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Blainville hosts Swiss delegation



From left to right: Michel Dicaire-Acosta, Strategic Advisor and Government Relations, City of Blainville; Daniel Veuve, Chancellor, City of Neuchâtel; Liza Poulin, Mayor of Blainville; Jonathan Gretillat, Vice-President of the Communal Council, City of Neuchâtel; Chantal Gauvreau, Director General, City of Blainville; and Damien Vaucher, External Relations Officer, City of Neuchâtel.

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The Best Choice
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Blainville hosts Swiss delegation as municipal partnership moves from symbolic to strategic

MARIA DIAMANTIS
info@newsfirst.ca

A municipal partnership signed in 2024 between Blainville and the Swiss city of Neuchâtel is beginning to take concrete shape, as officials from both sides met in person this month during a high-profile visit tied to the 60th Finale of the Jeux du Québec.

Blainville welcomed a three-member delegation from Neuchâtel, marking one of the first official exchanges since the friendship pact was formalized. The visit combined ceremonial elements with working sessions aimed at deepening cooperation between the two municipalities.

The Swiss delegation included Jonathan Gretillat, vice-president of Neuchâtel's communal council, Daniel Veuve, the city's chancellor, and Damien Vaucher, who oversees external relations. Over several days, they toured Blainville's territory, including its municipal facilities, sports infrastructure, and key development areas, while also attending events connected to the province-wide Jeux du Québec.

Beyond the formalities, the visit focused heavily on knowledge exchange. Meetings between municipal officials provided an opportunity to compare governance models, administrative practices, and policy priorities in two very different urban contexts.

According to municipal sources, the Swiss representatives showed particular interest in Blainville's approach to communications, participatory budgeting, social development policies, and the integration of information technologies into municipal services.

These areas have become increasingly important for cities seeking to modernize operations while maintaining citizen engagement, a challenge shared across jurisdictions despite differences in scale and governance structures.

For Blainville, the visit offered an opportunity not only to showcase local initiatives but also to position itself as an active participant in international municipal networks. Such partnerships, while often symbolic at the outset, can evolve



into practical collaborations in areas such as urban planning, sustainability, and public administration.

The timing of the visit, coinciding with one of Quebec's largest amateur sporting events, also allowed the delegation to observe how large-scale events are organized at the municipal level, including coordination between infrastructure, community engagement, and regional promotion.

While no formal agreements were announced during the visit, both sides indicated that discussions would continue, with the

expectation of further exchanges in the coming years.

As municipalities increasingly look beyond national borders for ideas and partnerships, the Blainville-Neuchâtel relationship reflects a broader trend toward localized diplomacy, where cities play a growing role in international cooperation.

Whether this partnership will translate into long-term, measurable outcomes remains to be seen, but the latest visit suggests that both sides are intent on moving beyond symbolic ties toward more substantive collaboration.

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Deux-Montagnes turns to mediation as white-collar contract talks drag on

MARIA DIAMANTIS
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After nearly two years of negotiations, the City of Deux-Montagnes is seeking outside help to break a deadlock with its white-collar employees, formally requesting the appointment of a mediator to move talks forward.

The decision follows 12 negotiation sessions held between June 2024 and January 2026 that have yet to produce a renewed collective agreement. While discussions have continued over that period, the lack of resolution has prompted the municipality to escalate the process through formal mediation.

Mayor Denis Martin described the move as a constructive step aimed at facilitating progress rather than signaling a breakdown in relations.

City officials say the goal is to reach an agreement that reflects current working conditions and organizational realities, particularly given that other municipal employee groups have

already renewed their contracts months ago. The white-collar unit now stands as the only remaining group without an updated agreement, adding pressure to conclude negotiations.

Under Quebec labour law, mediation is commonly used when negotiations stall. A neutral third party is appointed to assist both sides in clarifying positions, narrowing differences, and identifying possible compromises. While the process is non-binding, it often serves to re-establish momentum and prevent further escalation.

The specific points of contention in Deux-Montagnes have not been disclosed publicly. However, collective agreement negotiations in the municipal sector typically focus on wages, benefits, workload expectations, and workplace organization.

The city maintains that its negotiating committee has made sustained efforts over the past year and remains committed to reaching a settlement. At the same time, municipal lead-



ers are signaling that progress will depend on a willingness from both parties to move closer to common ground.

For now, the union representing white-collar employees has not issued a public response to the mediation request, leaving uncertainty about how talks may evolve in the coming weeks.

Although the dispute has not yet affected municipal services, prolonged negotiations can increase the risk of labour tensions, particularly

if mediation fails to produce results.

By turning to a mediator at this stage, the City of Deux-Montagnes appears to be attempting to resolve the situation before it escalates further, while maintaining a measured and cooperative approach.

Whether that strategy will be enough to bring both sides to an agreement remains to be seen, but it marks a clear shift in tone as the city looks to conclude one of its longest-running labour negotiations in recent years.

Rosemère invites public input as regional hub development moves forward

MARIA DIAMANTIS
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The Town of Rosemère is moving into the next phase of its long-term urban planning strategy, calling on residents to play a more active role in shaping the future of its regional hub.

Municipal officials have announced a public information session scheduled for March 23, aimed at presenting new regulatory frameworks tied to the Special Planning Program (SPP), a key component of the town's urban development vision through 2040.

The session comes as the municipality continues to refine zoning and planning bylaws following the adoption of amendments to its urban plan last fall. These changes are designed to guide development in one of Rosemère's most strategic sectors, balancing growth with environmental and community considerations.

According to municipal officials, the upcoming information evening is intended to prepare residents for a more formal public consultation process expected in April. Topics will include greening initiatives, parking structures, mobility planning, and environmental performance standards.

While the event is framed as informational, it also reflects a broader effort by the town to increase transparency and public engagement in urban planning decisions, an area that often

generates strong community interest.

The Special Planning Program itself is a tool used by municipalities across Quebec to provide detailed guidance for specific areas identified as priorities for redevelopment. In Rosemère's case, the regional hub represents both an economic opportunity and a planning challenge, requiring careful coordination between residential, commercial, and environmental objectives.

The town says the current regulatory proposals are based on a combination of technical studies and previous consultations with residents, though the upcoming sessions will test how well those proposals align with public expectations.

Participation in the March 23 event requires advance registration, and the presentation will be recorded for broader access.

In addition, residents will soon have the opportunity to formally submit opinions and briefs as part of the consultation process mandated under Quebec's land-use planning legislation.

Municipal leaders are encouraging citizens to review project materials online ahead of the consultations, signaling an intent to foster informed participation rather than reactive debate.

As cities across the province face increasing pressure to manage growth, climate risks, and infrastructure demands, the outcome of Rosemère's planning process could serve as a

case study in how smaller municipalities navigate these competing priorities.

For now, the focus remains on engagement,

with the town seeking to ensure that residents are not only informed, but actively involved in shaping the future of their community.



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OPINION & Editorial



Carney talks like Canada is a reliable energy partner

The world knows otherwise. Canada has the oil but years of political obstruction keep it from reaching markets

The world is scrambling for reliable oil suppliers as one of the largest supply disruptions in the history of oil hits global energy markets.

In early March, Israel and the United States launched coordinated strikes against Iran, triggering a regional conflict that quickly spilled into global markets.

Iran retaliated by disrupting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. The narrow waterway normally carries roughly 20 per cent of the world's oil supply, making it one of the most important oil routes on the planet.

The impact was immediate. Tanker traffic slowed sharply, oil prices surged toward US\$100 a barrel and governments began releasing emergency reserves.

In moments like this, the world looks for producers that can quickly supply additional oil to global markets. Canada is not one of them.

During a meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in Oslo on March 14, Prime Minister Mark Carney presented Canada as a stable oil exporter and partner to the world. "From Canada's perspective, we are low-risk producers of oil. We are low-risk producers of natural gas. We're reliable," he said.

Stable we may be. Reliable we are not. When Germany and Asian partners asked Canada to supply more oil and natural gas during earlier energy shortages, they were effectively told by

then-prime minister Justin Trudeau that there was no business case for expanding exports. Germany instead secured energy supplies from Qatar and the United States.

Canada's export infrastructure tells the same story. Major projects such as the proposed Energy East pipeline, which would have carried western oil to Atlantic export terminals, were abandoned after years of regulatory uncertainty, rising costs and political opposition that made the project commercially unviable.

Canada is one of the world's largest oil producers. But most of its crude flows south to the United States because export infrastructure to global markets was never built. Canada's oil pipelines are largely oriented north-south into the U.S. refining system rather than to overseas export terminals. That was a political choice.

In the short term (one to two years), Canada cannot do much to ease the current supply shock. Oil production is already running near capacity and most Canadian crude flows to the U.S. through existing pipeline systems. Without additional export infrastructure, there is little ability to redirect large volumes to global markets during a crisis. The reality is that our oil cannot reach global markets quickly enough to matter.

In the mid-term (three to five years), Canada could modestly expand its role. Oil sands production in northern Alberta continues to grow and

the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion now allows more Canadian oil to reach the Pacific coast for export to overseas markets. But these changes add supply gradually rather than quickly. They will not solve today's crisis.

In the long term (10 years or more), the potential is far larger if the political will is there. Canada holds the world's third-largest proven oil reserves and operates one of the most politically stable energy sectors in the world. With additional pipelines, export terminals and liquefied natural gas infrastructure, Canada could become one of the most reliable energy suppliers in global markets.

For now, however, Canada's ability to respond remains limited. Canada produced on average 5.3 million bpd of crude oil in 2025, according to the Canada Energy Regulator. And as part of the International Energy Agency's plan to increase oil supply, Canadian production is set to increase by about 140,000 barrels per day starting in April, according to the Natural Resources minister's office.

That increase represents about a 2.6 per cent rise in Canadian supply. It also illustrates the broader constraint. Canada can grow production. It just cannot deliver it when the world needs it.

Canada has the resources to be a global energy leader. What it lacks is the infrastructure and the political will needed to become one.

Rashid Husain Syed

You cannot bomb a country into freedom

The record of foreign intervention is bleak. Political change lasts only when it is driven by the people who live there

Last month marked the 40th anniversary of the People Power Revolution in the Philippines, the 1986 uprising that ended the two-decade dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr., a bloodless, indigenous, and very effective regime change.

And in an age where countries with powerful armies view regime change in foreign lands as justification for violence, it is worth reflecting on what the world can learn from this event.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have gone to university in the Philippines a few years before the People Power Revolution. President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. was the dictator at the time. Since it was during the Cold War and Marcos was an American ally, anyone who objected to his regime was labelled a communist.

As a Canadian used to free speech, I was shocked when students were uncomfortable engaging in political debates in the classroom, and then I learned about disappearances, shootings, and curious "accidents" that happened with regularity.

When my friends knew that there were no informants around, they talked to me about what was happening in their country. They were well-educated and skilled in critical thinking. They also made very effective use of humour.

While I enjoyed talking with my Filipino friends, I was very aware that as a foreigner, I needed to listen and learn. I had absolutely no right to advise them about how their country should be run. To me, this is simply common sense.

A few years after I left, the world stood in awe when, after a contested presidential election result, throngs of Filipinos confronted the military armed only with flowers and prayer beads.

U.S. President Ronald Reagan wisely remained silent, and Marcos was powerless. He left the country and Corazon Aquino, his opponent in the election, became the new president of the Philippines, bringing back democratic government after years of authoritarian rule.

The lesson from the People Power Revolution is clear. History offers few examples where foreign intervention—through sanctions, embargoes, blockades or violence—improved life for the citizens of a country. In fact, these actions often inflict tremendous suffering on the people living there. History repeatedly shows that attempts by outside powers to force political change often make conditions worse for the people living there.

This lesson is relevant far beyond the Philippines. In the case of outside efforts to bring about regime change in Iran, it seems very odd that foreigners who express concern about the freedom of the people of Iran are so willing to risk Iranian lives. On the first day of the latest military assault on Iran, reports said an elementary school was blown up, tragically killing more than 100 schoolgirls. Iranian authorities blamed the United States and Israel for the strike, though responsibility remains disputed.

The people of Iran, like the people of the

Philippines, are well educated. They live under a political system dominated by religious authorities and powerful security institutions and are fully capable of deciding how they want to be governed. Political change is far more likely to last when it is driven by a country's own citizens rather than imposed from outside.

The confirmed death of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had served as Iran's supreme leader since 1989, does not appear to have had the impact outside observers were hoping for. For many Shiite Muslims, he will be viewed as a martyr, and his death will likely strengthen resistance to what many will see as foreign aggression.

Whatever the outcome of the conflict, lasting political change in Iran, if it occurs, will ultimately depend on the choices made by the Iranian people themselves.

Sustaining a war also requires public support. In the U.S., public opinion polls show more Americans oppose the war in Iran than support it, with younger voters especially skeptical.

Forty years after the People Power Revolution, life is not perfect in the Philippines. I was shocked when the population elected Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of the former dictator, as their president in 2022. Regardless of what I think of this choice, it is not my business as a foreigner to tell Filipinos how they should be governed.

Nor is it our business who governs Iran.

Gerry Chidiac

Carney's first year: a new governance

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

By March 2026, the "New Liberal" government under Prime Minister Mark Carney has officially hit its stride. Since taking office in early 2025, Carney—often called "Mike" by his inner circle—has traded the traditional political playbook for a spreadsheet-driven, results-oriented approach. One year in, Canada looks less like a standard democracy and more like a massive global corporation under new management.

The CEO in the East Block

Carney's first year was defined by a total overhaul of how Ottawa works. He inherited a government that many felt was stalled by slow debates. His response was to centralize power among a small group of economic experts, prioritizing "deliverables" over "discussion."

The "Carney Doctrine" is simple: Social programs are only as strong as the economy that pays for them. To jumpstart growth, he launched the **Major Projects Office**, an agency designed to bypass the "red tape" that slows down big projects. If a company wants to build a critical mineral mine or a green energy plant, the goal is now to have it approved within two years, rather than ten.

The "One Elbow Up" Strategy and Global Trade

Carney's arrival coincided with the return of Donald Trump to the White House. Navigating this has been his biggest test, leading to a strategy called "One Elbow Up."

- **The "Up" Elbow:** Carney has been aggressive in defending Canadian trade. When threatened with U.S. tariffs, he traveled to Washington with a list of "counter-tariffs" ready to go, proving he would not be bullied.
- **The "Down" Elbow:** Simultaneously, he has diversified Canada's friendships. In early 2026, Carney secured a massive **Strategic Partnership with China**, allowing for more Canadian canola exports while bringing in affordable Chinese Electric Vehicles (EVs) to help meet climate goals. He also signed a **\$2.6 billion uranium deal with India**, positioning Canada as a top global energy supplier.

By March 2026, polling shows that 61% of Canadians approve of his "professional" handling of these global relationships.

A Fortress in the North: Defense Investments

Recognizing that a "serious" country must be able to defend itself, Carney used his first year to launch a generational reinvestment in the military. In March 2026, he announced a staggering **\$35 billion plan** focused almost entirely on the Arctic.

The plan includes building "Operational Support Hubs" in places like Resolute and Whitehorse, ensuring the Canadian Armed Forces can stay in the North year-round. He has also committed to reaching NATO's **2% GDP spending target** immediately, with an eye toward much higher spending by 2035. This isn't just about guns and planes; it's "dual-use" infrastructure. New roads and airports in the North will serve both military jets and local communities, helping to unlock the region's vast mineral wealth.

The "Canada Strong" Housing Pivot

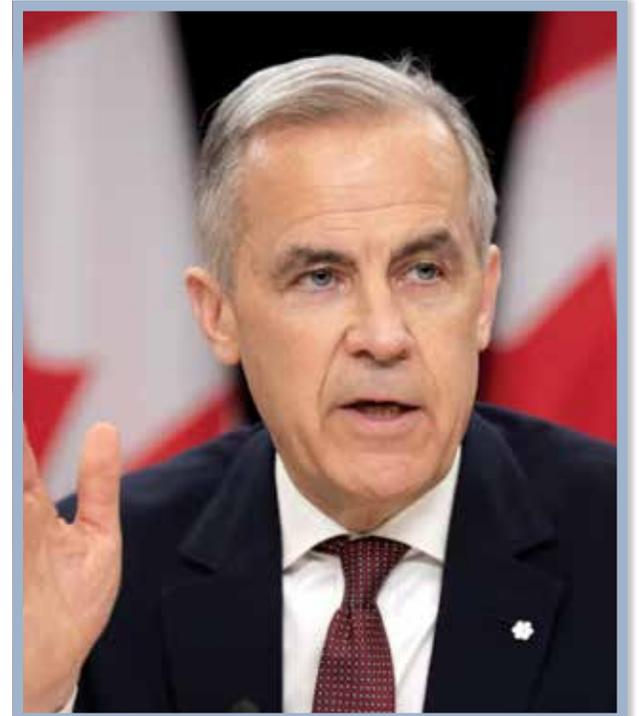
Perhaps the most aggressive part of Carney's first year was his 2025 Budget, which treated housing like a national emergency.

The centerpiece was **Build Canada Homes**, a federal agency that acts like a developer to build 500,000 homes a year. Carney's "CEO brain" saw that traditional building was too slow, so he shifted billions into **prefabricated (prefab) housing**. By building parts of homes in factories and snapping them together on-site, the government is trying to cut construction time in half. To help buyers, he also eliminated the **5% GST** on new homes under \$1 million for first-time owners, saving families up to \$50,000 instantly.

The Reality Check: The Cost of Living

Despite these big wins, Carney faces a major "relatability" problem. While the economy looks better on a chart, the average Canadian's wallet is still feeling the pinch.

Metric (March 2026)	The Public's Verdict
Leadership Style	Strong (61% approval)
National Security	High; people feel safer with a "steady hand."
Cost of Living	Poor (55% feel life is harder than last year).



The main criticism is that Carney is "too corporate." To a family struggling to buy groceries today, a "Strategic Partnership with India" or a new "Support Hub" in the Arctic doesn't help with dinner. His opponents have branded him as a "globalist banker" who cares more about international deals than local prices.

From Planning to Proving

Mark Carney's first year was about rebuilding the "engine" of Canada. He has streamlined the government, diversified trade, and launched a massive defense and housing plan. He has successfully convinced much of the country that he is a competent manager.

However, the "planning" phase is over. To stay in power, he must now prove that his "CEO style" works for the average person. If the new houses aren't finished soon and if food prices don't stabilize, his reputation as a "financial wizard" won't be enough to win the next election.

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Canadians are living on financial alert as tariff turbulence fuels the precarity mindset

EDDIE SHEPPARD & DAVID COLETTO
ABACUS DATA

Over the past year, Canadians have lived through a steady drumbeat of U.S. tariff threats, economic pressure, and political tension. For some, it fades into the background. For others, it shows up every time they tap their debit card.

In our latest research, I wanted to understand not just what people think about trade policy, but how this stretch of instability is shaping the way they live, spend, and make decisions.

If you've been following our work on the precarity mindset, none of this will feel disconnected. What we're seeing now is that mindset being reinforced in very practical ways. The sense that stability is fragile. That another hit could come at any time.

Three in ten Canadians say the past year has felt like a storm that keeps coming back. Not one sharp shock. Not a single disruptive

moment. Something that passes, then circles back. Something you brace for. Another 23% describe it as a wake-up call. A signal that they need to rethink how they spend, what they buy, and who they trust.

That tension between fatigue and adaptation is shaping consumer behaviour right now.

Living on financial alert

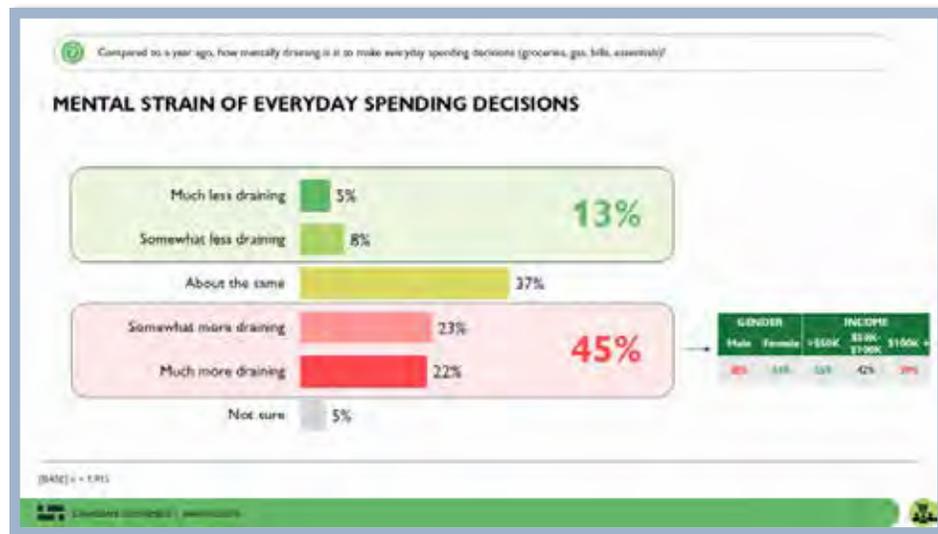
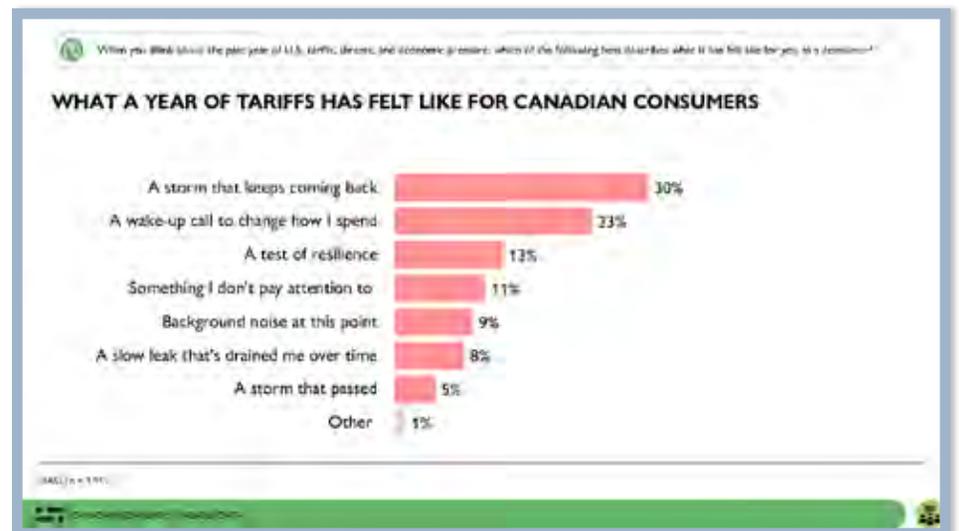
The most consistent signal in the data is this: Canadians feel on guard.

More than 8 in 10 say they feel like they have to stay on guard financially because another hit could come at any time. A similar share say they're exhausted by how often prices seem to change or jump. Even small purchases now require more thought than they used to.

This isn't just about buying a car or booking a vacation. It's groceries. Household basics. Everyday decisions that used to run on autopilot now require calculation.

That's precarity in action.

45% of Canadians say everyday spending deci-



sions are more mentally draining than they were a year ago. Among households earning under \$50,000, that rises to 55%. For many households, this isn't theoretical pressure. It's cognitive load, every single week.

Two-thirds say that right now it feels like no matter what they do, they can't really get ahead financially. And a similar share say they feel less financially secure than they did a year ago.

This is what erosion feels like from a consumer perspective. Constant pressure, like a drumbeat, not a full-on collapse.

How people are coping

When we look at behaviour, Canadians aren't responding in one uniform way.

Some Canadians are pulling back. About a quarter say they avoid spending whenever possible because it feels safer to hold onto money. Others are delaying decisions because they feel stuck. To them, everything looks expensive, so they wait.

There's also a growing group that's pushing

back. More than 8 in 10 say that if a company raises prices unfairly, they actively avoid them now. Loyalty is conditional.

At the same time, national sentiment is shifting. Three-quarters say this past year has made them believe Canada should rely less on the U.S., even if it costs more in the short term. A similar share says they're making a real effort to buy Canadian products when they can. Among Canadians over 60, those numbers are even higher.

This isn't just economic behaviour. It's emotional positioning. People are trying to regain a sense of agency.

What people actually want

In uncertain environments, you might assume consumers want big discounts or dramatic gestures, but this isn't what they tell us.

When asked what companies can do to earn

▶ Continued on page 7



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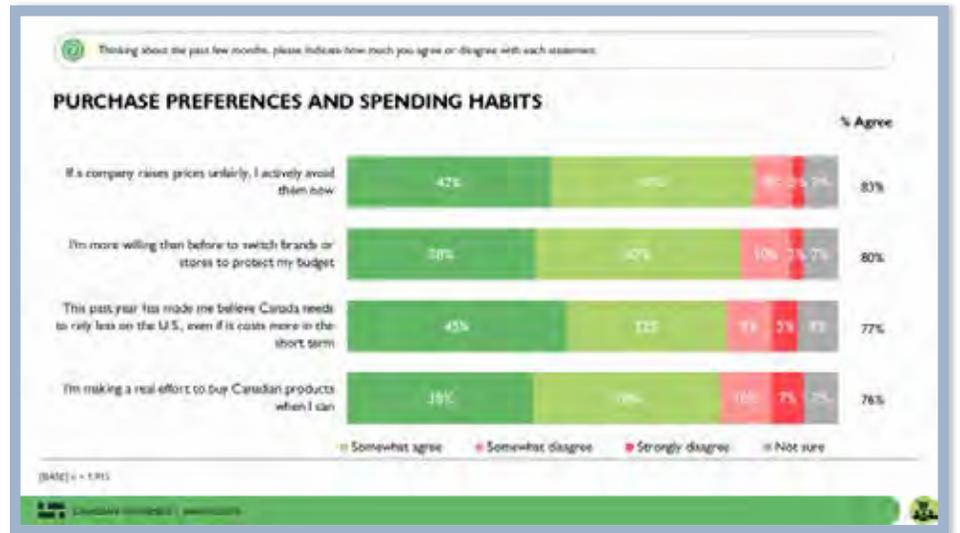
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◀ **Continued from page 6**

trust right now, the top answer is keeping prices stable and predictable. Not flashy. Not aggressive promotions. Stable.

After that, people talk about honesty about price increases and being treated fairly.

And when we ask what would restore a sense of certainty and stability in their lives as consumers, the leading response is prices becoming more predictable week to week. The second is knowing Canada has a plan to protect jobs and reduce reliance on the U.S.

The common theme that emerges from all of this is simple: Canadians want fewer surprises.

In a precarity mindset, predictability becomes a form of value.

The upshot

For consumers, this year hasn't fundamentally changed who they are, but it has changed how tightly they hold on. They are more alert. More skeptical. More willing to switch. More aware of where products come from. More mentally taxed by everyday decisions. Many feel like they're running harder just to stay in place.

For brands, the implications are straight-

forward but not easy. Stability now competes with price as a driver of trust. Predictability, transparency, and perceived fairness matters. If consumers believe you are taking advantage of volatility, they will walk.

Brand loyalty is no longer a given. It must be earned repeatedly, especially in moments of perceived unfairness.

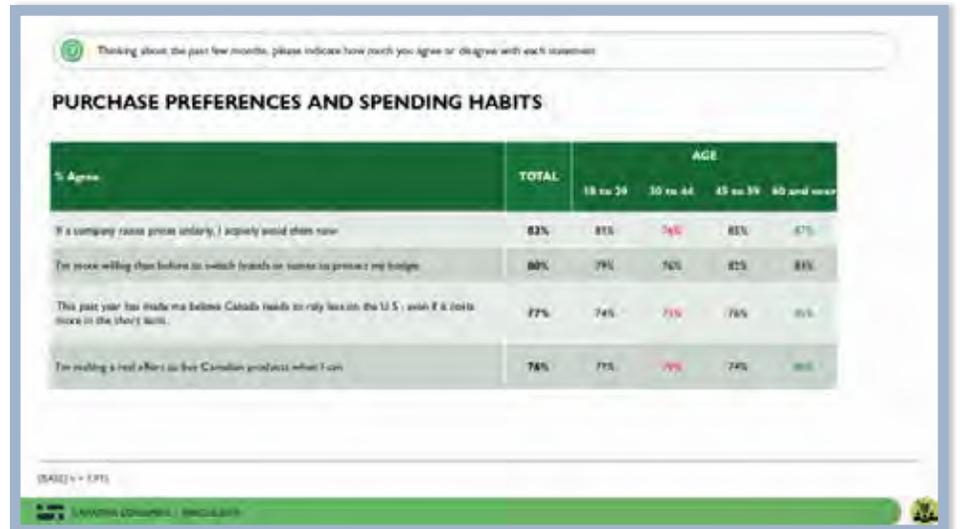
The precarity mindset won't disappear overnight. It will begin to fade as people experience consistency over time.

Right now, Canadian consumers are adapting. They're not spiraling. But they are tired. And in environments like this, the brands and institutions that reduce friction, reduce surprises, and restore a sense of steadiness are the ones most likely to earn lasting trust.

Methodology

The survey was conducted with 1,850 Canadian adults from February 20 to 25, 2026. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the PureSpectrum platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skews in the data from a single source.

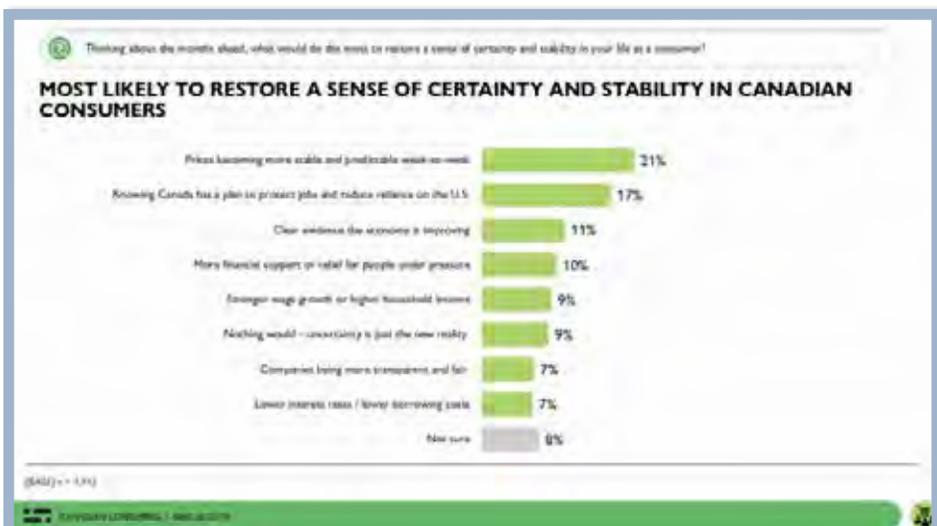
The margin of error for a comparable prob-



ability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.24%, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census

data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region.



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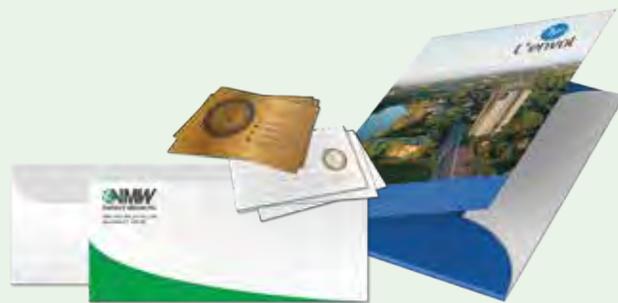
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FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

PART-TIME FRIEND

Q I am a middle-aged woman who teaches at a university and is happily married, so I feel stupid asking you this question. I just wanted you to know I am not a teenager!

A Christian friend of mine has stopped going to breakfast with me, which was once a treat for us as we are both very busy. I know she is occupied, but the signs of cooling are there, I think. Without naming them she tells me she has been breakfasting with other friends.

My husband and I were once welcome at her beach house, but the offer was not extended when they bought a new beach house this past year. Her morning phone calls were once almost daily but now are few and far between. She calls me randomly when she is out on errands, but not for long chats.

Long ago I was warned by a friend she dumped that she uses people for her own purposes, like getting them to volunteer at her church outreach. Then she dumps them when the need disappears. I feel so dumb if this is the case.

I know lives change and circumstances are constantly varying, but what do you think? If she is dumping me, please advise how I can feel better about it and not mope.

Elisabet

A Elisabet, author Nassim Nicholas Taleb once wrote about the dilemma faced by turkeys. If you are a turkey being fed for a long period of time, what should you believe? Does the feeding confirm your safety, or does it confirm the danger of becoming dinner?

You were forewarned. You knew what might happen, and yes, it happened to you. When we get a little bit older we don't have to wrestle things into what we want them to be. We can accept them for what they are. Today we can leave the bed unmade.

The number of people you will have a real bond with will always be small. What you had with this woman wasn't love or deep friendship but mutual benefit for a time. Though it was more in your eyes, in her eyes it was a symbiotic relationship, a tit for tat, a quid pro quo.

In the novel "Anne of Green Gables" Anne Shirley hopes for a "bosom friend." Perhaps you have an opening for that, and that is why you wrote. From your experience you know this woman is not a candidate for close friendship. Knowing that will free you to give time and attention to more constant friends, one of whom may become the bosom friend you desire.

Wayne & Tamara

SECONDHAND ROSE

Q I am a full-time college student. Two months ago my boyfriend went away for training. On the day he left, as I entered my car in a rush to work, he handed me a ring and asked that I wear it and also specified it was not an engagement ring but a promise ring. The ring was very nice and barely fit my ring finger. I gave him a kiss goodbye and off I was.

After taking a closer look during my drive, I realized this ring looked strangely familiar. One night early in our relationship he pulled out this box and showed me a wedding ring set which belonged to his ex-wife. I have a good

eye and know for a fact the ring he gave was not new or purchased specifically for me. It's the wedding ring from the set. We agreed I will move in with him after I graduate. Am I wrong for feeling offended?

Misty

A Misty, isn't that special! He gave you another woman's wedding ring that doesn't even fit. Is he planning on making you his next ex-wife?

Regifting is most often done for people we don't care about. His was a secondhand promise with a secondhand ring. Don't have a second thought about returning it.

Tamara

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

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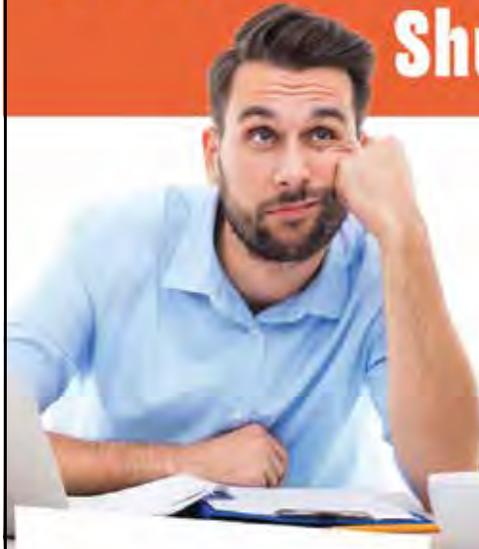
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Boisbriand unveils food community development plan aimed at strengthening local access and sustainability

MARIA DIAMANTIS
info@newsfirst.ca

The City of Boisbriand has released a new strategic plan aimed at reshaping how food is produced, distributed, and accessed at the local level, as municipalities across Quebec increasingly turn to community-based solutions to strengthen food security.

The Plan de développement de communauté nourricière, now publicly available, outlines a long-term vision to build a more resilient and locally rooted food system. The initiative seeks to bring together residents, community organizations, institutions, and local producers in an effort to improve access to healthy food while encouraging sustainable agricultural practices.

Municipal officials describe the plan as both ambitious and collaborative, reflecting a growing recognition that food systems are no longer solely a rural or provincial issue, but a central component of urban planning and public health.

The plan's development was informed by a public consultation process launched in 2025, which included a citizen forum and survey. According to the city, this participatory approach helped identify key priorities, including affordability, accessibility, and support for local production.

While the full details of implementation remain to be seen, the initiative aligns with a broader trend across Quebec municipalities seeking to reduce dependence on external supply chains, particularly in the wake of recent disruptions that have exposed vulnerabilities in food distribution networks.

Boisbriand's approach emphasizes local partnerships as a cornerstone of the strategy. A range of stakeholders from the agricultural, health, and community sectors contributed to the plan's development, highlighting the multi-dimensional nature of food policy at the municipal level.

Among the areas expected to be addressed are the expansion of local food production, support for emerging agricultural entrepreneurs, and the integration of food access into social development strategies. The involvement of regional health authorities and agricultural organizations also suggests a



focus on linking nutrition, public health, and environmental sustainability.

Mayor Christine Beaudette acknowledged the collaborative effort behind the initiative, noting that its success will depend on continued engagement from both institutional partners and the broader community.

As municipalities take on a more active role in shaping local food systems, Boisbriand's plan reflects a shift toward decen-

tralized, community-driven models. The challenge now will be translating strategic objectives into measurable outcomes, particularly in a context where economic pressures continue to affect both producers and consumers.

The coming years will determine whether initiatives such as this can move beyond planning frameworks to deliver tangible improvements in access, affordability, and sustainability for residents.



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HOROSCOPE

Week of March 22 to 28, 2026

The luckiest signs this week:
LEO, VIRGO AND LIBRA

♈ ARIES
Your honesty will bring hidden issues to light but may also cause some tension. An unexpected revelation will prompt reflection and doubt. The new moon's influence will cause a truth to be revealed, opening the path toward greater clarity.

♉ TAURUS
Even if your finances are strained, solutions will appear. You'll have the chance to revisit a pet project or redecorate your home, rekindling your motivation and sense of hope.

♊ GEMINI
This week promises to be lively and full of twists and turns. You may need to confront certain people to restore harmony. Even if you value peace, clear boundaries will help you rebuild trust and respect.

♋ CANCER
Your intuitive and creative abilities will grow this week, giving you a more spiritual outlook and fresh perspectives. Your empathy will intensify. Your artistic or inspiring side may start to shine.

♌ LEO
You may be unexpectedly inspired by a social media message that opens up new perspectives. A supportive friend will play a crucial role in helping you achieve something great, boosting your confidence and driving your pursuit of happiness.

♍ VIRGO
Your schedule may become overwhelming if you take on too much. Space out your appointments to avoid stress and last-minute chaos. Treat your time like a precious resource. Use it wisely to regain balance and peace of mind.

♎ LIBRA
You'll have the sudden urge to radically transform your life. A return to school or a career change could bring you closer to your true calling and pave the way for a more fulfilling, purposeful future.

♏ SCORPIO
Your emotions could overpower your logic this week, influencing your decisions even as you try to stay rational. Accepting your feelings and daring to step outside your comfort zone will guide you toward change that aligns with your path.

♐ SAGITTARIUS
This week will highlight the need for balance in all your relationships. Whether at work, in love, with relatives or friends, you'll need to negotiate skillfully, make compromises and adjust your expectations to preserve harmony and happiness.

♑ CAPRICORN
A disagreement or confusing situation at work could spark thoughts of a career shift. Before making a move, take a step back, weigh your options carefully and seek advice from loved ones.

♒ AQUARIUS
You'll shine brightly this week, attracting the recognition you deserve. This recognition will boost your confidence, self-esteem and self-worth, setting the stage for meaningful change in your future.

♓ PISCES
A move may be on the horizon, especially if your current home feels too big. This change could mark a new chapter in your life. In romance, positive changes could strengthen or rekindle your relationship.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 300

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
56						57			58	
59						60				61

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ACROSS

- Picnic insect
- Grand celebration
- Absent
- Seek the affection of
- Almost round
- Vatican City official
- Carry with effort
- Color
- Four-footed friends
- Glitch
- Clay brick
- Tread the boards
- Cato's language
- Hotel worker
- Wear down
- Verse type
- Stadium
- British brew
- Husbands' spouses
- Shrunk
- Method
- "___ Do You Love"
- Weight units

DOWN

- Piercing tools
- Verb's partner
- Roman garment
- Understood
- Pilot
- Go ashore
- Voice part
- Emerge
- Heartache
- Likely
- Proposal reply
- Sal, for example
- Laundry brightener
- Follower
- Croaker
- Run in neutral
- Requirement
- Curtseys
- Change a manuscript
- Unpaid bill
- Impose, as a tax
- Part of rpm
- TV anchors
- Firstborn
- Long time
- Deadly snakes
- Pack animal
- At another place
- Stadium section
- Ship's mast
- Flawed
- Frozen dessert
- Young society woman
- Cheerless

Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 993

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

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.

Last Issue's Answers

CROSSWORDS

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

Sudoku

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

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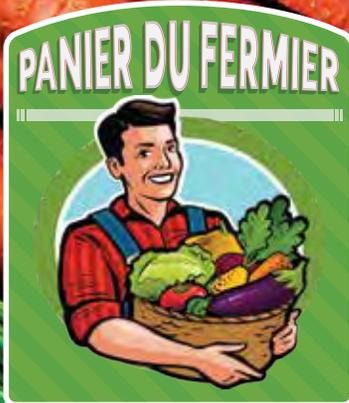
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BIG BASKET (\$40)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Red Peppers (4) | 9. Sweet Potatoes (2) |
| 2. Romaine Hearts (3) | 10. Lemon |
| 3. Pineapple | 11. Brussels Sprouts |
| 4. Grapes | 12. Pears (3) |
| 5. Strawberries | 13. Grapefruit |
| 6. Spinach | 14. Oranges (3) |
| 7. Green Zucchini (2) | 15. Dates |
| 8. Fresh Stalk Garlic (Egypt) | 16. Radishes |
| | 17. Butternut Squash |
| | 18. Cantaloupe |

SMALL BASKET (\$22)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Red Peppers (2) | 5. Green Zucchini |
| 2. Strawberries | 6. Sweet Potato |
| 3. Romaine Hearts (3) | 7. Spinach |
| 4. Cherry tomatoes | 8. Lemon |
| | 9. Oranges (2) |
| | 10. Pears (2) |
| | 11. Bananas (3) |

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