

Article enclosed in the Coast Guard, December 22, 2009

SWSDA ready to hold consultation meetings

By: Eric Bourque

The South West Shore Development Authority is getting ready to hold its annual series of public consultation meetings.

Three sessions are planned – one in Clare, one in Yarmouth and one in Shelburne.

The Clare meeting is first, scheduled for Thursday, Jan 7, followed by sessions in Yarmouth and Shelburne, both of these on Saturday, Jan. 9.

The meetings are designed to hear what people have to say about what they feel is important.

Participants in the sessions get a chance to talk about issues they think should be addressed and projects that should be pursued.

The development authority uses the consultation process to help map out its plan for the next year.

Dave Warner of SWSDA says the sessions are a good way of learning what people see as priorities.

Participants are broken up into groups, where they get to share ideas.

“There’s always good discussion,” Warner said. “When they’re sitting at the tables, they love to really make their points and they’re selling seven or eight other people on what their ideas are, so it’s important for them to have those good discussions. That’s really the meat of it.”

The first meeting in the 2010 round of consultation sessions is set for Thursday evening, Jan. 7, at the Clare Social Club.

This session is scheduled for 6:30 to 9 p.m. and will be conducted mostly in French.

Two days later – on Saturday, Jan. 9 – the scene shifts to Yarmouth and Shelburne, respectively, for morning and afternoon sessions.

The Yarmouth meeting is to be held at the Burrige Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College from 9 a.m. to noon.

The day’s second session will take place at the NSCC’s Shelburne Campus from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Asked about the turnout for last year’s sessions, Warner says the one in Clare drew around 30 people, the Shelburne one about 50 and the Yarmouth meeting around 80.

As for the the process of having session participants break up into small groups, Warner says they try to “have a good mix of people to allow them to have a great conversation (with input) from various parts of the community. That’s the key to it.”