told me he loved me, and kept saying it, though I never responded in kind. After four weeks, I did finally tell him I loved him. I thought I meant this. However, since then, he's come to mention quite often plans for the future. Plans such as marriage after we both finish college, children, names for those children, and more.

I am not ready for this. I cannot definitely say I want to spend the rest of my life with him, though he is completely enamored with me. I'm also worried, because I have not known how to respond, and in saying nothing, I believe he has read my assent.

I am truly scared I've led him on. This is not something I can accept of myself, since I honestly do care for him. I don't want to hurt him, but I will continue to lead him on if I don't say anything.

Bobbi

A Bobbi, ancient artists drawing on cave walls didn't sign their work. They couldn't because they didn't have a written language. Instead they put their hand against the cave wall, took color in their mouth, and blew. The outline of their hand is the mark they left for us.

Lovers also leave a mark—on each other. When your boyfriend said "I love you," he

put his mark on you. When you said it back to him, you put your mark on him, even though you had your doubts. The problem with marks is, if love isn't there on both sides, then the relationship has missed the mark.

In sociology there is a term called the "norm of social reciprocity." That simply means we feel obligated to give back to others what they give to us. It's called a norm because if we violate it, if we don't give back, we feel we have done something wrong.

When social reciprocity involves sharing or being polite, there is nothing wrong with it. But it has a dark side. It can be used to take advantage of us. When your boyfriend kept saying "I love you," it created the expectation that you had to say it back to him. Eventually you succumbed.

"I love you" is also an implied promise. It says I will behave in certain ways toward you, now and in the future. Since people are supposed to stick to promises, you feel bad about pulling back now. But if you don't, you will grow weaker as a person, and farther from your true feelings.

You went to college to learn things, and one of the most valuable things you can learn is how to say no. You have a chance, through your education, to secure your future. That is an opportunity many young women don't have. So grab that brass ring and put it in your pocket, knowing that economic freedom gives a woman the power to make wise decisions all of her life.

One of the marks of maturity is the ability to do the right thing, even though it is a hard thing. We totally understand not wanting to trifle with another, but if your boyfriend has moved too far forward, that's on him. The norm of social reciprocity is no substitute for the mark of genuine love.

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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Dr. Éric Goyer steps down as Laurentides public health director after 14 years of leadership



MARIA DIAMANTIS
info@newsfirst.ca

The Laurentides public health authority is preparing for a major transition as Dr. Éric Goyer, one of the region's most influential health leaders, concludes his mandate after more than two decades of service.

In a statement issued Monday, the **Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) des Laurentides** confirmed that Dr. Goyer will step down as **Director of Public Health** on **December 1, 2025**, after choosing not to seek a renewal of his mandate.

A career marked by crisis leadership and community commitment

Dr. Goyer has spent **over 25 years** working in public health in the Laurentides, including **14 years at the helm** of the region's public health department. His leadership became especially prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the region, one of Quebec's fastest-growing, faced unprecedented pressures on its health system, social services, and vulnerable populations.

Julie Delaney, President and CEO of the CISSS des Laurentides, praised Dr. Goyer's "remarkable commitment, leadership and dedication," noting the "colossal" amount of work he carried out during the pandemic and through numerous public health challenges.

"His sense of duty and his unwavering commitment to the well-being of our communities have deeply inspired our teams," Delaney said.

Beyond emergency response, Dr. Goyer helped strengthen preventive health initiatives, community health outreach, and environmental health strategies—areas that have become increasingly important amid Quebec's climate-related health concerns and demographic shifts.

Interim Director Named: Dr.

Gabrielle Bureau

To ensure continuity, the CISSS announced the appointment of **Dr. Gabrielle Bureau** as **interim Director of Public Health**.



Dr. Bureau has served as a medical advisor within the Laurentides public health department since 2018 and brings a strong academic and professional background. She holds:

- a medical degree,
- a master's in community health,
- and a specialist certification in public health and preventive medicine from Université Laval.

Her work in the region has touched several critical portfolios, including environmental health, emergency preparedness, municipal health planning, COVID-19 response, and climate-change mitigation strategies.

In her interim role, Dr. Bureau intends to "continue the mission" of Dr. Goyer, protecting and improving public health through prevention, promotion, crisis monitoring, and close surveillance of health trends affecting Laurentides residents.

Delaney expressed confidence in her appointment,

calling Dr. Bureau a physician of "great expertise" and emphasizing the importance of maintaining momentum in public health protection during a period of transition.

A Region at a Crossroads

The leadership change comes as the Laurentides faces ongoing demographic growth, increased climate-related health risks, and rising demand for preventive public health measures. The incoming interim director will inherit files that range from emergency preparedness to long-term community health planning.

As Dr. Goyer steps away after a career that helped shape the region's health landscape, the CISSS publicly thanked him for his years of service, emphasizing the significant mark he leaves on institutions and communities across the Laurentides.

Dr. Bureau will assume her new role on December 1.

Colombian delegation visits Deux-Montagnes to study stormwater innovations

MARIA DIAMANTIS
info@newsfirst.ca

A group of eight professionals from the metropolitan region of Bogotá-Cundinamarca, Colombia, made a technical stop in Deux-Montagnes on November 12 as part of a knowledge-exchange mission organized by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM). The delegation, representing an urban-planning agency comparable to the CMM, is touring Quebec to study local governance structures and climate-adaptation strategies.

The visit to Deux-Montagnes centred on one of the city's most ambitious recent infra-

structure projects: the open-air stormwater retention basin at Parc Central, combined with a new pumping station and flood-protection dyke system. Together, these installations form the backbone of the municipality's updated approach to flood mitigation—a pressing issue since the historic inundations that struck the Lake of Two Mountains in 2017 and again in 2019.

After a briefing at city hall, the Colombian delegation toured the Parc Central site, where municipal staff and CMM representatives outlined the engineering principles behind the open retention basin. The project captures excess rainfall, temporarily stores runoff, and regulates its release, easing pressure on the

stormwater network during increasingly intense precipitation events. The system is paired with a modern pumping station on 13th Avenue that can discharge large volumes of clear water into the lake when conditions allow.

What distinguishes the Deux-Montagnes project and what drew the interest of the South American visitors is the integration of hard infrastructure with landscape design. The basin was intentionally developed as a multifunctional public space, with walking paths, viewing areas, and permanent water features designed

to prevent stagnation. The model reflects an international shift toward "blue-green" stormwater solutions that strengthen resilience while improving neighbourhood livability.

For the CMM, which has been expanding its partnerships with other metropolitan regions, the visit represents a growing appetite for knowledge-sharing on climate adaptation. Bogotá-Cundinamarca has been examining ways to create a forum similar to the CMM's "Agora métropolitaine," a platform for cooperation among municipal leaders, planners and environmental specialists. The Deux-Montagnes stop served as an example of how a mid-sized municipality can leverage metropolitan governance

to implement large-scale, technically complex projects.

City officials emphasized that the Parc Central infrastructure is already delivering measurable benefits. By combining the retention basin, the dyke and the pumping station, the municipality has significantly increased its ability to manage extreme rainfall and prevent sewer surcharges, challenges expected to intensify in coming decades. The CMM has identified the Deux-Montagnes basin as a model that could be adapted by other flood-prone communities across Quebec.

The Colombian visitors expressed interest in applying similar practices in their own region, where rapid urban growth and climate pressures have heightened the need for integrated stormwater systems. Their Quebec itinerary includes stops in Montréal and Gatineau, focusing on metropolitan governance, planning tools and best practices in sustainable infrastructure.

For Deux-Montagnes, the November 12 visit was an opportunity to showcase a project that has become a reference point within the Greater Montréal area. More broadly, it underscored a trend seen worldwide: mid-sized municipalities, once on the climate-adaptation front lines, increasingly finding themselves at the centre of international exchanges on how to respond to the new realities of extreme weather.

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- Yellow potatoes (~2.5 lbs)
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- Oranges (3)
- Bananas (4-5)
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