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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Province supports Acadian celebrations***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Tourism and Culture**

The 350th anniversary of the Village of Pubnico and the 400th anniversary of French settlement in North America are just two of the many events taking place throughout Nova Scotia as part of the Acadian celebrations 2003–2005. The Nova Scotia government will dedicate \$1,000,000 to promote these celebrations and to help generate economic opportunities for our Acadian communities and all of Nova Scotia.

A high-profile campaign around the Acadian celebrations will see increased media presence in the province's key tourism markets of Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Quebec, and New England. The campaign will involve television, print, direct-mail, e-marketing, and other media.

The objective is to ensure that Nova Scotia is positioned as the premiere destination for Acadian celebrations in the Maritime region.

The Department of Tourism and Culture continues to work with Acadian organizations and communities to prepare, promote, and support the celebrations. Total funding of \$1,000,000 will be in addition to activities already under way. Those activities include the following:

- the addition of Le Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (the Historical Acadian Village of Nova Scotia) in West Pubnico as the newest member of the Nova Scotia Museum family
- hiring an Acadian Liaison Officer as a representative of Tourism and Culture to work with Acadian communities and organizations
- feature articles under the theme "The Tapestry of Acadie" in the 2003 edition of the *Doer's and Dreamer's Travel Guide*
- participation on the Acadie 2003–2005 Committee
- participation on the Joint Committee on Acadian Tourism under the Tourism Partnership Council.

Nova Scotians are proud of our rich Acadian heritage. The government is providing a clear indication of its commitment to support the Acadian celebrations. While this support will help attract visitors, it will also help promote the rich history of our Acadian culture.

Contact:

Tom Peck

Department of Tourism and Culture

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Better access to cardiac care***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Health**

Nova Scotians will soon have faster access to important cardiac tests and surgeries.

In 2003–2004, \$5 million will be invested in the Capital Health cardiac program at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre (QEII) in Halifax. The funding will be used to hire more staff and purchase equipment for diagnostic tests and surgeries for cardiac patients from all across Nova Scotia.

Currently, most-urgent cardiac patients get surgery within three days, well within the seven-day national standard. However, patients who can go home to wait for surgery, with restrictions on their physical activities, are waiting longer than the nationally recommended time frames.

Don Ford, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Capital District Health Authority, said, "This investment will significantly reduce wait times and have lasting benefits for patients and their families."

More patients needing cardiac tests from other hospitals across the province will be transferred by Nova Scotia's air ambulance. This year, approximately \$400,000 is being invested to get 150 to 200 to patients to the QEII more quickly. The trip by air is easier on patients and helps them to return to their local hospitals and their families more quickly.

These investments are the first steps in the province's strategy to reduce wait lists for tests and treatment in priority areas. The wait list strategy is outlined in *Your Health Matters*, the government's health plan.

Contact:

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2003



2004

# Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing

## Budget Bulletin

### Capital spending for Nova Scotia priorities

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### Department of Finance

Nova Scotia continues to invest in its priority capital\* projects. The 2003–2004 capital budget of \$250 million is an increase of \$31 million, or 14.2 per cent, over the previous year.

Once again, investments in roads, bridges, ferries, land, and equipment are higher than the previous year, with a budget of \$106.2 million, an increase of \$16-million over 2002–2003. This includes an additional \$11-million to complete a three-year, \$31-million commitment to increase funding for road improvements.

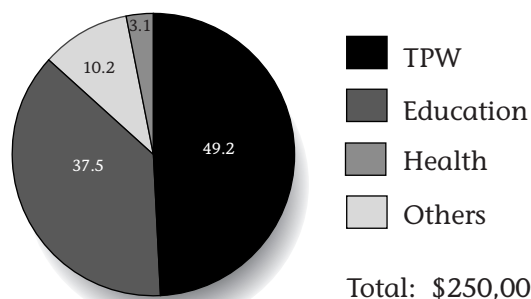
The Department of Transportation and Public Works will also spend \$10 million to make capital improvements to provincially owned buildings across the province.

Capital spending in the Department of Education is also increasing to a total of \$93.9 million, an increase of \$3 million, or 3.3 per cent, over the previous year. This includes \$62 million for 8 new schools, \$18.5 million for additions and alterations to existing elementary and high schools, \$9 million for expansion of the Nova Scotia Community College, and \$4.6 million for school buses.

The province's 2003–2004 capital budget also includes \$10.8 million for the Department of Justice (Yarmouth Correctional Centre and Port Hawkesbury Courthouse), \$7.7 million for the Department of Health (ambulances and hospital information system)<sup>1</sup>, and \$5.5 million for the Department of Tourism and Culture (capital improvements to three resorts).

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health has a separate capital account of \$30 million.

#### Capital Spending Requirements (per cent)



#### \*Note:

*Capital* spending is for investments in long-term assets such as roads, buildings, property, plants, or equipment.

*Operational* spending is for annual government expenses such as programs, salaries, and administration.

Contact:

Linda Laffin

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**2003****2004**

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Child care and early learning***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Community Services**

Children across Nova Scotia and their families are benefitting from significant improvements in early childhood services since the launch of the Early Childhood Development Initiative in 2000.

As part of this five-year federal/provincial initiative, the province will invest more than \$3.7 million this year to strengthen the foundation for early childhood development in Nova Scotia. This has led to new and expanded services that help our children grow up healthy, happy, and secure.

The province's plan to improve child care started with a major investment in the staff who deliver these vital services. So far, close to \$7 million has been provided to recruit and retain qualified staff in centres across the province. A further \$1 million in grants will help early childhood training institutions create new professional development opportunities.

Three hundred and twenty-five new full-day spaces and 74 part-day spaces have been created through new child-care start-up and expansion grants. Low- and moderate-income families have benefitted from 200 new subsidized portable childcare spaces, which parents can "take with them" if they move to another area of the province. There are now more than 2,650 subsidized seats in communities across Nova Scotia. This summer, the province will announce that more subsidized spaces will be made available.

Parents are also being supported in finding quality child care in their communities. A total of \$450,000 has been provided to create child-care resource and referral centres that give parents new resources to access local caregivers and information to help them find quality child care. An additional \$750,000 has been directed to programs and training initiatives that enhance opportunities for children with special needs to access licensed child care. We are also investing \$500,000 to help children who have language challenges, through the introduction of an early language and learning program in Nova Scotia communities.

In March 2003, Nova Scotia and the federal government agreed to a five-year funding framework that will provide new funding for provincially regulated child-care programs and services. The new framework also gives us flexibility to make sure we address local needs and priorities.

Contact:

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Department of Community Services

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Community supports for adults***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Community Services**

The province has demonstrated its commitment to improving supports for Nova Scotians with intellectual disabilities and long-term mental illness by increasing the Community Supports for Adults budget by \$12.8 million for 2003–2004. This new funding will help stabilize the system while a review process is under way.

Community Supports for Adults provides a wide range of services, including homes for special care, small option homes, supervised apartments, adult residential centres, regional rehabilitation centres, and adult service centres. In November 2002, the province launched a comprehensive review of this program, recognizing the need improve the way services are provided for people with intellectual disabilities and long-term mental illnesses. The goal of the review is to establish a standard level of quality, accessible, and flexible services across the province.

The province has already taken steps to improve services by introducing training standards for staff who provide care for clients. Several larger institutions have also been closed in favour of smaller community-based homes, meaning that clients can be closer to family and friends.

Through the review project, Community Services is working with clients, service providers, and other departments to create a program that meets the unique needs of our clients. The review is looking at all aspects of the current program, including access to services, assessment, licensing, information technology, funding, and legislation.

A community committee with advocacy, service provider, and client representation has been established to give input into the review. Staff have also met with interested organizations and have made several presentations about the project. Focus groups with clients, service providers, and advocacy groups are also planned.

All Nova Scotians are being asked to give their thoughts about these services and supports through the departmental Web site, <[www.gov.ns.ca/coms](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms)>, and written submissions. Community feedback and information gathered through the review will result in a discussion paper that will be distributed widely for input later in 2003.

Contact:

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**2003****2004**

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Debt Management***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Finance**

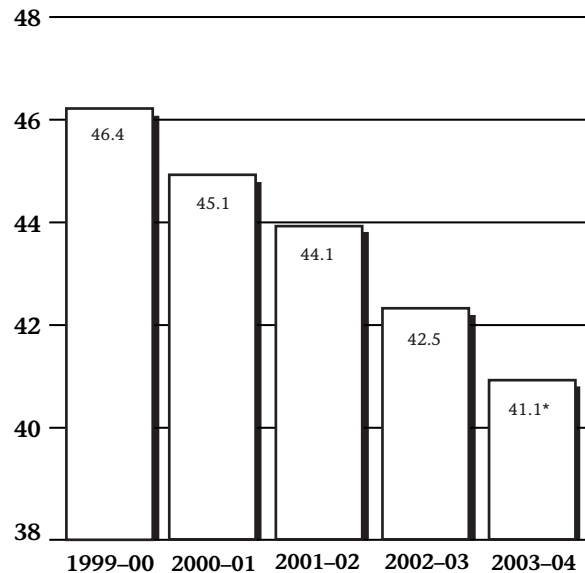
Nova Scotia continues to make progress when it comes to managing our long-term debt. Two successive balanced budgets have put us on the right path. The release of *A Balanced Approach to Surplus and Debt Management* by the Department of Finance highlights our commitment to manage our debt appropriately, according to all generally accepted accounting principles.

In the past three years, as a result of carefully controlled spending and a growing economy, one of the most important economic indicators, which shows our net direct debt as a percentage of the province's overall economic activity, has improved. What this means is that the burden of debt carried by taxpayers is less onerous. We have a greater ability to repay our debt.

The ratio of net direct debt (NDD) to gross domestic product (GDP) has dropped from more than 46 per cent in 1999–2000, to an estimated 41.1 per cent for the fiscal year 2003–2004. It is progress. And it shows that the province's strategy of managing the debt is working.

#### ***Net Direct Debt to Gross Domestic Product Ratio 1999–00 to 2003–04***

(per cent)



\* estimate

While the ratio of net direct debt to overall economic activity continues to decline, the actual debt will increase in 2003–2004, to \$11.8 billion, because we continue to borrow to build new schools, and improve highways. These are assets that will provide real benefits to Nova Scotians for years to come.

The cost of servicing the province's debt will increase to \$893 million in 2003–2004, from \$883 million last year.

Contact:

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### *More money for doctors, nurses, and patient care*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Health**

Funding to support doctors, nurses, health staff, and patient care will increase by \$119 million in 2003–2004.

Of this amount, \$42.9 million will support hospital programs, staff salary increases, and new staff to reduce wait times for tests and treatment. The \$42.9 million breakdown includes

- more than \$19 million as the first instalment in government's three-year funding plan for hospital care
- more than \$13 million for salary increases for health professionals in the district health authorities
- \$10 million to shorten wait lists in the provincial cardiac program; staff to operate new dialysis equipment, a bone densitometer, and MRI machines; and staff at the new hospital in Amherst

Also within the \$119 million, \$29.3 million will fund contract increases for doctors, additional doctors now working in Nova Scotia, and an increase in physician services.

Approximately \$2 million will be provided in 2003–2004 for training more nurses and doctors and for bursaries for paramedics and medical laboratory technologists.

Capital funding will be available to support hospital renovations valued at \$30 million in 2003–2004. The project list is now being finalized.

Contact:

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Drought relief and fisheries enforcement***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**

The Nova Scotia government will continue to address important issues facing farmers and fishermen.

Last year the province contributed matching funding to a \$600-million national program that addressed the serious drought conditions from 1997 to 2001. Funds were used to help producers invest in business risk management programs. Nova Scotia provided \$2.5 million. This worked out to an average total payment of \$5,150 to each of the 1,204 Nova Scotian participants in the National Income Stabilization Account.

Important work is also going on to help manage water use on farms. Activities include watershed clubs, manure guidelines, environmental farm plans, and continued co-operation with agencies such as the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and Clean Nova Scotia and other government departments.

In the fishing industry, the province plays a key role when it comes to reducing illegal fishing activities.

The number of fisheries inspectors and investigators has been increased to seven, covering Yarmouth, Baddeck, Pictou, Halifax, and Digby. In addition, agreements have been signed with federal departments that allow their staff to perform similar duties, which increases the presence of enforcement officers on the ground and at the wharf.

The province will continue to work closely with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and industry organizations to fight illegal trade in fish and fish products. We are committed to protecting the legitimate livelihood of the many Nova Scotians who make their living from the sea.

Contact:

Natalie Webster

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### *Employment support— helping Nova Scotians return to work*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Community Services**

Nova Scotians are achieving their goals and returning to work through enhanced Employment Support services offered by the Department of Community Services. In 2003–2004 the department will continue its investments in this area. Significant progress has been made. In the last four years, the number of people on income assistance has steadily declined, from 42,000 to 33,000.

This year, 3,500 income assistance recipients will successfully make the transition to work through programs that encourage and empower them as they move toward employability and increased self-sufficiency. Each year more than 10,000 clients participate in employment supports such as career development services, training programs, and job opportunities.

Employment Support staff work with each client to create an employment action plan that helps him or her move to self-sufficiency, while encouraging clients to participate in lifelong learning. Services include the following:

- **Personal Development**

- life skills, self-esteem workshops, and budgeting

- **Job Preparation and Employment Supports**

- job development, resumé preparation, workshops, employment referrals, and on-the-job placements

- **Entrepreneurship Program**

- a unique pilot project created with three Community Business Development Corporations that provides clients with opportunities to create their own business, helping them become more self-sufficient while contributing to their local economies

- **Skills Development**

- skill-specific training, placements, and short-term courses such as WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System), first aid, computer programs, and the Educate to Work Program through the Nova Scotia Community College

- **Career Development**

- career counselling, vocational assessments, and employment action and learning plans

- **Office and Technology Supports**

- Internet access, telephone service, photocopy and mail service, clerical services, and computer access

- **Literacy/Academic Upgrading Programs**

- Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, community-based upgrading programs, workplace literacy services, and tutoring services

- **Financial and Other Supports**

- financial supports that clients need to carry out their employment action plans, including basic needs such as housing
- child-care assistance that is more flexible than ever for parents receiving income assistance

- transportation allowances to help clients get to education, training, and employment
- coverage of prescription drugs for one year after the recipient leaves the system for employment

### **Community development activity**

Healthy and sustainable communities have healthy people who live, work, and participate in community life. Specific programs have been developed to ensure that recipients of income assistance benefit from community development. These include a partnership with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council to help income assistance recipients develop and run successful co-operatives; partnerships with the 13 regional development authorities, which coordinate community economic development in their areas; and the Halifax Inner City Initiative, which is supporting the development of an inner-city neighbourhood in collaboration with residents, organizations, and community agencies.

Other employment supports include

- Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (EAPD)
- work activity programs
- assessment services
- career counselling
- Job Search Centres
- Summer Youth Initiatives
- referrals to a large network of community-based service providers

By offering a wide range of employment supports, the government is helping Nova Scotians find new ways to reduce barriers to work, improve their education and employment skills, and reach their personal goals in their home communities.

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Cathy MacIsaac

Department of Community Services

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**2003****2004**

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Energy—putting strategy into action***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Energy**

Nova Scotians are excited about energy and its contribution to our future economic prosperity.

Last year, the government fulfilled one of its energy strategy commitments by creating a new Department of Energy and appointing a full-time deputy minister. The new department, a merger of the former Petroleum Directorate and the energy utilization division of the Department of Natural Resources, is beginning its first full year of operation.

#### **Encouraging exploration**

We know that the key to the development of this industry is to encourage exploration—it's a simple fact that exploration leads to more discoveries, development and production. We have the potential for as much as 40 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and we have \$1.56 billion in work commitments. To maintain that interest and build our momentum in offshore exploration and development, our number one priority must be to improve the regulatory process.

The Department of Energy will continue to play a lead role in the working groups established in November 2002 as part of the Atlantic Energy Roundtable on Regulatory Efficiency and Industrial Benefits. In co-operation with the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, the National Energy Board, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Natural Resources Canada, we will continue to consult with petroleum producers and support industries in order to set priorities in this area. In addition, we will continue to improve our own laws through offshore occupational health and safety legislation and a new Energy Act in 2003–2004.

#### **Economic opportunities**

The offshore oil and gas sector continues to be an internationally competitive industry. The Department of Energy will present technical papers on Nova Scotia's oil and gas potential at conferences and prospect exchanges and lead provincial delegations to major offshore trade shows in Aberdeen, Houston, and Calgary to promote the province as an oil and gas investment opportunity. This effort supports the top priority of the energy strategy—to encourage further oil and gas exploration.

The technology required to explore and develop oil and gas resources in deep water is significantly different than that employed in the shallower water of the Scotian Shelf. The Department of Energy will assess the opportunities presented by this technology in the areas of research, development, fabrication, construction and employment.

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## **Training and development**

Nova Scotians must be ready to take advantage of employment opportunities from offshore activity. To ensure that Nova Scotians have the tools they need to participate in the opportunities in the oil and gas industry, the Department of Energy will undertake initiatives to study relevant labour market information, provide energy-sector information to secondary schools, and leverage private-sector energy co-op or summer work terms for post-secondary students. We will work closely with industry and post-secondary institutions to help ensure that students receive the skills and training necessary for employment, and we will hold a private/public-sector energy skills forum to identify solutions to major labour issues projected for the sector in the next 5 to 10 years.

## **Gas distribution**

Now that the Utility and Review Board (UARB) has issued a gas distribution franchise to Heritage Gas and a conditional approval to Strait Area Gas, natural gas will soon be a reality for Nova Scotians living in franchise areas. Heritage Gas will be required to obtain subsequent approvals for the installation of pipe, operation of their distribution system, and their tolls and tariffs. The Department of Energy will be active in UARB proceedings to help ensure the early development of a distribution system, in a manner that meets the goals of the Energy Strategy.

## **Responding to climate change**

The province will continue to be active as part of the national process to determine burden sharing and provincial obligations following ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. It is important to maintain competitiveness for Nova Scotia's industry and to recognize the actions that have already been taken to reduce emissions. In the meantime, the Department of Energy will continue to implement its Climate Change Strategy in order to meet national obligations.

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Reducing foreign-held debt***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Finance**

The Department of Finance has achieved a significant goal in reducing the province's foreign currency exposure to 20 per cent—18 months ahead of schedule. This means that the province's finances are less vulnerable to sudden or dramatic changes in foreign currency markets.

The province has carried significant foreign currency exposure in its debt portfolio. It borrowed significant amounts in American, Japanese, and Swiss currencies in the 1980s and early 1990s. By March 31, 1995, the province's foreign exchange exposure stood at 72 per cent.

The Nova Scotia Provincial Finance Act requires that the province reduce its foreign currency exposure to less than 20 per cent and that all maturities of greater than one year are refinanced in net Canadian dollars. The government went a step further by announcing in the 1999 budget that all foreign currency debt coming due for a term exceeding one year will be refinanced in Canadian dollars or on a fully hedged basis. ("Hedging" is a financial transaction used as a protective measure. It can reduce the risk of price fluctuations of a security.)

The Department of Finance originally estimated that it would meet the 20 per cent foreign currency exposure target no later than mid-2004, but that goal was actually reached by March 31, 2003.

Our remaining foreign currency debt is in US dollars.

Contact:

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Department of Finance

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### *Supporting health and wellness*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Office of Health Promotion**

The priority of the Office of Health promotion in the first year will be to work with its many community and government partners to develop a vision, mission, and plan. This will further support government's investments in health promotion, such as three-year commitments of \$2.4 million to Active Kids, Healthy Kids and \$425,000 for the Sport Futures Leadership Program to help children and youth become more physically active.

While the initial focus of the office is to develop a plan and focus ongoing efforts, the budget contains \$600,000 more for new or enhanced health promotion programs, which includes \$250,000 more for the tobacco strategy. That brings the total annual budget for the tobacco strategy to \$1.75 million. The strategy, which includes smoke-free places legislation, tobacco tax increases, public education, support for people trying to quit, and youth programs, is making a difference. We've seen dramatic decreases in both the overall and teen smoking rates.

Over the next year, the Office of Health Promotion will work with a variety of stakeholders to develop a chronic disease prevention strategy for Nova Scotia.

Recent health studies show that Nova Scotia has some of the highest rates of chronic illness, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, in the country, costing taxpayers \$3 billion annually in medical costs and lost productivity. Even more important than the financial cost is the impact on the quality of life of many Nova Scotians.

While these statistics give us a snapshot of our current health, others give us a glimpse into the future. We know, for example, that most young people today are not physically active enough to benefit their health, and that many may be headed for a lifetime of health-related problems.

The good news is that much of this is preventable and Nova Scotia is taking proactive steps to help Nova Scotians live longer, healthier, more productive lives. Last December, the Premier created the Office of Health Promotion to bring a cabinet-level voice to the long-term health and well-being of Nova Scotians.

With a base budget of \$14.9 million, the new office brings together the related activities and programs of the Sport and Recreation Commission and the Department of Health, including tobacco control, active healthy lifestyles, and addiction prevention, and includes funding and grants to support regional and community-based programs.

The Office of Health Promotion will play a key role in helping Nova Scotians achieve our collective vision for a healthier, more prosperous province.

Contact:

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Office of Health Promotion  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Adequate, affordable housing***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Community Services**

The province is committed to improving the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Nova Scotians by providing affordable housing to low-income families, seniors, and individuals with mental or physical challenges. Through the housing division of the Department of Community Services, the province offers a wide range of housing programs and services for about 20,000 Nova Scotian families each year. These include rental housing accommodation and supplements, grants or loans for home repairs and renovations, and mortgages to purchase or build modest homes.

In addition to maintaining expenditures for existing housing and repair programs, in 2003–2004 the province will work with all levels of government and communities to help people find affordable housing in Nova Scotia. Programs include:

- The Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program agreement—signed last fall between the province and the federal government—is a \$38-million joint initiative that will provide funding for the construction or renovation of up to 1,500 affordable housing units for low- to moderate-income Nova Scotians over the next five years.

- The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program provides forgivable loans to low-income Nova Scotians who require much-needed repairs to their homes to ensure the safety and adequacy of their housing. This program assists approximately 1,000 families each year and has been renewed for an additional three years as a result of continued funding from both the provincial and federal governments.
- The province plays an active role in the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative, which addresses the issue of homelessness in Canada's major cities. Since it began three years ago, the program has achieved some important results in the province's capital, including the formation of a steering committee, the development of a Community Action Plan on Homelessness, and the completion of more than 30 projects to improve and expand existing community infrastructure. The province will continue to provide a significant level of funding for this initiative, to complement renewed federal funding.

Contact:

Vicki Fraser

Department of Community Services

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Investing in our students***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Education**

*\$5.1 million for student debt reduction*

*\$6 million more for universities*

A post-secondary education is becoming increasingly important for Nova Scotians' success in the job market and our province's success in the global economy. It's also becoming increasingly expensive.

In response, government has given universities an extra \$6 million in the 2002–2003 fiscal year. The increase will be included in the base funding for universities in 2004–2005. It will help maintain quality programs for students and keep tuition increases to a minimum.

A new \$5.1-million student debt-reduction program will help post-secondary students manage their debt. The program is designed to be flexible for the many ways in which students complete their post-secondary education. It aims to help the greatest number of students possible with the resources we have.

While half of our students have their own means of financing their post-secondary education, there are 18,000 students each year who receive Canada Student Loans.

About 9,800 of these students also receive Nova Scotia Student Loans. These are the students who are in greatest need of financial assistance. They are also the students who have higher debt loads upon graduation.

The amount of debt reduction each student receives through the new program will depend on many variables, including program length, successful completion of courses, the number of years the student had loans, and the number of years he or she took to complete the degree or diploma.

All students who receive Nova Scotia Student Loans in the academic year beginning August 1, 2003, study in Canada, and successfully complete full-time course loads will be eligible for debt reduction. They will apply for assistance through the new program after they have graduated. The money will be paid directly to the bank and applied to the student's debt.

Students can get loans for each year of their programs, plus one extra year. For example, a student can get a maximum of five years of loans for a four-year university degree.

The amount of debt reduction will change for each year of loan. For example, if a university student has loans and studies for four years, she will receive 15 per cent of debt reduction for the first year, 25 per cent for the second, 35 per cent for the third, and 45 per cent for the fourth. If she studies for another year and has a loan, she will get 15 per cent for that fifth year.

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The loan years need not be consecutive, but they must be within a certain time period for students to get the full benefit of the program. For example, debt reduction will be given for loans only within the seven-year period immediately preceding graduation from a four-year university degree.

Incentives have been built into the program to encourage graduates to work in Nova Scotia and repay their loans in a timely fashion. Students who work in Nova Scotia for 50 weeks within three years of graduation will be eligible for a bonus of 25 per cent of their debt reduction. Students who make 12 loan payments within three years of graduation will get an extra 10 per cent.

Community college and private career college students will also be eligible for assistance, following similar criteria based on different program lengths. More information is available at <http://studentloans.ednet.ns.ca>.

Contact:

Adele Poirier  
Department of Education  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### *Learning for life— planning for student success*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Education**

The Department of Education will continue to implement its Learning for Life plan in 2003–2004. Learning for Life was first introduced in September 2002 to help students succeed in school and to reach their full potential.

This year, the focus will be on reducing class sizes, providing more support for students with special needs, supporting quality teaching, and increasing student testing and reporting to parents. Reading, writing, and mathematics will continue to be a priority.

#### **The early years**

We will invest \$2.5 million to reduce class sizes in 2003–2004. Smaller class sizes will allow teachers to spend more time with more students. There will be no more than 25 students in grades primary and 1 as of September 2004. By 2005, we will expand this initiative to children in grade 2.

#### **Basics first—reading, writing, and mathematics**

The Time to Learn Strategy will continue to ensure that children spend more class time learning the basics. There are new time requirements for mathematics and language arts for grades primary to 6. New minimum time requirements for mathematics and language arts in grades 7 and 8 will be implemented in September 2004. In grades 10 to 12, new course options will see more time (220 hours) devoted to learning mathematics.

The Active Young Readers/*Jeunes lecteurs actifs* program will continue next year to give teachers the resources and support they need to help students improve their reading. The Active Readers initiative will expand to include grade 8. The Writers in Action initiative will expand to grade 5. Spelling will be a key focus in 2003–2004.

The department will continue to support school boards and schools in implementing the Mathematics Strategy. This strategy includes giving teachers trained to be school-based math leaders more time to help others teach the new math curriculum. Implementation of the Atlantic Canada Science Curriculum will continue in grades primary to 2. Resources will be provided to help teachers connect science learning to literacy, mathematics, and other program areas.

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### **Success for all students**

An investment of \$1 million will be made this year to support at least one pilot project in each school board for special needs students. The pilots will help identify the most effective ways to increase individual attention and support for children with special needs. Parents and teachers will be consulted as part of the overall initiative.

An investment of \$50,000 in professional development and resources will help students with technology in the classroom. More than \$800,000 will be used to hire more resource teachers, speech language pathologists, and other professionals to help students with special needs. Additional staff will be hired to help grade 1 students improve their reading and writing through Reading Recovery.

An increase of \$300,000 will go to hire 10 student support workers. The support workers will be a link between home and school for African Nova Scotian students. The department will spend \$150,000 for school boards to hire race relation coordinators.

All Acadian communities are now offering French education from primary to grade 12. This year the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial will be consulted on ways to improve French education in Nova Scotia.

### **Informed, involved parents**

There will be an increase of \$300,000 for student testing/assessment and evaluation. The increase will help to support grade 12 math and grade 6 literacy assessments. A Minister's Report to Parents will be released in 2004 to show how our students are progressing. Individual student results will be available for the first time starting with grade 6 literacy. The results will be used to identify students who need more support.

Work will continue on the production of a new Standard Report Card to Parents to ensure that parents have a solid understanding of their children's achievements. There will be consultations with pilot schools, parents, and other partners to evaluate the new report cards and the reporting system.

### **Safe schools, healthy students**

About \$62 million is being invested to build 8 new schools. Details will be announced at a later date.

Contact:

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Department of Education

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2003



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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Improving legal aid and restorative justice***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Justice**

Nova Scotians who need, but can't afford, a lawyer will benefit from an additional \$3 million in provincial funding for Nova Scotia Legal Aid.

The additional funding will be used to cover higher salary and operating costs and to hire solicitors and support staff required to meet increased demand. The increased demand for services has presented many challenges, largely due to federal funding cutbacks. Since 1996, federal contributions to legal aid have decreased by \$48,500. During that same time period, the Province of Nova Scotia has increased its contribution by \$3.8 million for criminal legal aid. Another \$1.4 million was provided during that time period for civil matters.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid delivers most of its services from a network of community-based law offices. Offices are staffed and managed by employees of Nova Scotia Legal Aid. In certain situations, the services of private lawyers are acquired on a fee-for-service basis.

#### **Restorative justice: Holding offenders accountable, repairing the harm done**

The Nova Scotia Restorative Justice program began in 1999 in four areas of the province and now operates province-wide. Since its inception, the program has responded to more than 4,100 referrals from police, Crown attorneys, courts, and correctional services.

To ensure that community-based agencies can respond effectively to any increased demands as a result of the new federal Youth Criminal Justice Act, an additional \$1,000,000 will be provided by the province.

Restorative justice is delivered to youth through a partnership between the Department of Justice and a network of eight community justice agencies.

Contact:

Michele McKinnon  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Nova Scotia Power payment to municipalities increased***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

Payments by Nova Scotia Power (NSP) to municipalities will increase by \$4.6 million in 2003–2004 to a total of \$31 million annually. Of the increased payments, \$1.8 million will be paid to municipalities that are home to major NSP properties and \$2.8 million will be used to fund municipal equalization.

The province wanted to ensure that municipalities did not lose any revenue through the equalization program, an important source of revenue for many municipalities. By using part of the NSP increase to offset the provincial reduction, the province is ensuring that municipalities receive no less through equalization in 2003–2004 than they did in the previous year.

Of the \$1.8 million to be paid to municipalities with major NSP properties, Cape Breton Regional Municipality will receive \$704,000, Queens \$455,000, Trenton \$267,000, and Annapolis Royal \$200,000. The remainder will be split among Annapolis (county), Antigonish (town), Canso, Digby (county), Kentville, Mahone Bay, and Yarmouth (county).

The increased payments will be in effect as of January 2004 and will not impact the company's 2003 bottom line, which ends December 31.

Municipalities will pay more for their share of educating Nova Scotia students but will continue to pay among the lowest municipal share of education costs in Canada.

The rate used to calculate the municipal contribution has not increased from the previous year.

Contact:

Municipal equalization: David MacNeil, 424-6336

Education funding: Sue McKeage, 424-8286

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**2003****2004**

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Pension Plan Accounting***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Finance**

The international downturn in financial markets affected the Public Service Superannuation Plan (PSSP) and the Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP) in 2002. While the market downturn had an effect on public and private investments, the province's plans are secure and well managed. The PSSP is regarded as one of the best-funded public service plans in Canada.

There are two methods for valuing pension plan assets—the fair market value and the smoothed market value. Both are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as prescribed by the Public Sector Accounting Board. The government has adopted the smoothed market value method. The smoothing method allows for gains or losses to be taken into the asset value over five years in equal amounts. This is a responsible approach and alleviates the effects of wide market fluctuations that may never be realized in the long term. Smoothing provides more stability in the budget process for pension-related expenses.

While the market downturn will have a short-term impact on pension plans, the accounting for these events recognizes the long-term nature of pension plans.

Total pension-related costs have increased debt-servicing charges by \$81 million for 2003–2004.

In keeping with the province's accrual accounting policies, the Pension Valuation Adjustment (PVA) credit for 2003–2004 is budgeted to be a credit of \$13.6 million.

The province's pension plans have significant assets to meet their cash-flow obligations: PSSP has \$2.6 billion in assets with an annual pension payout of \$152 million; TPP has assets of \$3.2 billion with an annual pension payout of \$214 million.

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2003



2004

# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

## **Budget Bulletin**

### ***Frequently Asked Questions About the Taxpayer Refund Program***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

**Department of Finance**

#### **Do I have to apply for this payment?**

No. If you filed your income tax return for the year 2001, 2002, met the residency requirement and you paid \$1 or more in provincial income tax in any of those years, you will automatically receive the one-time payment of \$155. If you don't meet these requirements but file and pay provincial income taxes in 2003, you will receive your refund in 2004.

#### **Who is eligible to receive the payment?**

In general, any Nova Scotia resident who filed their personal tax return in a qualifying year, was assessed by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, paid provincial tax that year, and had a valid Nova Scotia home address at the time of processing. Businesses are not eligible.

#### **When will the cheques be mailed?**

If you are eligible for 2001 or filed and had a 2002 return assessed by May 1, 2003, your cheque will be mailed in mid to late June 2003. Other 2002 returns will be processed later in 2003 or early in 2004. 2003 refunds will be processed in 2004.

#### **What if I haven't filed a tax return for 2001 or 2002?**

2001 returns must have been assessed by December 31, 2002. You have until December 31, 2003 to file and have your 2002 tax return assessed to be eligible for a payment during 2003. You have until December 31, 2004 to file and have your 2003 tax return assessed to be eligible for payment in 2004.

#### **If I paid tax in all three years, does it mean I get three cheques?**

No, this is a one-time payment only. We expect the vast majority of Nova Scotia taxpayers to be covered by the 2001 return.

#### **I've moved to a new address since then. What do I do?**

Call toll-free 1-866-413-8183 (in metro, 424-2502) for more information.

#### **Do I have to declare the payment as income or a taxable benefit the next time I do my taxes?**

No, you will not pay tax on this payment.

#### **If I'm on income assistance, will my regular payment be clawed back?**

No.

#### **Are there any people who might not be eligible, even if they paid tax in 2001 or 2002 or will in 2003?**

There may be people who did not have a valid Nova Scotia home address as of a specific effective date, residents of other provinces or territories who paid Nova Scotia income tax, or non-Canadians who paid tax while commuting here to work.

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**Where can I get more detailed information?**

You can call toll-free at 1-866-413-8183 or 424-2502 in metro Halifax. You can also find information on the Nova Scotia government web site at [www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)

Contact:

Linda Laffin

Department of Finance

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**NOVA SCOTIA**

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Investing in our roads, bridges, and ferries***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Transportation and Public Works**

For the fourth consecutive year, the province is increasing its capital investment in roads, bridges, and ferries across Nova Scotia, with \$106.2 million, an increase of \$16 million over the previous year.

The province will continue to dedicate all funds raised by last year's two-cent-per-litre tax increase to capital road construction. We estimate that this will generate approximately \$25 million this year to reinvest in safer, better roads throughout Nova Scotia.

Transportation is one of the keys to economic prosperity and community development in Nova Scotia. A strong transportation network sets the stage for the safe movement of people and goods. It also supports regional, national, and international trade.

Benefits from this year's capital program will be seen across the province. For example: a new bridge in Margaree Harbour, a repaving project on Highway 103 in Shelburne County, and the strengthening of Trunk 7 along the Eastern Shore. With an eye to the future, the province will continue to purchase land required for new highway improvements.

Steel-truss bridges will also receive more attention with a dedicated \$4 million in capital funds for 2003–2004. The province will soon announce details of a steel-truss bridge renewal program to repair or replace many of our older bridges. One of the ferries in the provincial fleet—the Joshua Slocum—will be replaced.

There is also money for maintenance, especially on local roads. The Road Improvement Money program (former Rural Impact Mitigation program) will invest \$10 million in rural roads across the province. This will mean improved road shoulders and ditches, as well as asphalt patching and gravel upgrading.

Contact:

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Transportation and Public Works

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### *Safe, healthy drinking water*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Environment and Labour**

The province is taking further steps to help protect our drinking water. Through the provincial Drinking Water Strategy, \$800,000 will be spent in 2003–2004 to manage the resource.

The government is working with municipalities to complete reports that will identify any areas where systems need improvement. Through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the province is making an estimated \$500,000 available to help the municipalities that qualify to complete these reports.

Since October 2000, the province has made many investments in drinking water. This year \$700,000 will fund 14 staff who have expertise in water issues, including four hydrogeologists and four inspectors.

The department will spend an additional \$100,000 this year to develop public outreach information for municipal and registered public water systems. Activities will include the creation of a handbook for municipal operators, public education materials for homeowners who drink well water, and training for water supply operators and staff.

Contact:

Valerie Bellefontaine

Department of Environment and Labour  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***Safety and security for Nova Scotians***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Environment and Labour**

Each one of us has seen the world change dramatically since September 11, 2001. Here in Nova Scotia, we are fortunate to have trained professionals who respond to critical events involving hazardous materials or other dangers. We have an obligation to support emergency responders as they work to protect our families and our critical infrastructure.

The Office of the Fire Marshal is investing \$190,000 to train and equip first responders who deal with hazardous materials.

Another \$71,000 has been committed by the Emergency Measures Organization to hire a critical infrastructure coordinator.

In September 2003, the government will have a plan in place to implement national standards training for emergency response teams. This will include firefighters from stations across the province.

One of the most important benefits of these initiatives is security in knowing that trained professionals are able to act as quickly and efficiently as possible in the event of a hazardous materials emergency. It is important that crisis response teams and all levels of government are on the same page and agree on the protocols for responding to critical events.

This training complements a recent federal investment of \$566,000 for specialized equipment worn by first responders so they can be as safe as possible when dealing with hazardous materials.

Contact:

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Bulletin**

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### ***\$33 million more to enhance seniors' programs***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Health**

In 2003–2004, an additional \$33.1 million will be invested to protect the quality of nursing home and home care, expand access to home care, and make nursing homes and drugs more affordable for seniors.

The long-term care budget will increase by \$18.1 million to a total of \$222.5 million in 2003–2004. Of that amount, \$8.5 million is being invested to continue government's efforts to reduce the costs of nursing homes for seniors; and \$9.6 million is being invested to meet increasing costs and protect the quality of care for seniors.

The budget contains \$9.7 million to meet government's commitment to freeze the premium and co-pay within the senior's Pharmacare program. As well, the co-pay will be capped at a maximum of \$30 per prescription. This means that seniors will continue to pay 33 per cent of individual prescription costs, but to a maximum of \$30 per prescription. For example, seniors now pay \$49.50 for a prescription that costs \$150. Starting on April 1, they will only pay \$30.

The home care budget is increasing by \$5.3 million to a total of \$126.6 million in 2003–2004. This includes a \$2.4-million increase for services provided by VON and home support services. As well, \$1.1 million is being invested to address the existing wait list for home care services.

*Your Health Matters*, released in March, identified these priority areas. Consultation will soon get under way on the full range of services that should be available to seniors to help them maintain their independence and stay close to home.

#### **Contact:**

Donna MacDonald  
Department of Health  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Making it easier to do business with government***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

The Nova Scotia government is making it easier for businesses to do business with government.

In 2003–2004, Nova Scotia will take a giant step towards modernizing the province's land registration system. A new, electronic-based land registration system is now operating in Colchester County and will be rolled out across the province over the next two years. This new system will replace the 250-year-old, paper-based Registry of Deeds. It will reduce red tape and improve efficiency by eliminating the costly and time-consuming need to do a historic title search each time a property is sold or mortgaged.

Staff at Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations are working with municipal governments to expand the variety of electronic services offered by local governments in Nova Scotia. The department and municipalities want to increase the quality and quantity of e-services by focusing on best practices and cost efficiencies. Internet customers want quick and easy access to government information and clearly organized Web sites. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is working with municipalities and other public-sector organizations to improve the organization of Web site information and other services.

The Nova Scotia Business Registry now offers 37 licences, permits, and registrations that can be obtained or renewed from government departments and the Workers' Compensation Board. This service enables businesses to go on line to register a business, complete licence applications and renewals, make payments, and obtain clearance letters from the Workers' Compensation Board.

Government plans other e-service improvements for business throughout 2003–2004:

- Checking for a vehicle lien through the Personal Property Registry will become more convenient with an on-line access service.
- A new Web site designed for business clients will improve access to electronic services for the business community.
- Nova Scotians will be able to save time by using the Internet to submit a single change of address notice that will then be distributed to several government departments or agencies.
- Businesses owing Registry of Motor Vehicles fines will be able to pay their fines on line.

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David MacNeil

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

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## **Budget Background**

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### ***Skills and learning for prosperous futures***

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Education**

A seven-year, \$123-million expansion to the Nova Scotia Community College system will make room for an additional 2,500 students across the province.

The expansion includes a new metro Halifax campus and major renovations and upgrades to 13 other campuses, with major projects in Port Hawkesbury, Kentville, Stellarton, and Truro. Design work will begin in 2003–2004. This long-term investment, with \$9 million budgeted this year, will allow more students to access programs and courses closer to their home communities.

The government is also investing \$1.5 million to advance the province's skills agenda. The additional funding will help more Nova Scotians to upgrade their education and training and be successful in a skills-based economy.

As part of the \$1.5 million, \$700,000 will be invested in the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning, which means more Nova Scotians will be able to improve their reading, writing, and other essential skills and earn their high school diplomas. This investment will mean shorter waiting lists and more options for students, such as evening or weekend courses and distance education.

We're also making extensive changes to the apprenticeship training system so we can help create more jobs for skilled tradespeople and increase business opportunities for Nova Scotians. Public consultation told us that training costs should be shared among government, employers, and apprentices. Revenue generated from apprenticeship fees will be put back into the system to expand training opportunities and deliver higher levels of service.

Other investments within the \$1.5-million funding include \$350,000 for the Skills Strategic Initiative Fund and \$100,000 for labour market programs to address the skills and learning needs of the workforce. It's another way to help Nova Scotia remain competitive in world markets. Workplace education programs are proven to increase the morale, efficiency, and productivity of employees. They also show the world that Nova Scotia businesses are strong competitors in local, national, and international markets.

For more information on Skills Nova Scotia, please visit our Web site at <[www.skillsnovascotia.ednet.ns.ca](http://www.skillsnovascotia.ednet.ns.ca)> or call 1-902-424-7764.

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2003



2004

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# ***Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing***

## **Budget Bulletin**

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### *Tax measures*

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### **Department of Finance**

##### **Higher threshold for small business tax rate**

Small businesses in Nova Scotia will have more room to earn taxable income before moving to a higher tax rate.

Effective the 2003 taxation year, the limit under which the small business tax rate (5 per cent) applies will be increased to \$225,000. The limit will be increased for each of the next three years and by 2006 will be \$300,000.

This measure could save a qualifying small business as much as \$2,750 in 2003 and once fully implemented could save that business as much as \$11,000. The small business rate currently applies to the first \$200,000 of taxable income of an active business. When taxable income exceeds \$200,000, the tax rate rises to 16 per cent. Extending the threshold to \$225,000 brings the province in line with the federal limit. This measure applies to Canadian-controlled private corporations in the same manner as the federal small business deduction.

##### **Three-year extension for Equity Tax Credit and Community Economic Development Investment Fund program**

The Equity Tax Credit will be extended three years to December 31, 2006, and the individual investment limit will be increased to \$50,000, up from the current limit of \$30,000 annually. The credit encourages Nova Scotians to invest in small and medium-sized corporations and co-operatives by offering a 30 per cent non-refundable provincial tax credit on qualified investments. In addition to meeting eligibility criteria, businesses must also comply with the Securities Act.

A Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) is granted an exemption under the Securities Act, which enables the community-focused fund to solicit the public to purchase shares and raise more capital. These shares also automatically qualify for Registered Retirement Savings Plans and increase the allowable foreign-content holdings limit within an RRSP.

Since 1994, the two programs have helped more than 300 diversified businesses throughout the province raise in excess of \$54 million from more than 5,000 investors. These businesses create meaningful jobs and generate new tax revenues that help provide better schools, improved roads, and important health-care services to Nova Scotians.

In addition to the three-year extension to December 31, 2006 and the increase in the annual limit, other administrative changes include

- relief from mandatory annual report filing for private companies
- discretionary relief on the four-year hold period for investors
- refundable penalties for Community Economic Development Investment Funds that do not meet investment of proceeds requirements
- making the Community Economic Development Investment Fund 20 per cent conditional on the fund's meeting the requirements of the act.

#### **One-year extension to Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Corporation tax credit**

The Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Corporation (LSVCC) tax credit will be extended one year to December 31, 2004. The credit is a combined provincial and federal non-refundable 30 per cent tax credit on investments in the funds. The funds in turn must invest a percentage of the proceeds in Nova Scotia businesses.

There are currently seven Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations offering funds in Nova Scotia. Among the changes:

- Limits have been placed on the funds' investments in public companies.
- Credits on investment rollovers have been eliminated.
- Investment requirements now flow through to businesses invested in by the LSVCC.

During this one-year extension, the province will continue to look for new ways to help small and medium-sized businesses find the money they need to grow and expand.

#### **Large Corporations Tax Extended**

The Large Corporations Capital Tax will be extended another two years to March 31, 2006. This tax applies to about 1,040 of the largest of Nova Scotia's 24,000 corporations. The tax is levied on taxable paid-up capital in excess of \$5 million, with a special phase-in for companies between \$5 million and \$10 million.

#### **Tax Credit for Caregivers**

Effective this year, the maximum amount of tax relief available to Nova Scotians who provide care for sick or injured family members has been increased from \$223 to \$408, an increase of 75 per cent.

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2003



2004

# Nova Scotia: Let's Keep Growing

## Budget Bulletin

### Tax relief for Nova Scotians

Halifax: April 3, 2003

#### Department of Finance

*Lower personal income taxes for a stronger economy*

Nova Scotian taxpayers will save an estimated \$147 million in 2004 because of lower personal tax rates announced in the 2003-2004 budget and will save an estimated \$68 million from a one-time tax rebate of \$155 in 2003 that will be mailed out beginning this June. The refund will ensure that tax reductions make it to the hands of individual Nova Scotians as soon as possible. The lower tax rates also mean more than 3,500 Nova Scotians will no longer pay provincial income taxes.

Tax relief is an important part of the government's plan to make Nova Scotia a more attractive place to live and work.

Effective January 1, the tax rates for all three brackets will be reduced, with the largest percentage rate reduction coming in the lowest bracket. That rate will be reduced from its current 9.77% of taxable income to 8.79%. The middle bracket will be lowered from 14.95% to 13.58% and the highest bracket will be reduced from 16.67% to 15.17%. Collectively, these tax reductions amount to a 10% reduction in total provincial personal income tax revenues.

Taxable Income	Current Rate	New Rate	% Decrease
\$0 to \$29,590	9.77%	8.79%	10.0
\$29,591 to \$59,180	14.95%	13.58%	9.2
Over \$59,180	16.67%	15.17%	9.0

The reductions<sup>1</sup> mean that a family of 4 with a single wage earner making \$40,000 will save an estimated \$276 over what they will pay in 2003. A single individual making \$20,000 will save about \$113 over 2003 while a family of 4 earning \$60,000 will save about \$551 over 2003.

These new rates will once again give Nova Scotia the lowest statutory rates in Atlantic Canada and improve our competitive position within the rest of the country.

The one-time rebate of \$155 per taxpayer will be delivered to residents of Nova Scotia who paid Nova Scotia tax in 2001, 2002 or will pay income tax in 2003. Payments will be administered by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency with the first payments expected to be mailed beginning in June.

<sup>1</sup>These estimates are based on sole wage earners who claim only the Basic Personal Amount, CPP and EI non-refundable credits and Spousal Amount where there is a non-working spouse or equivalent-to-spouse.

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