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Quebec launches Regional Action Plan to revitalize the Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

The Quebec government has unveiled a comprehensive action plan to support the long-term development of the Outa-

ouais region. The Plan d'action régional 2025–2029, presented on March 24 by Minister Mathieu Lacombe, is part of the province's broader strategy to ensure territorial vitality and directly addresses priorities identified by municipal leaders.



Andrée Laforest, Minister of Municipal Affairs, described the newly unveiled 2025–2029 Outaouais Action Plan as a coordinated government strategy to address regional priorities such as housing, education, economic diversification, and climate resilience, with the goal of strengthening the vitality and sustainability of the territory. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

“The territory has its own specificities, its own colors and riches,” said Lacombe. “It is therefore essential to showcase them and ensure that they have positive impacts for the entire population.”

At the heart of the plan are seven re-

gional priorities, including affordable housing, cultural development, improved access to education, sustainable local services, food security, economic diversification, and climate adaptation.

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Maple syrup season in full swing



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

In Chelsea, L'Orée du Bois restaurant continues to delight guests each Sunday through April with its sophisticated maple-inspired brunches. Full details are available at oreeduboisrestaurant.com.

Le Vieux-Aylmer se sucre le bec festival is returning to Old Aylmer from March 28 to 30. Rue Principale will transform into a vibrant celebration, filled with maple-themed festivities, local artisans, lively street performers, and the irresistible aroma of fresh maple treats. Last year's event attracted over 30,000 visitors, promising another exciting turnout this spring. Visit apica.ca for the complete event schedule.

Families eager to blend outdoor fun with traditional flavours can head to Domaine de L'Ange-Gardien near Gatineau. The venue offers classic sugar shack cuisine paired with exciting activities, such as tube sliding, running daily through March. Learn more at domaineangegardien.com.

Within Gatineau itself, maple creativity thrives at Le Rituel, which serves imaginative brunches and dinners featuring seasonal maple dishes until the end of March. Detailed menus are provided at restaurantlerituel.com. Additionally, Courges et Cie offers unique maple-inspired meals designed to enjoy at home, available until April 26. Visit courgescie.com to explore the menu and ordering options.

Val-des-Monts invites visitors to Sucrerie du Terroir, an authentic maple



Vieux-Aylmer se sucre le bec, from April 9, 2024. (TF)

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN ROCHEFORT

syrup experience complete with traditional ambiance and period costumes, open through May 4. Find details at sucrerieouterroir.com.

Blue Sea's Érablière Domaine du Cerf continues to welcome guests with maple-focused dining and family-friendly activities available until April 27. Additional information is available at tourismeoutaouais.com. Meanwhile, Papineauville's cherished Cabane à sucre Chez Ti-Mousse warmly hosts visitors seeking traditional maple meals, also available through April 27. Visit cheztimousse.com for further information.

Montebello provides unique opportunities to combine wildlife experiences with maple tasting at Parc Oméga, available through April 21. For details, visit parcomega.ca. Nearby, Fairmont Le Château Montebello Spa offers indulgent maple-themed spa treatments during maple syrup season, ensuring relaxation and luxury. Discover more at fairmont.com.



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Quebec launches Regional Action Plan to revitalize the Outaouais

Continued from page 1

Each is supported by measurable goals and concrete government commitments.

Housing remains one of the most pressing issues. Rising costs and low vacancy rates have made it increasingly difficult for residents to find affordable options. The plan calls for building new units, diversifying rental offerings, and exploring public land transfers to support social housing.

On the cultural front, the government will increase support for arts and heritage initiatives to offset the region's proximity to Ottawa and Montreal, which often draw away talent and resources. New funding and promotional efforts will target underserved areas outside Gatineau.

Educational inequality is also a key concern. While urban centers enjoy higher rates of post-secondary education, rural municipalities face elevated dropout rates. The plan aims to expand local training options, especially in sectors facing labor shortages.

Environmental and climate resilience are central to the strategy. Measures include reducing emissions through transit electrification, supporting biodiversity, and protecting natural areas. In tandem, the plan promotes food security through local farming initiatives and support for agro-environmental practices.

The rollout will be led by the Conférence administrative régionale de l'Outaouais (CAR), a first for the region. This interministerial body will coordinate efforts across sectors and ensure regional voices shape implementation.

Andrée Laforest, Minister of Municipal Affairs, called the plan "a real lever" for regional vitality. "The commitment and mobilization of all partners are essential," she said. "Promising projects will emerge in the coming years and will have positive impacts for all local communities."

Lacombe echoed that momentum: "Thanks to this action plan, we can continue to act concretely for today's and tomorrow's generations."

New initiative addresses link between suicide and domestic violence in Quebec



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

The organization À cœur d'homme – Réseau d'aide aux hommes pour une société sans violence will receive \$150,000 over two years to implement L'homicide-suicide : Agir pour mieux intervenir, a project aimed at training suicide prevention workers to better identify the risks of homicide-suicide in intimate partner and family contexts. By fostering collaboration be-

tween specialists in suicide prevention and domestic violence intervention, the initiative seeks to equip frontline professionals with the tools needed to recognize warning signs and intervene before tragedy occurs.

Sabrina Nadeau, Executive Director of À cœur d'homme, emphasized that the project aims to strengthen the ability of frontline workers—such as crisis intervention staff and first responders—to identify and respond to high-risk situations.

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Credible information during the election campaign

Dear reader: please keep in mind that Canadian news is blocked from Meta platforms such as Facebook and Instagram and their AI tools. Know that false information has always been part of election campaigns, but with Generative AI, deep fakes, foreign influence and chat bots, the

stakes are higher.

If you find fake information, report it. Take a screenshot and send to: mediasmarts.ca and electiontipline.ca

Please send in your questions to candidates: editor@westquebecpost.com

— Lily Ryan, publisher

CISSS de l'Outaouais eliminates 102 jobs amid budget crisis



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

The Outaouais healthcare system is bracing for another wave of cutbacks as the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de l'Outaouais moves forward with eliminating 102 positions, including 25 managerial roles. The decision, described by officials as a necessary response to budgetary pressures, has ignited a debate over the region's long-standing healthcare funding challenges.

Dr. Marc Bilodeau, Director General of CISSS de l'Outaouais, defended the move as an unfortunate but essential step to maintain financial stability while protecting core medical services. He stressed that the cuts would not affect frontline healthcare workers and that employees facing job loss would receive assistance, including career counseling, retraining programs, and opportunities for reassignment. "These are tough choices, but they are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of our healthcare services," Bilodeau said. He acknowledged the strain such measures would place on affected employees but maintained that they were unavoidable given the financial realities.

The announcement, however, has been met with fierce opposition from healthcare advocates who argue that the cuts are not simply a cost-saving measure but a symptom of deeper, systemic neglect. SOS Outaouais, a regional advocacy group, has criticized the government for what it sees as a pat-

tern of underfunding that has left hospitals overwhelmed and patients waiting for care. "This is not about financial management—it's about a government failing its responsibility," said Jean Pigeon, spokesperson for SOS Outaouais. "The Outaouais is underfunded by \$200 million annually, and instead of fixing this injustice, the government is imposing an additional \$90 million in cuts. Patients are paying the price."

Concerns over the impact of these reductions extend beyond advocacy groups. André Fortin, MNA for Pontiac and the Official Opposition Health Critic, has warned that the cuts will further strain a system already operating beyond its limits. Emergency rooms in the region are among the most overcrowded in the province, and surgical wait times continue to stretch well beyond medically recommended delays. "The government is taking resources away from a region that is already at a breaking point," Fortin said. "No matter what assurances they give, these cuts will hurt services, and patients will feel the consequences."

CISSS de l'Outaouais insists that the adjustments have been carefully planned to minimize disruption to healthcare services, but many remain unconvinced. Critics argue that while balancing the budget is important, it should not come at the expense of patient care. As the region's hospitals continue to face mounting pressure, calls for reinvestment in the healthcare system are only growing louder.

"The government's excuses are over," Pigeon said. "We will

New initiative addresses link between suicide and domestic violence in Quebec

Continued from page 2

"It's about sharing expertise," she said, explaining that suicide prevention professionals will receive specialized training from domestic violence experts to better recognize warning signs among at-risk men.

The initiative will offer online training, clinical coaching for crisis workers, and webinars to help health professionals detect homicide-suicide risk factors. Participants will also learn to conduct

gender-sensitive assessments and connect individuals with appropriate support services, fostering a more coordinated approach to intervention.

"This is about giving those on the ground the right tools to recognize distress and step in before it's too late," Nadeau said. "Regions like Outaouais will directly benefit, as their frontline workers will have access to this training. The more people we reach, the more tragedies we can prevent."

Chelsea Council Report Naming Highway 105



REUEL S. Amdur

Sir John A. Macdonald was instrumental in the establishment of Indian residential schools and in removal of the children from their families, to eliminate "savage" influences and "civilize" the children. He is also honored as a Father of Confederation. In 2013, the National Capital Commission renamed the Ottawa River Parkway in his honor, but in 2013 the name was changed again, this time to Kichi Zibi Mikan, Great River Road in the Algonquin language. Macdonald wanted to kill the Indian in the child, and so the residential schools punished children for speaking their aboriginal languages. Significantly, the change of name meant that the parkway's name is now in a language he wanted to kill.

On March 11, the regular monthly meeting of Chelsea Council took up the naming of the section of Highway 105 within its boundaries. Council had invited the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Band Council for their suggestion, and they put forward the same name as that of the parkway, Kichi

Zibi Mikan. Chelsea Council voted to include this name as one under consideration in a public consultation. Councillor Rita Jain voted against the motion, as she felt that the name should be adopted without going to public consultation.

Council repeated last year's awarding of funds for projects proposed to promote a greener Chelsea. This time, two projects were chosen. One, at the Hendrick Farm Community Garden, is to provide the mobility-challenged the opportunity to garden, giving them access to accessible raised gardens. The other project is a continuation of a study of light pollution, conducted by ACRE (Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment).

At the meeting, resident David Stockwell spoke about the Gatineau River. He commented that, while

public discussion of access was with reference to two access points, a planning document refers to four. He was also concerned about a study to which he was unable to gain access which addresses related safety concerns. He asked if any members of Council had read the report. None had.

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Chelsea council and Jean-Paul Murray: charges of insults at appeal court



REUEL S. Amdur

The appeal of a fine levied by Chelsea against Jean-Paul Murray, scheduled for March 19, has been postponed, for a later date. He is charged under Chelsea's "peace and good order" bylaw for his insulting language aimed at Chelsea's politicians and staff, with fines totalling \$2,545.

He has launched his tirades at Chelsea politicians and staff because, as secretary of the Gatineau Park Protection Committee, he is frustrated by what he sees to be a failure to act against people building without permits, around Meech Lake. It has been said that he

is the only member of the committee.

Murray has called people "nimrods" (jerks), "fartcatchers" (sycophants), and tinpot tyrants. He has characterized Chelsea's Director General as a practitioner of voodoo and witchcraft. The Director General Sheena Ngalle Miano is black.

Question is raised as to whether a municipality has the right to legislate in this area and circumstance and in fact is this speech protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms against attack by any level of government. Is this not free speech?

Free speech is not unfettered speech. There are limits to what is permitted. U.S. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes observed that one may not shout "Fire!" in a crowded theatre. There are also

laws on slander and libel.

It can be argued that those in the public eye, like politicians and government employees, deserve protection. Theirs are jobs in which there are constant pressures which can take a toll. Consider the case of Gatineau Mayor France Bélisle, who resigned because of the "hostile" political climate. She was not leaving just because of epithets hurled her way, but her leaving illustrates that words can have consequences. Does this justify the bylaw?

His characterization of Milano as a practitioner of voodoo and witchcraft reflects a racist stereotype. Whether or not it is found that he has a right to say what he said, was he wise to do so? How does his personal attack on Milano add

to his argument? He demonstrates that her testimony was not factual correct. Is that not good enough? In fact, does not his language about her distract from his message? An alternative message is suggested: Is this guy a racist? Should we not be defending her?

In general, his approach is to go for the jugular, to personalize, and to toss in irrelevant name-calling. This may be ego-syntonic, but it distracts from fact-finding, analysis, and dialog. That is aside from whether he has a right to insult, whether the municipality or any level of government has a right to legislate in this area and circumstance, and whether the fine is appropriate.

LETTERS

to the **Editor** *Opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the paper*

This paper is important - a story

Once there was a City of Aylmer and in that City there were Town Council meetings. At those meetings, you may have met a journalist.

If you spoke with them you would learned there are Community Associations in Aylmer. Today, the Aylmer Sector still has 14 Community Associations engaged in their communities around them.

Why reflect on that?

It's possible that without our local newspaper that offered a gateway or connection to all things possible, what is called "citizen agency" in Democracy - or information in having a voice, that number of Associations would still not likely be around us today.

Local printed news in return from community support to remain vibrant as a place to live, is important.

Recently, according to David MacDonald at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives,

"Broadly, the cities with the most news deprivation are the suburbs of larger centres. Gatineau, Quebec, saw decreases in service or outright closure of many of its local print outlets. One thing is certain: nature abhors a vacuum. If responsible local news coverage is lacking, social media will quickly fill the gap — often with misinformation."

You may not be able to afford the "big papers", but the knowledge and skill of our local journalists and editorial team should not be lost.

So instead of promising to destroy the CBC "to put more money in your pocket", defund journalism and prevent "all evil media" from being on your campaign plane, here's what we can do in this election cycle - simply offer up a small contribution/subscription to our *Aylmer Bulletin* or *West Quebec Post*.

Larry Prickett
Aylmer

Budget that ignores the crying needs of seniors

The Coalition pour la dignité des aînés (Coalition for the Dignity of Seniors) is astonished by the lack of measures in the Quebec 2025 budget to help seniors stay in their own homes. More than one in four Quebecers will be aged 65 or over by 2030, and barely 10% of home support needs are currently being met by the resources currently available in the network, which is a cause for serious concern.

The Coalition, which represents more than 150,000 seniors across Quebec, is stunned to note that the two main measures in the budget for seniors concern the conventionnement of private CHSLDs and the extension of the programme to install sprinklers in private residences for seniors (RPAs), a measure announced for the first time in the 2021-2022 budget.

We marked the fifth anniversary of the pandemic a few weeks ago. At the time, we collectively said: never again. Today, the needs of seniors are still glaring, both in terms of home care and services and in terms of coping with the skyrocketing cost of living. Installing sprinklers is the first step in ensuring the safety of seniors in RPAs, but we can't be fooled into thinking that this is a responsible response to structural needs that will only increase if nothing is done now.

While investments in the maintenance and construction of healthcare infrastructure, including seniors' homes, are welcome, the Coalition believes that a rebalancing must take place in the long-term care budget, in favour of home care and services. 'Continuing on the path of institutionalisation means

condemning ourselves to ever greater investment in concrete and more staff. The government talks a lot about innovation in its budget. This should also apply to the way we provide the services to which seniors are entitled if we want to guarantee their dignity.

Among the welcome measures in the budget, the Coalition notes the extension of vaccination to vulnerable clientele and the sums devoted to implementing the future national integrated health prevention strategy.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Only half of Quebecers (50%) believe they are able to age in dignity in their own homes with the resources currently available;
- 81% of Quebecers believe that access to home care and services is difficult, and the same proportion believe that the government is not doing enough to provide such services;
- A plurality of Quebecers (47%) feel that CLSCs should be the gateway to home care and services, ahead of the family doctor option (33%);
- If forced to age elsewhere than in their own home, less than 4% of Quebecers would choose a CHSLD or Maison des aînés ;
- 90% of Quebecers would prefer to be cared for at home rather than in hospital as a senior;
- Only 33% of Quebecers believe that the introduction of Santé Québec should improve care for the elderly.

Pierre Lynch
Coalition pour la dignité des aînés

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Present, Past and Future



Robbie Burns, the famed and beloved Scottish poet, wrote these sentiments in “To a Mouse” upon turning over its nest with a plough: “The best-laid plans o’ mice and men / Gang aft agley.” It is a line that we often quote today when our plans are disrupted.

“To a Mouse” concludes with this stanza:

Still thou art blest, compar’d wi’ me
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e’e
On prospects drear!
An’ forward tho’ I canna see,
I guess and fear!

Notice the words of Burns:
“the present only touches thee.
...backward cast my e’e
On prospects drear.
...forward tho’ I canna see,
I guess and fear!”

Robbie Burns wrote that poem in 1775. It was not until the late 1800s that psychology emerged as a separate discipline. Psychology is defined as “the study of behaviour and mental processes.” What does psychology say about living in the present? The past? The future?

Reflecting on the past provides us with insight into where we were relative to where we are now. Planning ahead gives us guidelines to follow to achieve goals. This, of course, is desirable. It keeps us grounded. It is normal and healthy to know our roots as well as to have some self-direction on where we are going.

Yet, unnecessary dwelling on the past or upon future-imagined events certainly can affect our mental health. For example, when things go awry, when the sky’s falling in, we might search for comfort by gazing backwards to the ‘good old days’ when our world was a much simpler place. That is defined as rumination. Rumination is like salt. A little flavours the food. Too much of it certainly isn’t healthy. Currently, a major topic of concern and discussion revolves around Donald Trump. Future fears and anticipatory anxiety revolve around that name. Certainly, there’s justification for our concern when the President of the world’s most powerful and richest country states that we would be better off as the 51st State

of the American Union. Should we succumb to anxiety and worry about what will happen? Or might it be a better course to trust our leaders and have faith in ourselves as a nation to confront pompous rhetoric and come together to bring about those changes that will lead us to a better future?

We are a nation strong and free. We can stand with pride to sing our anthem. Personally, I do not feel happy when we loudly boo the national anthem of the United States since it is not the people of that country whom we dislike. It is my view that our leaders, along with those who lead the American discourse, will right the ship and return us to sanity. The world will not end with Donald Trump, although he may first put us through the grinder.

Finally, I want to add these observations. Sometimes we hear people say that another’s views are irrelevant to the issue. Life itself is a journey through conflicting passages. There are choices between good and evil, optimism and pessimism, building and tearing down. I am pushing eighty-four. I have had good times and bad times like everyone else. When you reach an advanced age, you’re well aware of what lies ahead. It is not, however, the future concerns that keep you awake as much as what preceded. During eighty-three years, we all have to tug along loads of baggage with those things that lift us up. Gratefulness we have, yet regrets we have many. Here’s a little verse to summarize.

FACES

When our eyelids are curtains that close the day
As we reflect on the deeds we have done
Our mind’s eye often sees faraway places
We catch glimpses of faces that have gone on before.

There are faces of our parents and those of our siblings
Faces of our cousins, of our uncles and aunts
Faces of those who were playmates as children
Faces that we will not see anymore.

Then as night’s thief steals our awareness
Faces of loved ones once more appear
As our dreams take us back to the long-ago spaces
The boy that’s within us wears an old man’s disguise.

Then as we awaken as daylight shines on us
Life’s journey is etched on the lines of our faces
We see ourselves now in the years that have left us
In our reflection we know that mirrors can’t lie.



Congo: The Tail Still Wags the Dog

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

“Joseph Kabila boycotted the election and is preparing an insurrection because he is the AFC,” said President Félix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo last October, and lo! It is coming to pass just as he predicted. But you can’t tell the players without a programme, so a little bit of explanation first.

Well, a lot, really. Please be patient. It’s quite a tangled tale

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo or just DRC), so-called to distinguish it from a much smaller country on the other side of the river that also calls itself ‘Congo’, is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa and the second most populous (115 million people). The eastern part has been at war for the past 30 years, and it’s about to get worse.

The fighting has been almost continuous for two reasons. One is that the eastern part of the country is very rich in scarce minerals — gold, copper, cobalt, tin and above all coltan, which is essential for smartphones and other electronic devices. (DR Congo has 60% of the world’s coltan). The government is 1,600 km away, and most of the mineral wealth is stolen.

The other reason is that just across the DRC’s eastern border is Rwanda, where the Tutsi minority suffered a genocide in 1994. With the help of neighbouring Uganda, the Tutsis fought back and they now effectively rule Rwanda — but the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, also takes a keen interest in the eastern DRC. In fact, he sort of controls it.

There are also Tutsis in the eastern DRC, and Rwanda has created various militias from among them over the past three decades to keep the ‘génocidaires’ (perpetrators of the genocide who fled to the DRC) at bay. However, the same militias also ensure that the minerals dug out in the eastern DRC by tens of thousands of small-scale miners actually go to Rwanda.

It’s a highly profitable game, but it can only go on so long as the DRC’s government in Kinshasa is weak and the Congolese army is corrupt. That

hasn’t generally been a problem for Rwanda (or for Uganda, which also takes its share of the loot), but once in a while they need to change the president in Kinshasa.

The first time they did that was in 1997, when they found a washed-up Congolese ex-revolutionary called Laurent-Désiré Kabila running a bar and brothel in exile in Tanzania and made him the president of the DR Congo.

Rwanda’s Kagame and President Yoweri Museveni in Uganda needed a Congolese face for their fake revolution, and Kabila suited their purposes perfectly. After a bloody campaign he was duly installed as the new president in Kinshasa — but he subsequently fell out with Kagame and Museveni, and was assassinated in 2001.

Ten days later his son Joseph Kabila was made president at the age of 29 (by whom it was never clear), but he won elections of a sort in 2006 and 2011. Joseph ran an authoritarian and corrupt regime, but he was certainly more than a puppet. He was finally forced to step down in 2018 — whereupon his links with Kagame and Museveni began to revive.

The militia that is overrunning the mineral-rich parts of eastern DR Congo now, made up mostly of Congolese Tutsis and stiffened as usual with some thousands of Rwandan and Ugandan regular troops, is called M23. It completely controls two provinces and is advancing into a third.

M23 is part of a broader coalition called the Congo River Alliance (AFC) — and they all really work for Rwanda and Uganda, though many of them don’t know it. As Joseph Kabila’s close ally Ramazani Shadary said last month, “Our objective is to regain power democratically in the DRC.” Or undemocratically. Who cares?

A handful of people, some Congolese and some not, have determined the fate of more than a hundred million ordinary citizens of the DRC for thirty years. They could not have done worse if they tried — but it looks like they will go on trying. The tail is still wagging the dog.

Charles Milliard on leadership, economy, and the fight against misinformation



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Charles Milliard, a pharmacist and former President of the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ), has built his public life around a simple principle: leadership begins with listening.

Drawing on years of experience in healthcare, business, and community service, Milliard believes strongly in economic renewal through targeted support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). He advocates reducing the SME tax rate from 11.5% to 10%, introducing tax incentives for smooth business succession, and exempting employer contributions to the Health Services Fund for five years—measures aimed squarely at

stimulating local growth. “Our SMEs are the backbone of our prosperity,” Milliard said, emphasizing the need to dismantle interprovincial and international trade barriers so Quebec businesses can thrive in new markets.

On healthcare, Milliard proposes concrete solutions to address chronic underfunding, especially in underserved areas such as the Outaouais. He suggests legislation guaranteeing salary parity for healthcare workers with their Ontario counterparts, along with a \$200 million investment in regional healthcare infrastructure and workforce retention. “Quebecers work hard, pay high taxes, and deserve accessible, quality healthcare,” he insisted, emphasizing prevention, innovation, and efficiency rather than harmful cuts.

Milliard's education platform calls for significant reform, advocating the creation of a professional order for teachers to elevate the profession, standardize training, and ensure accountability. He believes modernizing the curriculum is essential to reducing dropout rates, particularly among young boys. “We must build a system that gives every child, in every region, an equal opportunity to succeed,” he stated.

Youth engagement is also central to Milliard's vision. Inspired by younger members of his community, he supports mandatory paid internships to help students manage the rising cost of living. He argues that young people deserve a meaningful seat at the political table, as their voices are critical for Quebec's future.

On the sensitive issue of language, Mil-

liard maintains a balanced approach. He is committed to strengthening French through enhanced francization programs while respecting minority communities. He emphasizes dialogue and unity over division, believing that linguistic diversity, approached respectfully, strengthens Quebec.

With growing concerns about misinformation and AI-generated deepfakes, Milliard underscores the importance of safeguarding Quebec's media. “Quebecers deserve objective, reliable information, and safeguarding the integrity of our news media is vital to our democracy,” he said.

Reflecting broadly on his public service, Milliard distilled his vision into a straightforward principle: “Political engagement should inspire pride rather than hostility.”



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AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33. -Thursday, April 10 at 6 pm: It's Show-Time Thursday featuring “Jason Coyle”. No cover charge. Special prices at the bar from 5 to 7 pm. -Saturday, April 12 at 7 pm: Live Band “Arc of Fire”. No cover charge. All are welcome. -Tuesday, April 15 at noon: Seniors & Friends Lunch followed by karaoke, dance, games & door prizes. We celebrate Easter! Tickets are available in advance at the Branch. \$25 pp taxes included. -Knitting Group “A humanitarian initiative” get-togethers on Mondays from 1 pm to 3 pm. -Members and non-members, all are welcome at the Aylmer Legion 59 Bancroft Street, Gatineau (Aylmer sector), Qc. For more information regarding our services,

events, or hall rentals, please email us at Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

BINGO AYDELU 94, rue du Patrimoine, Gatineau (secteur d'Aylmer). Tous les mercredis soir / Every Wednesday night 18 h 45 / 6:45 p.m. Ouverture des portes 16 h / Doors open at 4 p.m. 3 800 \$ en prix / in prizes. 18 ans et plus / 18 years and older. Places limitées / Limited places. Nouveau programme / New program. Service de cantine / Canteen service. 819 684-7888 ou/or 819 230-2240.

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LE GRAND ORCHESTRE GRANDE RIVIÈRE PRÉSENTE LA SYMPHONIE GASTRONOMIQUE DU PRINTEMPS. Souper-concert accompagné en musique par des classiques du

cinéma, suivi d'une soirée dansante. Le 26 avril 2025 à 18 h 30 à l'école secondaire Grande-Rivière 100, rue Broad, Gatineau (Aylmer). 100 \$/personne (pourboire et taxes inclus). <https://www.grandorchestregranderiviere.com/symphonie-du-printemps-2025/>

LE GRAND ORCHESTRE GRANDE RIVIÈRE PRESENTS THE GASTRONOMIC SYMPHONY OF SPRING. Dinner concert with musical accompaniment by film classics, followed by an evening of dancing. April 26, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at Grande-Rivière High School, 100 Broad St., Gatineau (Aylmer). 100/ person (tip and taxes included). <https://www.grandorchestregranderiviere.com/symphonie-du-printemps-2025/>

LUSKVILLE FARM HOP SPRING FAIR May 3 and 4, 2025, from 10 am to 3 pm. Chemin Crégheur area, Luskville, QC. www.luskville.farm-hop.com

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MAY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS be adored, loved, glorified, and persevered throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. Amen. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help for the hopeless, pray for us. St. Therese, little flower of Jesus, pray for us. Say this nine times a day for nine days. By the ninth day, your prayer will be answered. Publication must be promised. Thank you very much the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude for the favors received. D.C

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Riot and Security Issues at Hull Prison



Méliissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

During lunch break on March 20, more than a dozen prisoners at the Hull detention centre decided to demonstrate their delinquency by throwing and destroying objects in the lunch area.

An emergency team intervened to restore discipline and order. "There were no injuries, thanks to the officers' rapid response," said Mathieu Lavoie, president of the Quebec Union of Peace Officers in Correctional Services. "This was an area where behavior had been problematic for several days."

The increasing rate of violence in prisons is a reality that is becoming increasingly problematic and, unfortunately, few resources are available to alleviate the situation. "The Superior Court has taken away a lot of power from correctional officers," said Lavoie. "This prevents



Quebec Correctional Services Badge
(December 12, 2024) (MG)

PHOTO: CORRECTIONNELLEMENT FACEBOOK PAGE

us from managing a very violent prison population."

Furthermore, security on the premises is also sub-optimal. Several drones transport weapons, drugs, and cell phones to inmates. "This is the reality in prisons today," Lavoie explained. "We're calling for intervention tools and taking no action has the effect of encouraging and increasing the trafficking of illegal items and drugs. Although officers are responsible for screening prisoners using X-ray machines, drone activity has increased significantly in recent years.

Given the facility's dilapidated condition, inmates regularly manage to break their cell windows to retrieve their packages. "We've resorted to appealing to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail (CNESST) and the courts to secure the windows, since the government isn't taking action." According to Lavoie, this problem isn't just affecting Gatineau, but all detention facilities across Quebec.

In addition to this issue, the Hull prison is an outdated facility that needs major investment, particularly in the old section. "There are still barred doors that are no longer compliant," explained Mathieu. "Construction of these stopped over 40 years ago." Solid (closed) doors need to be installed. This prevents objects from being thrown and/or the lock from being tampered with.

On the other hand, according to information gathered from the Quebec Treasury Board Secretariat, the infrastructure will need to be redeveloped and expanded to meet the requirements and the current lack of prison capacity.

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