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# HARTLAND

## HAPPENINGS

2025 – vol 7

THANKS to Courtney Hallett (Waterville), Barb Derrah (Peel) and Julie Stockford (Howard Brook) for the photos featured above!

Sign up for the town's Notification System in our website's Latest Notices section at [www.townofhartland.ca](http://www.townofhartland.ca) or call 506-375-4357 to be added.

## A Legacy of Leadership, Service, and Kindness

The Town of Hartland and the firefighting community across New Brunswick continue to feel the profound loss of Mike Walton, who passed away on February 24, 2025. A man of action, generosity, and unwavering dedication, Mike's impact on his hometown and beyond will be felt for generations to come. Whether as a fire chief, town councillor, businessman, or friend, he devoted his life to making Hartland a better, safer place for everyone.

Mike's passion for firefighting began in 1975 when he joined the Hartland Fire Department. Just seven years later, he became Fire Chief, a role he held for more than four decades. Under his leadership, the department saw significant advancements in training and equipment, ensuring firefighters had the tools they needed to protect the community. After witnessing the devastating downtown fire in 1980, Mike vowed to improve the town's fire preparedness, spearheading efforts to modernize the department and secure critical resources.

His influence reached far beyond Hartland, as he played a key role in the New Brunswick Association of Fire Chiefs, serving in multiple leadership positions, including as President. He was instrumental in advocating for firefighter safety and benefits, helping secure presumptive cancer coverage for volunteer firefighters. His

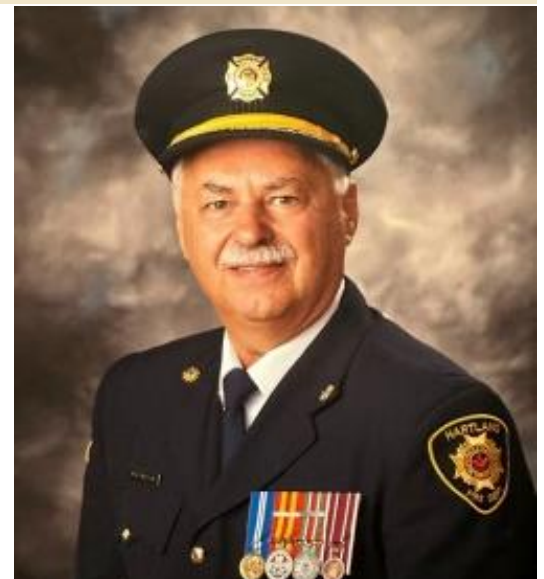
commitment to the well-being of his fellow firefighters took him all the way to Ottawa, where he met with government officials to ensure the needs of the fire service were heard at the national level.

In 2019, Mike extended his service to the people of Hartland by being elected to Town Council. He served on several committees, including Finance & Infrastructure, Protective Services, and the Police Review Committee.

While his professional accomplishments were remarkable, it was Mike's generosity and compassion that truly set him apart. He was known to open his home to those struggling to afford a meal and provided affordable housing for those in need.

In recognition of his service, Mike was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal, an honor given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to their communities. But for those who knew him, no medal or award could ever fully capture the depth of his impact. He was a mentor, a leader, and a friend to so many—always available for advice, a helping hand, or a well-timed joke.

As Hartland mourns the loss of this remarkable man, we also celebrate his legacy. His leadership in the fire service, his commitment to his community, and his



boundless generosity will never be forgotten. The fire department he built, the policies he shaped, and the lives he touched will stand as lasting tributes to the man he was.

Mike Walton leaves behind a community forever changed by his presence. Though he is no longer with us, his spirit lives on in the town he loved, the firefighters he mentored, and the countless people whose lives he made better. Hartland has lost a great leader, but we have all gained a legacy to uphold.

# Non-Profit Spotlight: Covered Bridge Events Committee

Since its evolution from the Hartland Potato Festival Committee in 2015, the Covered Bridge Events Committee has become a cornerstone of celebration and cultural enrichment in Hartland. With a mission focused not on profit but on creating accessible, engaging events, the committee has played a vital role in showcasing the unique charm and heritage of the region.

At the heart of their efforts is Big Bridge Fest, a multi-day celebration of the beloved Hartland Covered Bridge that has grown into one of the town's signature events. From hosting the province-wide New Brunswick Day festivities in 2015 to chairing Hartland's 100th Anniversary in 2018, the committee's creativity and dedication have brought life to events like the Battle of the Bands, Carleton County Idol, Gospel concerts, and markets that draw thousands. Each initiative is powered by a network of over 40 dedicated volunteers.

The Town of Hartland has been a valued

partner in the committee's continued success. In addition to providing volunteer and in-kind support, the town typically contributes between \$3,000 and \$5,000 annually to help offset costs for Big Bridge Fest, and in 2018 provided a one-time grant of \$20,000 to support the town's milestone centennial celebrations.

Today, the festival draws between 5,000 and 8,000 visitors, and continues to thrive, with over 200 vendors, inclusive family programming, and recent additions like Heartland Culture on the Green. Beyond events, the committee enhances the iconic Hartland Covered Bridge with seasonal décor, supports local artists and youth with scholarships, and collaborates on beautification and historic preservation projects.

The Town extends sincere thanks to the Covered Bridge Events Committee for their continued dedication, vision, and countless volunteer hours that help bring Hartland's community spirit to life year after year.



*Pictured left to right are Committee Co-Chairs: Doris Kennedy, Julie Culberson, Shirley Dickinson*

## A New Cultural Landmark in Hartland

The Day & Ross Community Centre in Hartland is now home to a breathtaking new art installation by Wolastoqey Indigenous multidisciplinary storyteller Samaqani Cocahq (Natalie Sappier), entitled *Psuhuni Wolastoq: Heart of the beautiful bountiful river*.

Hailing from Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation), Samaqani Cocahq brings a powerful visual narrative to life using acrylic on pine boards, blending tradition with contemporary storytelling.

The artwork is installed just inside the walking track, creating an immersive experience for visitors to enjoy as they move through the space. It transforms the environment into a place of cultural reflection, where every passerby has the opportunity to engage with the rich heritage of the Wolastoqey people.

Deeply inspired by her ancestral teachings, Samaqani Cocahq's work is rooted in Traditional Wabanaki motifs, landscapes,

language, and her personal experiences growing up on the rez.

Through her unique approach to painted storytelling, she bridges generations by honoring the past while expressing Indigenous culture in a vibrant and evolving way. Her art serves as a connection to her ancestors and community, sharing stories that resonate beyond words. By weaving elements of nature, history, and identity into her work, she fosters a deeper appreciation of Indigenous traditions and their continued presence in contemporary spaces.

The piece is a celebration of identity, history, and the natural world that shapes Wolastoqey culture. With each brushstroke, Samaqani Cocahq invites viewers to explore the spirit of the land and the voices of her people.

Art lovers and community members are encouraged to visit the Day & Ross Community Centre to experience this powerful new work firsthand. Whether walking the track or pausing

for a closer look, this vibrant piece provides a meaningful connection to Indigenous history, storytelling and artistic expression.

The installation not only enhances the space but also fosters dialogue about the importance of Indigenous art and culture in our shared communities. It is a reminder that art has the power to bring people together, inspire understanding, and honor traditions that continue to shape our collective identity.

For more information about Samaqani Cocahq and her artistic journey, visit [www.samaqanicocahq.com](http://www.samaqanicocahq.com).





# Ward 2's Newest Voice on Council



Hartland Council is pleased to welcome George Boone as the newly elected councillor for Ward 2, representing the communities of Hartland, Bubartown, and Coldstream. George brings a deep-rooted passion for his hometown and a renewed energy to tackle the opportunities ahead.

With past council experience and a forward-thinking approach, George is ready to get to work for the people he proudly calls neighbours.

Born and raised in Hartland, George has a strong connection to the area through his years of involvement in local schools, recreation, and business. His campaign emphasized putting the community first, planning for sustainable growth, and ensuring reliable infrastructure.

George's message struck a chord with voters seeking focused representation grounded in local values. His commitment to listening to residents and delivering results is a key part of his vision for a more vibrant and inclusive Hartland.

Throughout his campaign, George shared his passion for community-driven initiatives, including one especially close to his heart — the pavilion park project on Main Street. Initiated during his previous term, this project was seen as a central gathering place for families, markets, music, and more.

Financial stability, business and housing development, and enhanced recreational programming were also at the core of his platform. His focus on practical, community-oriented progress reflects his dedication to building a Hartland that is not only economically strong but also socially connected and future-ready.

As he begins this new chapter on council, George Boone is thankful for the trust placed in him by the community. "Let's move forward together, Hartland," he said following his win, "and create a bright future for our town."

## New Programs and Facilities Booking Portal

Hartland is excited to announce the launch of ActiveNet, our new online recreation portal! This user-friendly platform gives residents the ability to register for community programs, view upcoming events, and check facility availability — all from the comfort of home. ActiveNet brings a modern, convenient way to stay involved in the community while continuing to offer traditional registration methods.

Program registration and facility bookings will still be available in person at the Day & Ross Community Centre, as well as by phone or email. Residents can also make payments for programs and bookings in person at Town Hall. Whether you prefer to handle your registration online or face-to-face, we've got you covered with flexible options to meet your needs.

We encourage all residents to create an online account to take full advantage of the new customer portal. If you've registered with us before and provided your email, you'll receive a verification code to help you set up your account. This secure process ensures your past registration details transition smoothly into the new system, minimizing disruptions.

In addition to program registration, ActiveNet also provides an easy way to browse upcoming community events and facility availability. Whether you're planning a family gathering,

A screenshot of the Town of Hartland website. The top section features a banner image of a bridge over a river with the text "feet across the Saint John River. Built in 1901, it remains a cherished landmark and symbol of Hartland's history." and a "LEARN MORE" button. Below the banner is a navigation bar with icons for "Pay Water &amp; Sewer", "Permits &amp; Applications", "Bylaws &amp; Policies", and "Register &amp; Book". The "Register &amp; Book" icon is highlighted with a red circle and a "CLICK HERE" button. The URL "www.townofhartland.ca" is visible. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "Join the Fun!" with the text "Welcome to the Town of Hartland. We are proud to offer a wide range of activities and events for the whole family!" and a "Sign In/Up" button. At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Activities", "Reservations", and "Memberships".

[www.townofhartland.ca](http://www.townofhartland.ca)

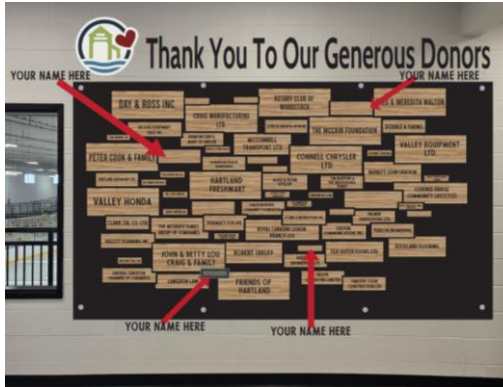
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# Facility Supporters Recognized

The Day & Ross Community Centre stands as a symbol of unity and pride in Hartland. With its doors open and serving the region in many ways, the facility has a new feature planned to recognize the generous individuals and organizations who helped make it a reality. The Recognition Wall in the lobby will honour those



who donated \$1,000 or more toward the construction of this important community hub.

This installation will be a lasting tribute to the donors whose support helped turn the vision of the Community Centre into a reality. Each name on the wall represents a commitment to growth, wellness, and togetherness. Through personal giving or corporate support, these contributions have been key in creating a space for recreation, events, and connection.

The Recognition Wall not only reflects past generosity, it also welcomes others to take part. There's still time to be included. With a donation of \$1,000 or more, individuals and businesses can add their names and become part of Hartland's story.

To contribute, contact Friends of Hartland at 506-645-7309 or [info@friendsofhartland.ca](mailto:info@friendsofhartland.ca) and learn how your donation can make a difference.



## ATVs and Off-Road Vehicles

In New Brunswick, dirt bikes and off-road vehicles must be registered and display a license plate or decal from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. Most require insurance for trail use, though dirt bikes and dune buggies may be exempt in some cases. These vehicles are not allowed on public roads, except to cross at a 90-degree angle after stopping completely. Helmets are mandatory for all riders and passengers.

Dirt bikes that aren't street-legal, registered, insured, and properly equipped cannot be operated on public roads. To report off-road vehicles on town streets, contact the RCMP non-emergency line at 1-888-506-RCMP (7267) or 506-325-3000. For trail issues, call the Off-Road Vehicle Enforcement team at 1-877-449-2244 or [OffRoadVehicle@gnb.ca](mailto:OffRoadVehicle@gnb.ca). Always call 911 in an emergency.

[www.gnb.ca/en/topic/driving-transportation/off-road-vehicles-boating/regulations-registration-insurance.html](http://www.gnb.ca/en/topic/driving-transportation/off-road-vehicles-boating/regulations-registration-insurance.html)

# Raising the Bar at the Covered Bridge

The Hartland Covered Bridge, known as the Longest Covered Bridge in the World, has long been a cherished symbol of our town's history and identity. In an effort to preserve this iconic structure for generations to come, the Province's Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (DTI) has recently installed height barriers at each end of the bridge. While the change has sparked mixed reactions, the purpose behind the installation is clear and vital: to protect the bridge from further damage and maintain its structural integrity.

Over the years, the bridge has seen its fair share of close calls and actual damage from oversized vehicles that exceed the bridge's weight and height limits. These incidents pose serious risks not only to the bridge itself but also to public safety. The new height barriers are a preventative measure designed to physically block vehicles that are too large, ensuring they no longer compromise the structure. This action reinforces DTI's commitment to maintaining the bridge and keeping it open for pedestrian and light vehicle traffic.

Understandably, the aesthetics of the height barriers have drawn concern from some members of the community. While the barriers are not visually appealing in their current form, they serve a critical function. Many residents recognize that preserving the structural health of the bridge must take precedence.

The Town of Hartland is fully supportive of DTI's efforts and is actively working alongside the department to address the visual impact of the barriers.

In partnership with Craig Manufacturing, discussions are underway to develop a more aesthetically pleasing design that complements the historical character of the bridge while maintaining its protective function. Our goal is to find a solution that balances beauty and safety.

It's important to remember that this bridge is more than just a convenient crossing for locals—it's a piece of living history, a source of local pride, and a major draw for tourism in our region.

Preserving it is in everyone's best interest.

By making these tough but necessary decisions now, the province is investing in the future of our community and helping to protect one of New Brunswick's beloved landmarks.

We thank residents and visitors alike for their understanding and patience as we continue to work toward solutions that serve both the practical needs and the visual legacy of the Hartland Covered Bridge.

With collaboration, creativity, and a shared love for this remarkable historic structure, we can ensure it remains a source of pride for many more years to come.

