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Better bus service on the way: mayor

Full Codiac Transpo service will take weeks to restore once labour dispute settled

BY BRENT MAZEROLLE
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Assuming the tentative agreement in the Codiac Transpo dispute is ratified when both the Amalgamated Transit Union and Moncton city council are expected to hold votes on the issue, long-discussed changes

will be coming to the system starting the day buses begin running again.

A tentative agreement to end two years of negotiations and five months of a lockout was announced Tuesday night, and though both sides have agreed to not discuss details of the agreement until it's ratified, but city officials were willing yesterday to talk about getting the service back up to speed in an estimated two to three weeks.

"We intend to start up with some changes for better efficiencies and go from there,"

Mayor George LeBlanc said yesterday.

City spokesman Paul Thomson elaborated on that, saying the four pillars of improved service they've laid out will be part of every decision, even before the full service is restored.

As the city starts reinstating routes — and Thomson warned it will not be the full bus system that people remember when it re-starts on day one — the system will offer more frequency, reduced travel times, little or no wait at transfer points, and the

flexibility to expand or contract routes to meet fluctuating customer demands.

"The full service will take time to restore, but these principles will be fundamental to the service as it goes forward."

For now at least, the fleet will continue to be regular sized transit buses, but two smaller ones are in the 2013 capital works budget.

It is both the nuts and bolts of getting a

➤ See CITY, A6

Mother pleads for son's return

RCMP widen search for Chris Metallic to wooded areas outside Sackville

BY ALAN COCHRANE
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

SACKVILLE — The mother of a missing 20-year-old Mount Allison University student remains optimistic for his safe return and is asking anyone with information about Chris Metallic to please contact the RCMP.



Christopher Mackenzie Metallic

"I don't know if he ran away because he's upset about dropping a class or something. Maybe he just wants to be left alone, but if that's the case, just let us know and we'll back off, we just need him to contact us. And if anyone has information or has seen him, please

contact the RCMP," Mandy Metallic said in an interview with the Times & Transcript yesterday afternoon.

"We need him to contact us," said his stepfather, Murray Isaac. "Chris, just let us know and we'll back off and let you be."

Mandy Metallic and Isaac travelled to Sackville from their home in Listugui, a First Nations community in Quebec, just across the border from Campbellton, when they heard that Chris Metallic was reported missing early Sunday

➤ See SEARCH, A2

Help for Superstorm Sandy's victims



GREG AGNEW/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Florence Goddard takes a last look yesterday at a fully loaded 55-foot trailer carrying relief supplies for victims of Superstorm Sandy, which ravaged the New York City area in late October. The truck was filled with goods donated by Metro Moncton residents as part of a campaign spearheaded in the past few weeks by Goddard, of Salisbury. Keltic Transportation provided the truck and the driver, who left Moncton yesterday for New York.

Mapleton Centre still growing

Wicker Emporium celebrates opening on Saturday; second wave of businesses expected in spring

BY ERIC LEWIS
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Wicker Emporium is the latest business to open at Mapleton Centre, Moncton's newest shopping hub located off Mapleton Road near Costco.

The business, located at 78 Wyse St., is open now and will celebrate that fact on Saturday with special discounts, product giveaways and refreshments.

Meanwhile, Patrick Gillespie of Mapleton Centre's developer Ashford Properties said there is still plenty to come in the area already active with several businesses.

"Everyone who is open is doing extremely well," he

➤ See RETAILERS, A7



GREG AGNEW/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Wicker Emporium celebrates its grand opening in the new Mapleton Centre on Saturday.

Are NBers overcharged for insurance?

Despite reports, those in the industry say premiums are among the lowest in Canada and will continue to fall

BY COLE HOBSON
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Despite a recent report suggesting New Brunswickers are being overcharged for auto insurance and calls for investigation from government opposition, those

involved in regulating and monitoring the industry in the province say premiums are some of the lowest in the country since the introduction of reforms and they are expected to continue to drop.

"Insurance is about long-term trends that affect insurance premiums and when you look at the long-term and not just one or two years here or there to draw conclusions, you see that over the last decade auto insurance premiums in New Brunswick have come down

36 per cent (from \$1,239 in 2003 to \$790 today) and are now amongst the lowest average premiums in the country," said Bill Adams, Atlantic vice president for the Insurance Bureau of Canada. "Now has the insurance industry made money in the last few years? Absolutely. But again you go back a few years before that and they were losing money (and leaving the province)."

Adams was referring to a recent

➤ See INDUSTRY, A10

Crown closes case in murder trial

Court hears Sabrina Patterson's blood was on Frederick Prosser's pants and in his truck

BY CRAIG BABSTOCK
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

The Crown prosecutors closed their case in the Fred Prosser murder trial yesterday, after testimony about DNA evidence linking the accused and victim.

Crown prosecutor Marc Savoie called Joy Kearsey to testify yesterday morning in Moncton's Court of Queen's Bench, about DNA testing done on evidence collected by police during the investigation. Kearsey is a reporting scientist with the RCMP's forensic lab in Halifax. While the actual testing of the evidence was done at labs in Edmonton, Vancouver or Ottawa, Kearsey is the one who took the results, analyzed and interpreted them.

Savoie asked the witness to go through her reports and discuss the findings, which she did for the jury. Some objects and swabs that were tested didn't turn up any DNA while other pieces of evidence had DNA, but not enough for any conclusive results.

But there were several pieces of evidence where testing revealed interesting DNA results.

Kearsey testified that a swab was taken of Sabrina Patterson's neck which turned up her DNA and the DNA of an unknown male. When she later received a sample of Prosser's DNA — taken from drops of blood seized by Mounties at the Moncton Detention Centre — she determined Prosser was that unknown male who left DNA on the victim's neck.

Pathologist Dr. Kalman Protzner testified on Tuesday that Patterson's cause of death was manual strangulation and he noted possible nail marks on her neck.

Kearsey also said she tested swabs taken from various places in the back of Prosser's truck. While a swab of the tailgate area couldn't

➤ See CROWN, A9

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Retailers opening at Centre

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said, adding that the businesses' expectations have been exceeded.

Open are Golf Town, Cleves Source for Sports, Ocean Trail Source for Adventure, Carter's/OshKosh, Bombay and Wicker Emporium. Opening in December is Bed, Bath & Beyond and Pet Smart, and opening in spring is Tag, a clothing retailer for men, women and children.

Gillespie said a second group of retailers will move in early next year, but each of them asked that he not reveal who they are.

"There won't be a whole lot (of space) left once the second group comes through in spring," he said.

One space remains ready for a 38,000 square foot (3,530 square metre) store, and while Gillespie said Ashford is talking to a few companies about taking that spot, nothing is confirmed.

While work on the Ashford site began a few years back, it quickly stalled when the North American economy went into a recession in 2008. Stores planning to move to Moncton backed out of the project, such as Linens N' Things which filed for bankruptcy but later reemerged as an online retailer.

Eventually, as the economy began to recover, work on the Ashford property resumed.

"Now, (the economy) is doing better, but it's a lot more cautious," Gillespie said.

"Unfortunately for Moncton, while it's a very good market, it's a small market, so we have to wait a

bit (for retailers to come this way)."

Nevertheless, Gillespie said his company is "very happy" with their development and the number of patrons pouring in and out each day.

The new Wicker Emporium — the company's third Metro Moncton store — will serve as a template for future locations, the company explained in a statement released this week. It will feature better lighting, easier maneuverability and designated sections for different categories of products.

"Our customers seek high quality, solid wood products at fair prices, especially in today's economy," said Raj Kapahi, the company's chief operating officer. "We're able to provide these products through sourcing directly from the manufacturers in Asia."

The family-owned and operated business was started 40 years ago in neighbouring Nova Scotia. From the roots of its original location in Halifax, the still family-run company has grown to 26 locations, stretching as far west as Ontario.

Wicker Emporium's most recent openings include Bedford and a second shop on Prince Edward Island.

The company's other local stores are on Mountain Road in Moncton and Paul Street in Dieppe.

Speculation that major electronics retailer Best Buy Canada might be interested in the Moncton market — specifically the Mapleton area — remains unconfirmed. The company did not return a request for comment this week.



Several retailers have opened at Mapleton Centre and there are still more to come.

Police believe crimes are linked

A break and enter and a home invasion that took place on the same street in Belledune this spring may have been committed by the same people. As part of its investigation, District 9 RCMP in Belledune is releasing a photo of a baseball cap that was left behind at one of the incidents in an effort to identify the individuals involved.

Early on June 1, police responded to a break and enter on Curry Drive in Belledune. The suspects left in a hurry, leaving behind a black baseball cap. On June 10, at approximately 9:15 p.m., the RCMP was again called to Curry Street, this time to a home next door to the first incident. Two men broke into the home of an

elderly couple. They tied the couple up and demanded money. The man and woman suffered minor injuries but did not require hospitalization. RCMP believe that the same two men broke into both homes. They are described as being approximately five feet eight inches to five feet ten inches in height. One was tall and skinny while the other man was shorter with a heavier build.

Both were dressed in black and wearing masks. One spoke English, while the other spoke French. Anyone with information about these incidents, can identify the owner of the ball cap, or saw two men matching this description on the evening of June 10 in Belledune is



This black baseball cap, reading 'Saint-Andre RC Nitro,' was left at the scene of a break and enter.

asked to contact District 9 RCMP in Belledune at 506-237-3030 or remain anonymous and contact Crime Stoppers at crimenb.ca or call 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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