

**2000 Newspaper Clippings**

## Pole fire closes street

### CORNER BROOK

The RNC and the Corner Brook Fire Department responded to a pole fire on Broadway 8:30 a.m. Monday.

A section of the thoroughfare was closed for a brief period of time so

firefighters could contain the small flare-up near Penney Photography. A Newfoundland Power truck was on the scene before 9 a.m. to repair the minor damage.

No harm was reported to any nearby buildings.

*The Western Star - Jan 18/00*

# Burn victim takes utility to court

By BONNIE BELEC  
The Telegram

ST. JOHN'S - After three years of operations to repair the damage 66,000 volts of electricity caused to his young body, Randy Meeder will attend a court hearing next week to tell lawyers what happened.

Randy was 14 years old on May 11, 1997 when he climbed a transmission tower near the lower end of the Rennie's Mill Trail in St. John's.

When he started to fall from the top of the tower Randy tried to catch himself by grabbing a transmission wire and then fell 17 metres to the ground, engulfed in a ball of flame.

He suffered third-degree burns to more than 70 per cent of his body and, when he woke up six weeks later, he was at the Shriners Hospital for Children in Boston, Mass.

His mother, Mary Bruce, said Thursday she and her son have just returned from Boston where Randy, now 16, had another skin graft - bringing the number of operations to 31.

Bruce said the Shriners organization will care for her son until he reaches his 21st birthday, but after that she's not sure what will happen.

The Mazol Shriners of Newfoundland and Labrador pays the transportation and accommodation costs for Randy and his mother to and from Boston. Shriners International pays the medical costs.

When asked about the court case against Newfoundland Light and Power Co. Ltd., Bruce said she couldn't talk about it. The family's lawyer, Brad Wicks, of Williams, Roebollian, McKay and Marshall,

also couldn't discuss the details of the case. But he said the hearing next week is the first stage of the court process.

According to court documents, lawyers involved in the case will hear what witnesses have to say about the incident. Twelve witnesses have received notification to appear at the hearing.

Randy's statement of claim, filed last May, states that the electrical company is liable for his injuries.

It states the company was negligent because it did not post adequate signs to warn the public of the hazards associated with the tower.

The document also claims there were inadequate precautions taken to prevent the public from having access to the tower.

"Given the location of the premises, in close proximity to a well-travelled park trail, it was foreseeable that an accident would occur if adequate precautions weren't taken to protect the public," the document reads.

The statement of claim says that as a result of the alleged negligence by the company, Randy has suffered substantial and ongoing pain and distress.

Further, the document reads, Randy has suffered diminished earning capacity, diminished housekeeping capacity, pain and suffering and loss of amenities of life.

His claim states that the company is "strictly liable" for his losses.

Bruce said her son, a Grade 10 high school student and father of a nine-month old boy, is doing well since his last trip to Boston.

*Meeder after March 8, 2000*

## Corner Brook Stream looking for volunteers

The Corner Brook Stream Development Corp. needs your help.

The committee, whose mandate is the construction of hiking/walking trails along the Corner Brook Stream and the protection of the stream's environment, is actively recruiting new volunteers now in anticipation of their upcoming annual general meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 15.

"This organization is run solely by volunteers, and with the growing popularity of the trail system we find ourselves needing to recruit new people to help us," explained Sheldon Peddle, the group's treasurer.

The committee is especially looking for people with backgrounds in trail design, maintenance, vandalism prevention, engineering, fundraising or protection of stream ecosystems.

"We have big plans for the future of the Stream but these require a large pool of volunteer support and of course the ongoing support from the local business community," says Peddle. "With a wide range of tasks to be done almost everyone should be able to find something to fit their background and interests."

The organization's annual general meeting is one good way for potential volunteers to learn more about the activities of the stream development corporation. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact Bob Scott at 634-6564 or Peddle at 637-7309 to discuss the volunteer opportunities.

*Western Star March 6, 2000*

## Man dies after falling from tower

ST. JOHN'S (CP) - Police and federal labour officials are investigating the death of a man who plummeted more than 20 metres from a transmission tower Friday.

The 30-year-old victim was apparently undergoing some sort of work-related height training when he fell.

Another man at the base of the tower was evaluating the three for a St. John's company, Hi-Rise Maintenance and Construction Ltd.

The tower is owned by Newfoundland Power. "That's our site and I can tell you they did not have permission to be there," said Bob Pike, a spokesman for the utility.

The 60-metre tower was partially shrouded in fog when the victim apparently lost his grip and fell to rocky ground below. He suffered serious head and internal injuries, as well as two broken legs. He was rushed to hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Pike said the main gate to the site was locked and an "anti-climbing device" surrounds the tower itself.

# Fatal plunge under investigation

Sat. March 4/2010

BY BRIAN CALLAHAN  
The Telegram

**P**olice and federal labour officials are trying to find out why a man plummeted more than 20 metres to his death from a transmission tower on the outskirts of St. John's Friday.

And while that will likely be the focus of the investigation, it's now clear the victim and three co-workers of Hi-Rise Maintenance and Construction Ltd. had no permission to be on the property, which is owned by Newfoundland Power.

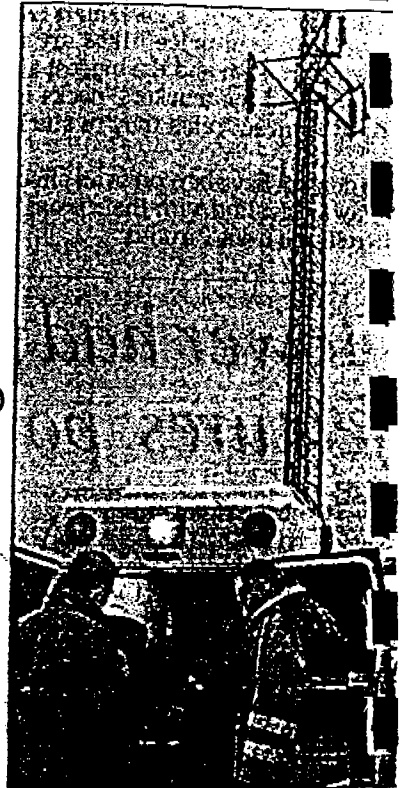
"That's our site and I can tell you they did not have permission to be there," Newfoundland Power spokesman Bob Pike told The Telegram.

The RNC major crimes section is heading the police probe, Sgt. Bob Garland said Friday, shortly after leaving the scene just west of the Manuels access road overpass on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Ron Dooley, a federal occupational health and safety official, also confirmed he had just received the file and would be carefully reviewing it over the weekend before making any comment.

No charges have been laid.

See TOWER, page 2



JOE GIBBONS/THE TE

Rescuers work on a man who fell more than 20 metres off this tower on the Trans-Canada Highway Friday. The 30-year-old man later succumbed to his injuries.

## • BRIEFS •

### Vatcher leaving city mill

#### CORNER BROOK

Corner Brook Pulp and Paper will soon have a new general manager.

The *Western Star* has learned that Allan Vatcher, the mill's current general manager, will be moving on to a new position with Kruger Inc., the parent company based in Montreal, Que. that owns Corner Brook Pulp and Paper.

It is expected that Kruger will announce his transfer and replacement in the near future.

### Three eyeing Cormack council seat

#### CORMACK

Three people are vying for the vacant seat on the Cormack town council.

Anthony Alexander, Aubrey Chaffey and Cory Spracklin are looking to fill the seat that became vacant after former councillor Kirk Gillingham left the province earlier this year. Gillingham's resignation was effective Jan. 31.

The election will take place March 27 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Polling booths will be located at the council office in the Community Centre on Veteran's Drive in Cormack.

### More strike related charges

#### CORNER BROOK

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary has now laid a total of 16 charges against striking city employees.

All 16 charges are the result of a complaint registered by the City of Corner Brook on Feb. 25. It is alleged these employees breached a court order issued by the Supreme Court of Newfoundland on Feb. 15.

On Tuesday, police reported 15 charges had been laid.

Meanwhile, a city man has been charged with assault as a result of a complaint by a striking city employee who, it is alleged, was assaulted while picketing in the Griffin Drive area. That complaint was made Feb. 23.

### Polar Bear killed after coming too close to town

TWILLINGATE (CP) — A polar bear that wandered in from the pack ice and zigzagged across Twillingate's harbour was fatally shot.

polar bear has come close to the coast town.

The white bears are a more common sight off the coast of Labrador, but they have been known to follow seals on the moving ice floes much farther south.

### Man charged with dangerous driving

#### STEPHENVILLE

Joe Hefferan, 38, was arrested by the RCMP on Tuesday and charged with dangerous driving, possession of a controlled drug and resisting arrest.

The Bay St. George RCMP laid the charges in relation to a high speed pursuit which started in Stephenville during the early morning hours on Sunday and ended in the community of Fox Island River. A man fled from police after being checked for erratic driving and the chase ended when the vehicle was seized by police.

Hefferan has been released on an undertaking and will appear in court on May 9 to answer to the charges.

### Utility has no plans to hike power rates

ST. JOHN'S (CP) — Newfoundland Power says it has no plans to seek an increase in electricity rates because of the rising cost of oil.

Newfoundland Power's Bob Pike said 70 per cent of Newfoundland's electricity is produced through hydro generation.

### Decision on unionization at Hibernia months away

ST. JOHN'S (CP) — It looks like it will be several months before workers on the Hibernia project find out whether they will unionize.

The employees cast ballots last fall and had the choice of joining the Canadian Auto Workers, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, or no union at all.

But the votes cannot be counted until it's decided who would be covered by union representation. That issue will get an airing at labour board hearings, the first of which is set for April 7.

Other dates are set for June, July and August.

### Province's budget to be tabled March 22

ST. JOHN'S — The provincial budget will be tabled in the House of

Western Star  
March 21/00

# Newtel has plan to relieve rural phone-line congestion

By BERNIE BENNETT

**The Telegram**  
ST. JOHN'S - NewTel is taking additional steps to ensure that customers in rural areas of the province have access to emergency services through the long distance network.

Effective April 10, residential customers in 91 telephone exchanges who currently subscribe to NewTel's "unlimited" long distance calling plan will have it replaced with the NewTel 100 Plan on an interim basis until network enhancements are completed.

The NewTel 100 Plan is a new plan that offers 100 minutes of long distance calling within Canada during the evenings and weekends for \$9.95 per month.

Any long distance calling over 100 minutes will be billed at 25 per cent off the regular daytime discount rates.

"Our priority is to ensure that customers can dial 0 to reach an operator in the event of an emergency," said NewTel president Frank Fagan.

He said they have already taken several steps to address emergency access, including their network engineering and operations teams making changes to put all available circuits into use.

Fagan said they have also placed mobile and satellite phones in some locations.

"But we are still challenged by the high usage on our network," said Fagan. "Since the introduction of unlimited calling plans in mid-1998 we have seen an unprecedented increase in long distance calling."

He said that in some communities long distance usage has soared to as high as 1,000 minutes per customer each month.

NewTel is currently undertaking a \$40-million network enhancement program which will provide state-of-the-art digital systems throughout rural Newfoundland and Labrador by mid-2001.

The upgrading will increase the capacity of the network, virtually eliminate network congestion and deliver many new services and features, including local dial access to the Internet.

But on an interim basis, added Fagan, it is necessary to reduce the level of long distance calling to provide customers with greater access to emergency services.



The Grade 4 class at Cassidy Memorial School in St. Fintan's sits in front of its new incubator unit to be used in conjunction with the Fish Friends program at the school. Standing are Joe Ryan, of Newfoundland Power, left, and Keith Piercey of the Salmonid Council of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Salmon eggs will be released in June

### ST. FINTAN'S

Keith Piercey, president of the Salmonid Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Joe Ryan of Newfoundland Power, recently visited the Grade 4 class at Cassidy Elementary School here.

They were delivering salmon eggs to the students as part of the Fish Friends curriculum supplement. The students will watch attentively as the eggs develop first to alevin, then to fry.

In June, students will travel to

Hughes Brook in the Bay of Islands to release their "fish friends." As part of the Fish Friends curriculum, students will learn about fish habitat, adaptation, life cycle and the importance of conservation of the Atlantic Salmon.

This year, the Grade 4 class was able to purchase the new eco-chamber/incubation unit from the Atlantic Salmon Federation, made possible through financial assistance from the Cormack Trail School District and the Bay St. George South Area Development Association.

Western Star 11/Jan 21/00

Wed., Apr. 5/00

# VINCIAL

The Western Star Page 4

## No charges coming in fatal fall

ST. JOHN'S — Police have decided not to lay charges after a man fell to his death from a communications tower on the outskirts of St. John's a month ago.

Dave Winsor, 35, was climbing the 60-metre tower near Paddy's Pond with two others as part of a training exercise with Hi-Rise Maintenance and Construction Ltd.

Winsor was about 20 metres up when he plummeted to the ground. He suffered serious head and internal injuries and two broken legs, and died hours later in hospital. It's not clear what caused the fall.

A key facet of the accident was the fact Hi-Rise didn't have permission to be at the site, owned by Newfoundland Power.

"That's our site and I can tell you they did not have permission to be there," Newfoundland Power spokesman Bob

Pike told The Telegram March 3, the day of the incident.

He said Newfoundland Power co-operated with the federal probe, explaining it focused on the utility's "fall arrest" and "fall protection" safeguards at the tower.

He would not speculate on the outcome of the federal investigation.

The federal Department of Labour is investigating the incident because Hi-Rise builds communications towers, which fall under federal jurisdiction.

A department officer is preparing the report, which won't be ready for another three or four weeks, said Bren Kenny, labour program manager for Human Resources Development.

It will remain confidential until it's reviewed at the regional and federal levels, he said, noting it could be a year or two before its findings are made public.

## Newfoundland Power contributes \$15,000 to St. John Ambulance

The Newfoundland and Labrador Council of St. John Ambulance received a \$15,000 commitment from Newfoundland Power in support of its capital infrastructure campaign.

"We are pleased to be a major sponsor of this important health initiative," said Philip Hughes, president and chief executive officer of Newfoundland Power.

"Our company's support will assist St. John Ambulance in upgrading vehicles and equipment that will allow them to carry on and expand the vital services they provide to our communities," said Hughes.

"The St. John Ambulance campaign is a major initiative being undertaken in the province. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$300,000," said Ian Kelly, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of St. John Ambulance.

The organization, most known for first aid training, will utilize these funds to replace and/or refurbish exist-

ing mobile first aid posts, add new mobile posts, upgrade and modernize equipment, provide uniforms for volunteers, main-

tain supplies and material, and expand their volunteer services to communities not currently being served.

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## REGION

Thursday, April 13, 2000

*Western Star*

# Electricity rates won't rise in 2000

By RYAN CLEARY  
The Telegram

ST. JOHN'S — The price of fuel may have blown sky high this year but the fall-out won't be landing on Newfoundland Power customers.

In fact, the cost of electricity is expected to fall by about one per cent on July 1, the annual date for price adjustment.

Newfoundlanders, however, shouldn't expect to get off so lucky in July 2001, when the price of electricity may jump as a direct result of this year's rising fuel costs.

"When we make the adjustment in July there will be a credit going to customers of about one per cent," says Derek Osmond, vice-president of finance with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

In 1986, the Tory administration of the day brought in a rate stabilization plan to eliminate severe fluctuations in electricity bills caused by, among other things, rising oil prices.

Under the plan, a base fuel price is set at \$12.50 Cdn a barrel. In recent years, however, the price of a barrel of crude has jumped to as high as three times that amount.

Given those prices, it would seem obvious that a rate hike this year would be as likely as rain in April.

Not so, Osmond said Wednesday.

"The thing to keep in mind is the adjustment this year isn't reflective of anything that happens in 2000, it's the adjustment to the end of 1999."

The rate stabilization formula takes into account a number of factors besides fuel costs, including precipitation levels.

If the reservoir at Baie d'Espoir is full, it allows the utility to rely more on cheap hydroelectricity and less on oil.

That was the case in 1999.

Further, the price of Bunker C oil burned at Hydro's three oil-fired furnaces at Holyrood hovered at around the \$12.50 mark for the first few months of last year.

Consequently, Hydro's increase to Newfoundland Power should be about 1.8 per cent in July - and the Fortis-owned utility typically passes on increases to consumers that are about half their own increase.

This year's high fuel costs will be factored into the rate stabilization plan for July 2001, but Osmond said rate hikes are not guaranteed then either. It depends on the amount of precipitation this year, along with what happens with the price of fuel.

"We really don't know what's going to happen," said Osmond, although his boss, Hydro CEO Bill Wells, said it's logical to assume the rising cost of oil will drive electricity prices up.



# Charges not warranted in fatal fall: RNC

BY BRIAN CALLAHAN

The Telegram

*Wed, April 5/2000*

**P**olice have decided not to lay charges after a man fell to his death from a communications tower on the outskirts of St. John's a month ago.

Dave Winsor, 35, was climbing the 60-metre tower near Paddy's Pond with two others as part of a training exercise with Hi-Rise Maintenance and Construction Ltd. A fourth man observed from the ground.

Winsor was about 20 metres up when he plummeted to the ground. He suffered serious head and internal injuries and two broken legs, and died hours later in hospital. It's not clear what caused the fall.

A key facet of the accident was the fact Hi-Rise didn't have permission to be at the site, owned by Newfoundland Power.

"That's our site and I can tell you they did not have permission to be there," Newfoundland Power spokesman Bob Pike told The Telegram March 3, the day of the incident.

Nonetheless, Pike said Tuesday he's not surprised charges weren't laid.

"I'm not surprised, from that perspective, that police didn't lay charges," Bob Pike said. "From our standpoint, we're finished with it."

He said Newfoundland Power co-operated with the federal probe, explaining it focused on the utility's "fall arrest" and "fall protection" safeguards at the tower.

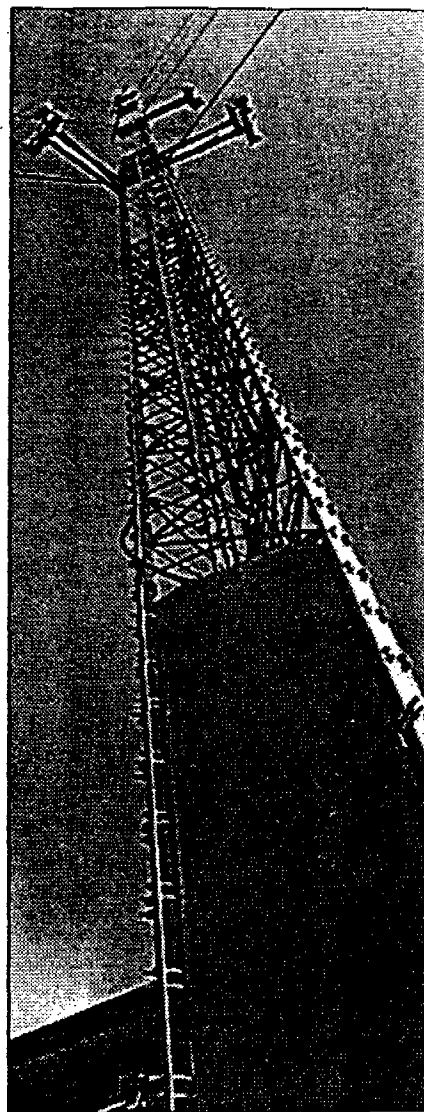
He would not speculate on the outcome of the federal investigation.

The federal Department of Labour is investigating the incident because Hi-Rise builds communications towers, which fall under federal jurisdiction.

A department officer is preparing the report, which won't be ready for another three or four weeks, said Bren Kenny, labour program manager for Human Resources Development.

It will remain confidential until it's reviewed at the regional and federal levels, he said, noting it could be a year or two before its findings are made public.

"We may or may not recommend



MELANIE BOYCE/THE TELEGRAM

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary has recommended that no charges be laid in connection with March's fatal fall from this Newfoundland Power tower off the Trans-Canada Highway at the rear of the Goodyear tire plant.

charges," Kenny said Tuesday. "It may go to court or it may not. That will be up to the lawyers and the Justice Department after reviewing the report."

He noted a similar review in British Columbia took two years to complete.

Hi-Rise Construction's Jerome Flynn refused comment.

Western Star April 27/00



Star Photo by Geraldine Brophy

### *Money for ACRE facility*

Verbon Hewlin, right, Newfoundland Power's regional manager western Newfoundland, presented a \$5,000 cheque Wednesday to Don Downer, chair management for Aquatic Centre for Research and Education (ACRE). The money is going to the ACRE facility in Hughes

Brook and will be used to support ongoing research projects and general management of the hatchery facility. This is the third year that Newfoundland Power has made such a donation.

NEWSWATCH

St. Johns Evening Telegram A/C 5/60

POSITION

EXPRESSCLIP

DATE: June 1, 2000 PAGE:

36

## FINANCE

# Power Co. contingent liability reduced

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

Newfoundland Power said Wednesday it has substantially reduced the potential liability associated with income tax reassessments issued by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency five years ago for the years 1988 to 1993.

The reassessments were issued in July 1995.

"As a result of detailed representations made by the company, the contingent liability of \$40.3 million reflected in the notes to the company's 1999 financial statements will be reduced by approximately \$29.7 million to \$10.6 million," said Barry Perry, vice-president, finance and chief financial officer.

"Newfoundland Power has always believed that it has reported its tax position appropriately and these revised reassessments are a significant step to substantiating that position," Perry said.

He also said the utility believes it has strong arguments supporting its position that "the remaining \$10.6 million outstanding under the revised reassessments is not payable by the company."

**"Although the reduction in liability will not translate into a decrease in electrical rates, it will play a key role in reducing business risk and the cost of power over the long term."**

Barry Perry, chief financial officer,  
Newfoundland Power

Perry said that in the July 1995 reassessments the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency disallowed certain amounts capitalized for regulatory and accounting purposes but claimed as expenses for tax purposes between 1989 and 1993.

"The new notices of reassessment effectively allow such tax claims," he said.

Perry said remaining at issue between Newfoundland Power and the federal agency is the company's practice of recording revenue as customers are billed.

"Since the inception of Newfoundland Power we have recorded revenue on a billed basis," Perry said. "This is in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and complies with Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities' orders."

Newfoundland Power believes that the \$10.6 million outstanding under the revised reassessments is also "not payable" by the company and it will continue to pursue having the matter resolved, he said.

"Should Newfoundland Power be unsuccessful in defending its position on this point, a liability of approximately \$10.6 million would arise," Perry said.

"An application by the company to the provincial electricity regulator to have the amount considered in the rate making process would be made should this occur."

Perry said that as a result of the reduction of liability, the utility will receive a refund of part of the funds deposited in relation to the dispute. He said the refund will be used to reduce current outstanding short-term debt.

"Although the reduction in liability will not translate into a decrease in electrical rates, it will play a key role in reducing business risk and the cost of power over the long term."

# REGIONAL/PRO

Saturday, June 3, 2000

*Western Star.*



## *Environment exhibit*

Star Photo by Frank Gale

Newfoundland Power held an EnviroFest at Stephenville Middle School on Thursday that consisted of a number of displays including one by the Codroy Valley Development association about the areas wetlands, and

habitat. Phyllis Baird, left, co-ordinator of the Codroy Valley Development association, looks on as Aaron Reid and Gregory Branton examine one of the ducks.

# REGIONAL/PROVINCIAL

Thursday, June 8, 2000

*Western Star*



Interprovincial Airlines announced on Wednesday it will be a Major Corporate Sponsor for the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships. On hand for the news were, left photo, Aiden White, left, general manager of the championships; Kyla St. Croix, customer service manager for Interprovincial airlines and William McNeil, the championships' vice-chair-



John Gaulty Photos

man and chairman of its service sector committee. Wayne Neal, right photo, Bank of Nova Scotia manager in Stephenville, presents \$2,250 to Peter Doyle, organizing committee chairperson for the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships. On Tuesday, the bank became a Bronze Level Corporate Sponsor.

## Judo championships attracts four sponsors

BY JOHN EARLE  
Star Correspondent

### STEPHENVILLE

Four companies have joined the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships' sponsorship team this week.

Interprovincial Airlines will be a Major Corporate Sponsor, while WE Music Studios, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland Power have signed on as Bronze Level Corporate sponsors.

Interprovincial's announcement was made Wednesday afternoon at the Stephenville airport terminal.

The airline's commitment includes: \$20,000 cash, \$8,000 in airline tickets, and \$10,000 worth of Air Nova tickets.

All of the tickets are for travel between Stephenville and St. John's, and Stephenville and Halifax.

"With Interprovincial as a sponsor, it allows us to bring officials and other guests into the region for the champi-

onships" said Peter Doyle, organizing committee chairman. "Our logo will be on their aircraft, which will give us more exposure wherever they fly, so it is a great partnership."

Kyla St. Croix, manager of customer service for Interprovincial Airlines is enthusiastic about her company's involvement with the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships.

"We have been flying into Stephenville for seven years now, so we feel like we are part of the community," she said. "Being involved in events such as this is beneficial for all concerned. We get to help out, and get lots of free, good publicity in return."

Newfoundland Power's pledge to the event was made Wednesday morning here at the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships office.

"We are proud to be a sponsor. Obviously a lot of planning has already gone into an event of this magnitude," said Nora Duke, vice-president of customer and corporate services for

Newfoundland Power. I am sure it will be a great event for the town of Stephenville."

Duke presented \$1,000 to Aiden White, general manager of the championship event.

"I am pleased to see major corporations such as Newfoundland Power become corporate sponsors for the event," he said. "Without corporate sponsors, we would not be able to have the freedoms we have in the decision making process."

Meanwhile on Tuesday, WE Music Studios and the Bank of Nova Scotia made their commitment public.

WE Music Studios created the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships song to fulfill its sponsorship deal, while the local branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia made a \$2,250 donation.

Staff at the branch raised \$1,125 through various fund-raisers, such as bake sales and lunches. The contribution was matched by the bank.

"It's great to see businesses such as WE Care Music Studios contribute to the event, by utilizing their expertise in helping the championships," said Doyle. "I am also pleased to see the Bank of Nova Scotia on board as a sponsor. It is good to see businesses in the community supporting this wonderful event."

The Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships will begin Saturday, July 1, with the opening ceremonies at the Stephenville Dome featuring Ron Hynes, Felix and Formanger, The Dirty Big Band, as well as a four-minute video specially produced for the event.

More than 100 dancers and actors are also scheduled to perform.

The championships will be held until Monday, July 3.

Afterwards an international judo training camp will be held in the area from July 4-8.

For more information on the championships check the event's Web site at <http://www.judo2000.nf.ca>.



On Wednesday Nora Duke, vice-president of customer and corporate services with Newfoundland Power, left photo, presented a \$1,000 cheque to Aiden White, general manager of the Commonwealth 2000 Judo Championships in Stephenville. On Tuesday, Esther Richards, right photo,



John Earle photos

of WE Music Studios in Stephenville presented a CD with the championships radio jingle to White. Both companies are Bronze Level sponsors of the event.

NEWSWATCH

St. Johns Evening Telegram A/C

EXPRESSCLIP

DATE: July 9, 2000 PAGE: 26

ROWING

# Newfoundland Powers to top

*Utility's crew posts best time at regatta time trials as  
Smith Stockley impresses*

**N**ewfoundland Power's senior men's team recorded the top time of the day, while Keyin College senior team was the top ladies' crew at the Royal St. John's Regatta time trials Saturday on Quidi Vidi Lake.

Former Olympian Andy Crosby stroked the team of John Handrigan, Albert Gibbons, Chris Barton, Sean Budgell and Perry Cahill to a time of nine minutes, 20.58 seconds in the first race of the day. Mike Summers is the cox and Mike Jardine the coach.

#### NTV rows close to top

NTV's race 1 time of 9:23.74 was second fastest of the day, while the intermediate team of Smith Stockley, the surprise crew of the event, was clocked at 9:35.08 in race 13. Crosbie Industrial Services finished race 1 in 9:45.72, while My Brother's Place won race two in 10:03.04.

Defending ladies' regatta champ

Keyin College won race 5 in 5:11.05. The team consists of stroke Diane Gibbons, Lynn Jones, Lori Butt, Williamina Martin, Dawn Summers and Karen Penney. The crew is coxed by Mike Hickey and coached by Rick Coish.

"We had a pretty good run," Hickey said. "There was a little bit of wind, but nothing too bad. This is a great boost for us and if we can take off a few seconds in the next three weeks, we'll do well (on Regatta Day)."

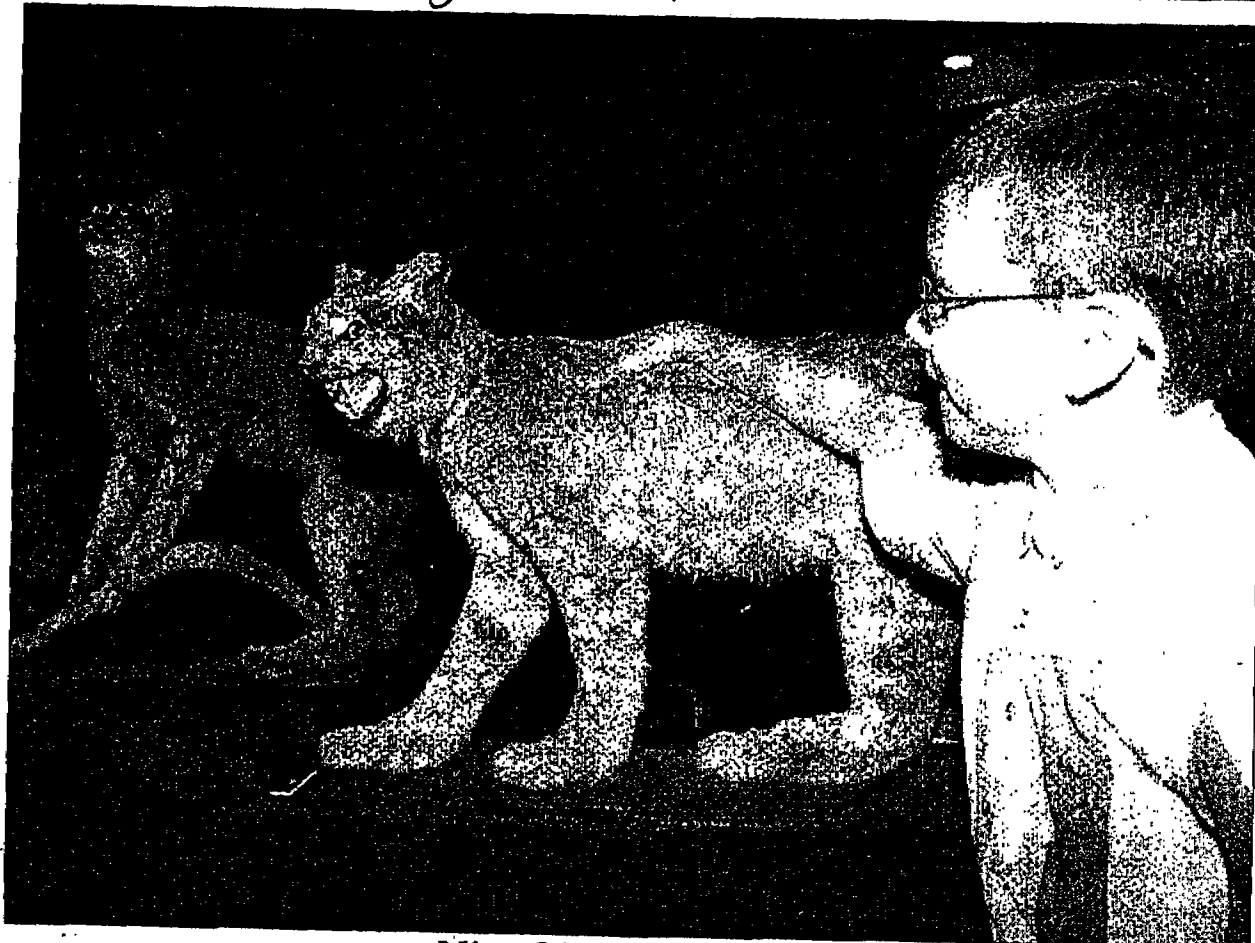
OZ-FM's winning time of 5:14.57 in race seven was good enough for second best in the women's division. Third fastest was Wedgewood Physio, which crossed the finish line in race five in 5:20.92, while in the same race, Husky Oil was clocked at 5:26.26 and O'Dea Earle at 5:33.17.

A total of 114 crews took part in the event, which is a qualifier and determines groupings for races on Regatta Day set for Aug. 2.

# AL/PROVINCIAL

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000

The Western Star Page 2



## *Nice kitty, Nice kitty*

Star Photo by Gary Kean

The third annual EnviroFest was hosted by Newfoundland Power at C.C. Loughlin Elementary School earlier this week. The event offered people like seven-year-old Philip Cave a rare chance to pet a lynx, one of several stuffed animals showcased at the exhibi-

tion. EnviroFest 2000 featured more than 20 local environmental groups, schools and government agencies with interactive demonstrations and displays about various environmental issues.

## ROWING POWER



**GEARING UP:** The Newfoundland Power crew gets in some practice time on Quidi Vidi Lake Monday evening. Crew members are, from left, Perry Cahill, Dianne Gibbons (subbing for Andy Crosby, who will be stroking for

the team on Regatta Day, Aug. 2), Sean Budgell, Chris Barton, John Handrigan, Albert Gibbons and cox Mike Summers.

GARY HEBBARD/THE TELEGRAM



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NEWSWATCH	Advertiser, Grand Falls-Windsor, NF A/C	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Thursday June 22, 2000 PAGE: <b>A3</b>		

# Rare power outage hits Exploits

By WENDY HOULIHAN  
Advertiser

■ Residents of Grand Falls-Windsor were left without power for two hours Tuesday as a result of a transmission line fire.

The Grand Falls-Windsor volunteer Fire Department responded to a down transmission line at approximately 2:00 p.m. that erupted into a fire on the T'Rail bed behind Day n' Ross.

According to Newfoundland Power official Sean Tulk, customer service specialist, an insulator failed on the transmission line and the center phase came down on the ground.

"The insulator, a porcelain-type object, which supports the main line exploded and once that happened the transmission line fell to the ground," said Mr. Tulk. "A significant voltage of 138,000 volts caused the fire."

*"One insulator can cause significant damage on the whole system."*

**— Sean Tulk**

Most areas, including Grand Falls-Windsor are fed through what is called a loop system, explained Mr. Tulk. He said that Grand Falls-Windsor has transmission lines coming from two different directions - from Bishop's Falls, and across from Stoney Brook. Normally, if a transmission line fails, there is no interruption in power. Newfoundland Power just switches to the other transmission line.

"Normally there are two systems servicing our area, but yesterday, we were doing maintenance on the second transmission line and had the power cut for that purpose," said Mr. Tulk. "When the insulator failed on the other transmission line we were

without any power coming into Grand Falls-Windsor at all.

"When we work on the maintenance we have what is called standard protection in place so that no one could bring the power back on the line. Once we found the guys who were in the country, we got them off the line and made some changes to bring the second transmission line up. That's when we got the power restored," he added.

That was approximately 4:00 p.m.

## COINCIDENCE

Last night at 7:30 p.m. Newfoundland Power had a second insulator fail in the area located behind the former

Kixx Country building on Grenfell Heights.

But there was no power interruption because the transmission line that was down for maintenance earlier in the day was already back up.

The only difference with the second insulator fail was they had to call in a water bomber for the fire.

"Under normal circumstances these insulators are not sensitive to heat because they usually have as much as 66,000 volts coming through them," said Mr. Tulk. "If an insulator has any kind of defect such as somebody who throws a rock and puts a small crack in the side of it, that can be enough to make the whole insulator fail."

"One insulator can cause significant damage on the whole system," he explained.

According to Mr. Tulk, Newfoundland Power is still looking into why the insulator failed.

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<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: June 25, 2000 PAGE: 25	

#### ROWING

### Newfoundland Power sets fastest time

Newfoundland Power senior men's team posted the fastest men's time, while St. John's Rowing Club intermediate crew had the top ladies' time Saturday at the Discovery Day Regatta at Quidi Vi-di Lake.

Newfoundland Power crossed the finish line in a time of 9:36.78 in race two, followed by NTV in 9:38.74.

St. John's Rowing Club had a time of 5:29.37 in race 12. The second-fastest female time was 5:33.03, set by Keyin Tech in race one.

A total of 79 crews took part in the event.

For complete results, see scoreboard on page 27.

# Point of Order



## Bishop's Falls

By NATASHA CARBERRY  
Advertiser

Bishop's Falls held its regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday, June 20 and some of the items discussed included:

• **Lighting the bandstand**

The town has learned Newfoundland Power has completed the design for the line extension required to accommodate power to the bandstand located in Fallsview Municipal Park. The project will cost the town approximately \$1,600 plus HST for the installation of a 400 amp, single phase 120/240 volt service with a connected load of 12 kw.

However, the financial numbers will look quite different if the town also opts to establish a telephone line connection to the structure. In that case, NewTel Communications will share in the cost of the line extension, resulting in the reduction of costs to approximately \$1,216 plus HST.

Council, under the recommendation of the finance committee, has requested both NewTel Communications and Nfld. Power undertake a co-operative effort to initiate the completion of electrical and telephone services to the municipal park at the earliest possible date.

A cheque for \$1,390.40 has been forwarded to Nfld. Power to facilitate the arrangement.

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: June 30, 2000 PAGE: 3	X

## ENERGY

# Electricity rates drop by 1.1 per cent

Electricity rates will drop by an average 1.1 per cent beginning Saturday as a result of the annual review of the Rate Stabilization Account (RSA) and the Municipal Tax Adjustment (MTA), Newfoundland Power said Thursday.

The utility said that for a residential customer with a monthly electrical bill of \$100, the decrease will mean a reduction of approximately \$1.10 per month.

During the 1980s, the Public Utilities Board (PUB) approved the establishment of the RSA and the MTA.

The RSA helps to reduce large swings in electrical rates as a result of the fluctuations in the cost of oil used at Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's thermal generating plants. The MTA was established as a means to collect and pay municipal taxes.

"The price of oil in 1999 put an upward pressure on the RSA," said Bob Pike, Newfoundland Power's manager of corporate communications. "However, the quantity of oil Hydro used for generation in 1999 was lower because of the mild winter and because they were able to produce more electricity

at their hydro developments."

Pike noted that because the rate adjustment is based only on the balance in the RSA and the MTA as of Dec. 31, 1999, it does not reflect the impact of changes in the price of oil that have occurred in 2000.

"Since the inception of these accounts in 1987, the impact on electricity rates has been a total of eight increases and five decreases," Pike said.

"However, the net effect over the 13 years has been a reduction of 2.4 per cent."

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<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: Tuesday July 11, 2000 PAGE: 312	1/2

# Rock throwing causes major damage in addition to power outage

Members of the Trinity Conception District RCMP are investigating a power outage we had a couple of weeks ago.

The power outage shut the power down from Bay Roberts to Old Perlican. According to employees at Newfoundland Power, they believe this was due to a piece of equipment on a transformer damaged by someone throwing rocks at it.

According to one of the maintenance crew we spoke to, throwing rocks at this equipment could cause a major explosion and injuries to anyone nearby, not to mention the consequences of a power outage.

I went a little bit further and



**You & Your Police**  
by Marc Triforeau

talked to the manager of New-

foundland Power. He told me that unfortunately this kind of incident is not an isolated one. Too often people will do damage to electrical installation or will even steal equipment from these installations. By doing that the people responsible don't know what they are dealing with and the possible consequences of their acts. These people take considerable risk of injuring themselves, or for that matter, other people.

Talking about senseless act of vandalism, we received another complaint last week - this one was in relation to someone throwing a bottle off a bus. The bottle hit the car behind the bus

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Wednesday July 12, 2000 PAGE: 7A		

# Newfoundland Power upgrading power source

By CORETTA STACEY  
the nor'wester

**BAIE VERTE** -The number of Newfoundland Power vehicles around town have increased in number lately, but all in good reason. They are making changes which are needed for the Newtel upgrades, and rebuilding the low voltage bus at the Seal Cove sub-station.

For much of last week, Newfoundland Power placed extra poles along Highway 410. These extra poles were needed to offset the Newtel upgrades. "They are putting

in new fibre optic cable and this will be another wire, which will be added weight on the poles. We installed these extra poles to ensure our system can carry off the extra weight. If it wasn't for these upgrades we would not have had to make this interruption within town, as the poles were not due to be changed," said Wallace Baker, Newfoundland Power General Foreman.

Unfortunately while the contractor, B & R, were installing the new poles, they dug into the town's main water line. Most residents lost

their water, while also falling into a planned power interruption Thursday morning. Newfoundland Power did not expect such a drastic interruption to their customers. This was their reasoning for bringing in a larger crew which would help in eliminating a long power outage. The outage which did take place lasted approximately 4 and half hours, while the water line was fixed shortly afterward.

Mr. Baker said another outage can be expected later in the summer when they complete their work on Seal Cove road, which includes re-

building a low voltage bus. They have to dismantle the existing one and put in the new. This work which is expected another month, will cause minimal disruption to their Baie Verte customers, however their will be planned power outages for Seal Cove and Wild Cove.

"This will give Baie Verte a more powerful power source," he said.

The changes Newfoundland Power made in May, which included changing a faulty insulator, also helped increase the power source to the area, he said.

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NEWSWATCH	St. Johns Evening Telegram A/C	82
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: July 18, 2000 PAGE: 27	POSITION 1 X

EARNINGS

# Newfoundland Power posts strong second quarter

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

Improved system reliability and higher second-quarter earnings were highlights of a report issued by Newfoundland Power Monday.

The utility is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., which holds all of the company's common shares.

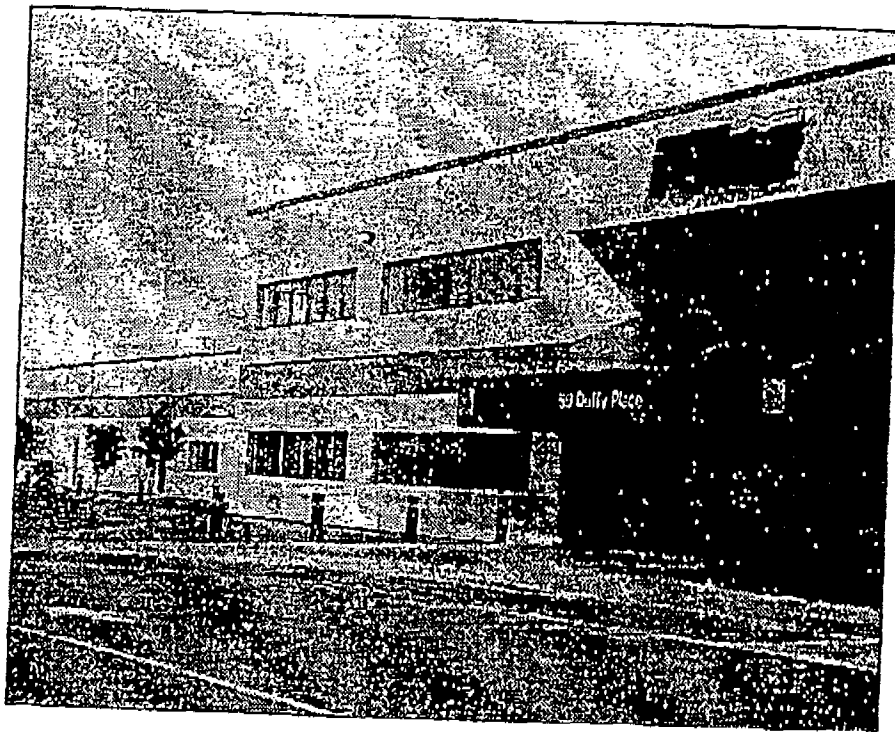
"Newfoundland Power continues to increase earnings by improving reliability, reducing operating costs and resolving a long-standing tax issue," said Philip Hughes, president and chief executive officer.

"Our efforts to upgrade the electrical system have led to improved customer service and lower maintenance and operating costs."

The company has also announced a new early-retirement program. Hughes said the \$2-million severance and pension costs related to the program were provided for in the just-concluded second quarter of 2000.

As well, Newfoundland Power has declared dividends on four categories of First Preference Shares.

The utility reported that for the second quarter of this year, earnings applicable to common shares were \$9 million, or 87 cents per share, compared to \$7.3 million, or 71 cents per share, for the same quarter in 1999.



MEL BOYCE/THE TELEGRAM

Newfoundland Power has reported second-quarter earnings applicable to common shares of \$9 million, or 87 cents per share, compared to \$7.3 million, or 71 cents per share, for the same quarter in 1999.

NEWSWATCH

St. Johns Evening Telegram A/C

POSITION

EXPRESSCLIP

DATE: July 19, 2000 PAGE: 4

X

# New rules for electricity customers

BY GERARD O'REILLY

I would like to comment on a proposed policy initiated last week by Newfoundland Power, concerning the reconnection and disconnection of the electrical service for their residential customers and its impact on citizens of Newfoundland.

As it now stands, Newfoundland Power employees — linespeople by trade — reconnect all residential services with the exception of meter installations upon authorization of the city inspection department or the government services centre. If no permit is issued for a particular job, the respective government or city department will not authorize the reconnection, and the customer cannot get connected to the Newfoundland Power supply.

## High-quality workmanship

Therefore, in order for electrical contractors to finalize a job and receive payment from their customer, they are encouraged by this process to follow the appropriate guidelines, thus assuring the customer the highest quality workmanship.

In the case of emergency work, the procedure is a little different. The customer, by signing the emergency reconnection form after a Newfoundland Power employee visually inspects the work, is reconnected. The form is then sent to the appropriate government or city department so it may inspect the work as soon as possible. Again, this process assures the customer is protected, and it guarantees the electrical contractor performs quality electrical work.

As a cost-cutting measure, however, Newfoundland Power has initiated a policy whereby electrical contractors will be able to disconnect and reconnect services, and the utility crews will

## TELEGRAM FORUM

make the permanent repairs at their convenience.

Over the years, even when Newfoundland Power's policy required that all electrical service be disconnected and reconnected by its employees, some contractors were aware that they could avoid getting permits by calling the utility's trouble department and have crews reconnect services by stating the customer had no power. When this practice escalated, procedures were introduced to stop it as the utility realized it would be liable if a customer was reconnected unlawfully.

**Newfoundland Power is now proposing a policy in which there are few checks and balances ... this enables some contractors to easily avoid the rigours and expense of an inspection and their obligation to the customer.**

Newfoundland Power is now proposing a policy in which there are few checks and balances; it will be up to contractors to apprise Newfoundland Power that they are doing electrical work on behalf of one of utility's customers. In my opinion, this enables some contractors to easily avoid the rigours and expense of an inspection and their obligation to the customer.

Without an inspection, a contractor may just make temporary connections to the utility's power supply, and these temporary connections may not break down for years. When they do break

down, the customer will call Newfoundland Power's trouble department and a crew will be dispatched to the site. (The problem can be avoided if the permanent repairs are made earlier — something an inspection will enforce.) It is quite conceivable that if there is damage to the customer's electrical service, a dispute will occur over who is responsible — the customer or Newfoundland Power.

## Customers on the hook

Another way to avoid the inspection department is for a contractor to purchase the same equipment that the utility uses to make permanent repairs. This would make it more difficult to prove that a contractor had even done work for a customer, or to determine the quality of the workmanship. The only time there will be a discussion of workmanship will be when it is too late.

This is not prophecy. This has happened many times in the past when some contractors did not follow the proper procedures.

Newfoundland Power's proposed new policy will mean that the only one left on the hook will be the customer. If there is damage to the customer's appliances or service, they could pursue damages against the contractor through the courts. But, in most cases, it would be far cheaper to just get the service repaired and chalk it up to experience.

In my opinion, the only ones who have anything to gain by the utility's new policy will be the Newfoundland Power shareholders.

*Gerard O'Reilly is the business manager for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1620, some of whose members are employees of Newfoundland Power. He is based in St. John's.*



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NEWSWATCH	Advertiser, Grand Falls-Windsor, NF A/C	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Monday July 24, 2000 PAGE: <i>M</i>		
		<i>112</i>	

# Trestle lights up night sky

By NATASHA CARBERRY  
Advertiser

It was a moment more than a year in the making, and it didn't disappoint.

At approximately 10:52 p.m. Thursday, Mrs. Ada Hampton, a 91-year old pioneer resident of the Town of Bishop's Falls, "threw the switch that illuminated 12,000 bulbs outlining the frame of the trestle crossing the Exploits River.

It was the highlight of the opening ceremonies for the town's Come Home Year celebrations, whose theme is, *Let's light up our memories and cel-*

*brate together.*

"Just as these trestle lights serve as a beacon to draw people back home to Bishop's Falls for these wonderful celebrations, let your own lights shine and draw people towards you with feelings of love and happiness," she encouraged the thousands gathered on Riverside Drive for the official ceremony.

The evening began at 9 p.m. with musical performances by the Leo Burke Academy jazz band.

Following the arrival of the official party, Town Crier Peter Budgell declared the cer-

Please see page 9



Barry Perry, chief financial officer and vice-president of finance for Newfoundland Power, assisted Mrs. Ada Hampton, a 91-year old pioneer resident of the Town of Bishop's Falls, as she flipped the switch.

Natasha Carberry photo

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<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: Monday July 24, 2000 PAGE: <u>19</u>	2/2

## Trestle lights night up sky

Continued from page 1

emony's officially underway.

Sara MacDonald performed *O Canada*, which was followed by the unveiling of the municipal flag by Mayor Oliver Rose, Deputy Mayor Doreeen Tremblett, and flag designer and Bishop's Falls native David Sheppard.

Well-known residents and musicians Barry Canning then performed the new municipal song, *Light Up Our Memories*, written especially for the Come Home Year celebrations.

The Grade 9 students from Leo Burke Academy then performed a traditional square dance to a song by The Fables.

### OFFICIAL GREETINGS

Grand Falls-Buchans MHA and Treasury Board president Anna Thistle brought greetings on behalf of government.

"Congratulations to George Saunders, chairman of the organizing committee, and Mayor Rose for the fabulous work that has been put into this celebration," she said. "On behalf of government, and my constituents in Grand Falls-Buchans, I wish you 10 days of great fun, great food, and great entertainment."

Next up to the podium was Bishop's Falls Mayor Oliver Rose.

"To residents of Bishop's Falls who travelled from away to be here, welcome home," he said. "There will always be a welcome for you in Bishop's Falls."

"I encourage everyone to get out and attend the events planned for the next 10 days as we enjoy each other's fellowship, and make new memories."

Barry Perry, chief financial

officer and vice-president of finance with Newfoundland Power, corporate sponsor for the light-up of the trestle, also welcomed participants to the opening ceremonies.

"Newfoundland Power is a proud partner in this project, and we are very proud of the contribution and dedication of our employees in getting this project off the ground," he said. "The lighting of the trestle is truly an example of what communities can accomplish when everyone pulls together."

The opening ceremonies, which concluded following the official light-up of the trestle, also featured performances by soloists Renee Mallard, Steven Wall, and the community choir, under the direction of Mary Tremblett.

tario Securities Commission of manipulating the closing price of 26 stocks over eight days in late 1998 and early 1999 through a practice known as high closing or "juggling."

In a settlement reached recently, RT Capital was fined \$3 million and nine of the firm's directors and employees were subjected to trading bans or suspensions for varying lengths of time.

A spokeswoman for Finance Minister Lloyd Matthews told The Telegram Wednesday the province has not transferred money into RT Capital since the scandal broke.

However, Paula Dyke, the minister's director of communications, said that was because "there has not been any excess funds to invest during that period."

Dyke said the government's pension committee met recently to examine the matter and make recommendations as to what the government should do.

The committee has submitted its recommendations to Matthews, who will review them in due course, she said.

## OTTAWA

### Number of people receiving EI benefits falls in June

The number of people receiving regular employment insurance benefits in June was 375,440, a decrease of 10.1 per cent from June 1999, Statistics Canada said Wednesday.

Regular benefits paid increased by 0.7 per cent in June from May to \$598.3 million, a 5.6 per cent decline from June a year earlier.

"From May to June, claims received decreased by 1.6 per cent to 211,980," the agency said.

# Board not doing its job: former consumer advocate

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

The Public Utilities Board (PUB) has "not done its job" in ensuring Newfoundland Power's compliance with a board order concerning the monthly reading of meters, according to Dennis Browne.

Browne, who has acted as consumer advocate at PUB electricity-related hearings in recent years, is maintaining his position that the utility did not have the right to return to estimating power bills this summer.

Browne wrote the PUB Tuesday calling on it to enforce a directive it issued following public hearings four years ago.

However, the board issued a statement Wednesday saying it is satisfied the power company is acting properly.

The controversy is centred around Newfoundland Power's decision to implement a system of estimating electrical power bills during the period from July through September, rather than doing monthly meter readings.

The monthly reading system was the subject of a PUB hearing in 1996.

Browne said the company's commitment at that time to return to monthly readings was approved by the PUB, which incorporated it into its order at the conclusion of the hearings.

The PUB said Wednesday that in a May 25 letter, the utility advised the board of its plan to implement a pilot project for summer meter readings along with the parameters under which

the project was to be implemented.

"This project involves estimation of less than three per cent of total readings for Newfoundland Power's residential and general service customers once only during the months of July, August or September," said the board.

"In subsequent communication with the company prior to the implementation of the pilot project, the board satisfied itself that the implementation of this project was not contrary to Board Order No. P.U. 7 (1996-1997) wherein Newfoundland Power dispensed with bimonthly meter readings."

### Conforms to rules

In addition, the PUB said it is satisfied that the pilot project conforms with the rules, rates and regulations of Newfoundland Power regarding meter readings as approved by the 1996-97 board order.

The PUB said that since the pilot project started in July, it had received four inquiries, all within the last three days.

"Of these, two customers were not affected by the project and two customers' bills appeared to be estimated accurately."

The board said it will again review this matter later this year after comple-



Dennis Browne

tion of the pilot project.

"In the interim, the board will continue to monitor the project and is prepared to direct Newfoundland Power to make any adjustments to the project the board may deem necessary."

### Made commitment

Browne said Wednesday that the power company made a commitment at the 1996 hearing to return to monthly readings and the board approved that and incorporated it into its order.

He said the PUB directed Newfoundland Power to set forth a new schedule of rules, rates and regulations reflecting the directives of the board from that hearing.

"That appears not to have been done," Browne said.

"Newfoundland Power had an obligation to comply with that directive and the board had an obligation to ensure Newfoundland Power did comply with it, but that apparently was never done."

Browne said he still believes the utility's pilot project is a violation of that order.

Browne also took exception to this matter being dealt with simply by communication between the PUB and the power company.

"The consumer, the ratepayer, was left out of the equation," he said. "Given that this matter was dealt with at a public hearing in 1996, the pilot project should have been addressed publicly."

"I believe the public should have been made aware of the plan to return to bimonthly readings."

and we know there are a lot of people who want to participate in the project," he said.

"I think Premier Bougie is both committed to a project and to translating that commitment into a concrete agreement is always a challenge."

"Our preference is to see it done, but it's not the only way. So one way or another, we will be making progress or failing."

## REWARDS PROGRAM

### Amex m deal w Canada

The Canadian Press

Amex Bank of Canada frequent flyer deal with 3000 Airlines Ltd., even as the bank is mired in a legal battle over the cancellation of its program with Canadian Airlines. Starting Oct. 2, cardholders in its membership program will be able to redeem points for flights on Canada 3000 destinations announced Wednesday.

The credit card company found a new airline program with Canadian Airlines cancelled in April as part of a restructuring of the program.

The abrupt end of the program led to a chain of lawsuits against Amex to lion.

The suits relate to the free ticket program and the diminution of the value of the points. Malcolm Ruby, a lawyer with Strathy & Henderson in

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NEWSWATCH	St. John's Evening Telegram A/C	POSITION
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: August 23, 2000 PAGE: 39	
	ENERGY	

# Estimates for summer power bills not good enough, says advocate

Practice not in accordance with 1996 PUB order and approved budget : Browne

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

Newfoundland Power has implemented a system of estimating electrical power bills during the summer rather than doing monthly meter readings, as a pilot project, says Charlotte McCardie, corporate communications specialist with the utility.

The system, which is being carried out island-wide from July through September, was brought in as a cost-saving measure and to "keep electricity rates the lowest in Atlantic Canada," McCardie told The Telegram Tuesday.

She said the company, which informed the Public Utilities Board (PUB) in advance about its plans, "believes it is in full compliance with all PUB orders."

## No right, says lawyer

However, Dennis Browne, the St. John's lawyer who has acted as consumer advocate at PUB hearings in recent years, believes otherwise.

"Newfoundland Power has no right to return to estimating power bills for the period July to September," Browne said Tuesday.

He said there was considerable controversy a few years ago over the practice of estimating bills rather than doing monthly readings and the power company's plan to return to monthly readings was incorporated into a PUB order issued three years ago. At the same time, a budget approved for the utility included funding for monthly readings, Browne said.

"The power company's decision this summer, which was made without prior notice to consumers, runs contrary to the approval given by the board for the company to return to monthly meter reading."

Dennis Browne



"Now, all of a sudden, they're going back to estimating," he said. "I don't understand how they can do that. It doesn't seem right."

In the hearings held in 1996, the utility proposed a return to monthly meter reading from a practice of bi-monthly meter reading, he said.

"That return was necessitated after Newfoundland Power and the PUB had received numerous calls of complaint

and concern regarding the estimation of power bills based on bi-monthly meter reading," Browne said.

"The power company's decision this summer, which was made without prior notice to consumers, runs contrary to the approval given by the board for the company to return to monthly meter reading."

Browne is encouraging customers to "take a second look at their electricity bills for those months to determine if they have been affected by this estimation process."

He said he is wondering who the saving is for because "the customer is not getting anything back."

Browne said he has written the PUB requesting it to order Newfoundland Power to comply with the board's 1996-97 decision and return to monthly meter readings.

ter readings.

McCardie said the estimating process was brought in during the summer months, when a number of meter readers are on vacation with their families, in order to save money and maximize the meter readers who are available.

## Letter written to PUB

She said the PUB was informed of this action in a May 23 letter.

When there was no response from the board, and believing it is in compliance with all board orders, the company proceeded to implement the pilot project.

"As a pilot project, it will be evaluated at the end and if it is successful and beneficial, we will do it again next year," McCardie said.

She said the utility has received some complaints from customers about the estimating process, but "when we explained why it was being done, the vast majority were satisfied and said it made sense."

McCardie said the utility, which was not aware of Browne's comments until contacted by The Telegram, was surprised by Browne's action as his statements are "confusing the issue."

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NEWSWATCH	St. Johns Evening Telegram A/C	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: August 24, 2000 PAGE: 31	X

PUB

# Board not doing its job: former consumer advocate

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

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Browne wrote the PUB Tuesday calling on it to enforce a directive it issued following public hearings four years ago.

However, the board issued a statement Wednesday saying it is satisfied the power company is acting properly.

The controversy is centred around Newfoundland Power's decision to implement a system of estimating electrical power bills during the period from July through September, rather than doing monthly meter readings.

The monthly reading system was the subject of a PUB hearing in 1996.

Browne said the company's commitment at that time to return to monthly readings was approved by the PUB, which incorporated it into its order at the conclusion of the hearings.

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Dennis Browne

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"I believe the public should have been made aware of the plan to return to bimonthly readings."

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Thursday, August 24 ,2000 PAGE: p 5 5	2 1/2

## Nfld. Power returns to estimations

Continued from page 3

monthly. They would read meters every other month and estimate in the interim what was owed," he explained.

"This affected their customer's ability to budget. Many people in this province have modest means and live on fixed incomes."

During the hearing in 1997, they announced they would stop estimating bills and return to monthly meter reading.

"They gave that commitment to the board and to their customers," said Mr. Browne.

"The board approved, in its order at the conclusion of the hearing, that request. Now we find Newfoundland Power breaking that commitment by returning to estimating some people's power bills. There seems to be some confusion as to how many bills are being estimated, and there was no prior notice by Newfoundland Power that they were returning to this system.

He says many people receive their bill and don't even realize it's an estimate.

"It says so on the bill, but since people were under the impression Newfoundland Power wasn't doing that any more, and they gave no other notice, some people may not be giving the bill the scrutiny it deserves," he said.

He's written the PUB asking it call a public hearing into the matter and to implement its order approving Newfoundland Power's decision to return to monthly meter readings.

Consumers will now have to wait to determine if the PUB is prepared to do this, and prevent Newfoundland Power from estimating power bills during the months of July, August and September.

"I think it's incumbent on Newfoundland Power to explain how it has withdrawn from the commitment it gave

to the board and consumers and the board in 1997," said Mr. Browne.

"They've given no real explanation other than some press statements saying it benefits customers. There can be no possible benefit to customers. They're not offering a rebate of any kind. The only savings are for Newfoundland Power, and their budget includes money allotted to allow the company to read meters monthly."

"When you have a monopoly it's very important the regulator, which in this case is the PUB, makes every attempt to ensure fairness to the company and consumers," he added.

"This comes at a time when great strides have been made by Newfoundland Power to improve their image. Why they've returned to estimating, in view of the progress that's been made, requires an explanation, but is of no benefit to consumers."

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Thursday, August 24, 2000 PAGE: P53	1	4

# **Nfld. Power returns to estimations** **Browne questions controversial move**

By KELLY FOSS  
Advertiser

Newfoundland Power has returned to its controversial estimation process for figuring residential customer bills and some customers want to know why.

Charlotte McCardle, corporate communications specialist with the company, said they implemented a province-wide pilot project in July to minimize costs during the summer when meter readers are on vacation.

Instead of doing monthly meter readings, the project

would see some residential customers receive an estimate for their bill.

"The program is all about cost savings and keeping our electricity rates the lowest in Atlantic Canada," she said.

"The public was fully informed of this decision, and we've had a number of customers call and inquire about the process. When we've explained to them that what we're doing they are satisfied with that."

She says instead of hiring temporary employees to fill in for meter readers going on vacation, they're sharing that

workload among the meter readers who are not and estimating certain routes.

"There's a lot of checks and balances put in place to ensure this is a service which benefits customers," she said.

"There will be only one estimate per residential electrical service during the project and because it is a pilot project it will be reviewed when it is completed in September. If it is beneficial and successful, we'll probably do that again next year."

Ms. McCardle said the company informed the Public Utilities Board (PUB) about

the project and is complying with all of their orders.

The orders stem from a 1997 hearing in front of the PUB looking into Newfoundland Power's then practice of bi-monthly estimations.

## **CONFUSION**

Consumer advocate and lawyer Dennis Browne was asked to represent consumers at that hearing by the provincial government.

"In 1996 there was a public uproar because Newfoundland Power had been estimating people's electricity bills bi-

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: August 22-28, 2000 PAGE:		



**T**his utility pole at the corner of Main and West Streets in Stephenville has been deemed an "abused" pole according to NewTel and Newfoundland Power. Years of nailing and stapling yard sale signs and other notices to the pole has made it unusable by both companies. A plastic sign placed around the pole reads: "Warning. It is illegal to place signs, nails, staples, or any other foreign object on this or any other utility pole."



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<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: Monday August 28, 2000 PAGE: <i>SA</i>	<i>2/2</i>

## Newfoundland Power inquiries

Continued from page 4

satisfied the project conforms with the current rates, rules and regulations of Newfoundland Power respecting meter readings."

Since commencement of the project in July, the board had received four inquiries, all within the last three days. Of these, two customers were not affected by the project and two customers' bills appeared to be estimated correctly.

The board will review the

matter later this year after completion of the project. In the interim, the board will continue to monitor the project and is prepared to direct Newfoundland Power to make any adjustments to the project the board may deem necessary.

Inquires regarding the project should be directed to the board's director, Regulatory and Advisor Services, by phone (709) 726-0742, fax (709) 726-9604, or e-mail [rbyrne@pub.nf.ca](mailto:rbyrne@pub.nf.ca).

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<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: Monday August 28, 2000 PAGE: 4A	1/2

## Utilities board responds to Newfoundland Power inquiries

By **KELLY FOSS**  
Advertiser

The Public Utilities Board (PUB) released a statement Monday after fielding several inquiries regarding a Newfoundland Power summer pilot project.

The power company recently returned to its controversial estimation process for figuring residential customer bills in an attempt to minimize costs during the summer when meter readers are on vacation.

The recent inquiries stem from an announcement by the company to end bi-monthly estimates at a 1997 hearing in

front of the PUB. That announcement was approved by the board and became a part of Board Order No. P.U. 7, the PUB's final orders to the company, at the end of the hearing.

To some, the summer pilot project appears to be a return to that practice and one consumer advocate, lawyer Dennis Browne, is calling for a public hearing into the matter.

In its press release, the PUB said Newfoundland Power wrote them in late May to advise them of their plans to introduce the summer pilot project and included the parameters under which the project was to be implemented.

"This project involves estimation of less than three per cent of total readings for Newfoundland Power's residential and general service customers, only once, during the months of July, August or September," read the release.

"In subsequent communication with the company, prior to the implementation of the project, the board satisfied itself that its implementation was not contrary to Board Order P.U. 7 (1996-1997), wherein Newfoundland Power dispensed with bi-monthly meter readings.

"In addition, the board is  
**Please see page 5**

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NEWSWATCH	The Pilot, Lewisporte, NF A/C	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Wednesday September 6, 2000 PAGE: 10B		

## Public Utilities Board responds to Newfoundland Power inquiries

By KELLY FOSS  
R-B News

**PROVINCE** - The Public Utilities Board (PUB) released a statement Monday, Aug. 28, after fielding several inquiries regarding a Newfoundland Power summer pilot project.

The power company recently returned to its controversial estimation process for figuring residential customer bills in an attempt to minimize costs during the summer when meter readers are on vacation.

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"In addition, the board is satisfied the project conforms with the current rates, rules and regulations of Newfoundland Power respecting meter readings."

Since commencement of the project in July, the board had received four inquiries, all within the last three days. Of these, two customers were not affected by the project and two customers' bills appeared to be estimated correctly.

The board will review the matter later this year after completion of the project. In the interim, the board will continue to monitor the project and is prepared to direct Newfoundland Power to make any adjustments to the project the board may deem necessary.

Inquires regarding the project should be directed to the board's director, Regulatory and Advisor Services, by phone (709) 726-0742, fax (709) 726-9604, or e-mail [rbvme@pub.nf.ca](mailto:rbvme@pub.nf.ca)

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: Wednesday September 6, 2000 PAGE: 6		

## PUB responds to inquiries

**By KELLY FOSS**  
*R-B News*

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: September 21, 2000 PAGE: 41	
		PUB

PUB

# Power corp. submits capital budget

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

Newfoundland Power is seeking regulatory approval for a capital budget for 2001 which is eight per cent less than its 2000 expenditure.

The Public Utilities Board (PUB) has scheduled a public hearing for Friday on the utility's application for approval of a capital budget totalling approximately \$39.1 million for next year.

The application submitted to the board Aug. 15 also seeks approval for a number of other items such as leases in excess of \$5,000 per year and determining various rate bases.

In its notice of the hearing, the PUB said any and all customers of Newfoundland Power, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro customers whose rates are based on the rate schedule of Newfoundland Power, may be affected by the proposed application.

The hearing will begin 9:30 a.m. Friday in the board's hearings room at the Prince Charles Building, Torbay Road.

Charlotte McCardle, the utility's

corporate communications specialist, said Wednesday the 2001 capital budget focuses on improving the electrical system and, in turn, enhancing safety, reliability and customer service.

"More than half the 2001 budget will be used to refurbish the electrical system," McCardle said.

**"Obtaining regulatory approval for the proposed expenditures sooner will enable the company to begin detailed construction planning earlier, order materials well in advance, and begin 2001 capital work without delay."**

Charlotte McCardle,  
Newfoundland Power's  
communications specialist

She said this capital budget approval has no impact on electrical rates.

"The 2001 electrical rates will be determined by the application of the automatic adjustment formula in November."

Capital programs scheduled for next year include rebuilding distribution feeders, rehabilitating hydro plants, and replacing deteriorated equipment, she said.

McCardle said the company has submitted its capital budget application earlier than usual this year.

"Obtaining regulatory approval for the proposed expenditures sooner will enable the company to begin detailed construction planning earlier, order materials well in advance, and begin 2001 capital work without delay," she said.

"This will assist in further increasing productivity and lowering overall cost to customers."

The largest expenditure in the proposed capital budget is \$18.7 million for distribution, followed by \$5.4 million for energy supply and \$3.6 million for information systems.

Other items in the budget are: substations, \$2.2 million; transmission, \$2.1 million; general expenses capital, \$2.6 million; general property, \$1.7 million; transportation, \$1.8 million; and telecommunications, \$683,000.

McCardle said within the distribution expenditure, approximately \$17

million is directly related to providing extensions and services for new customers.

"The balance of the distribution budget is marked for projects such as distribution line rebuilds and refurbishments and the purchase of transformers."

Within the energy supply category, approximately \$4 million is allocated for the rehabilitation of up to 16 of the company's 23 hydro plants, McCardle said.

"These rehabilitation projects will provide enhanced public safety and increase generating efficiency of the plants," she said.

Extending the capabilities of the company's new system technology to increase operating control of the electrical system, reducing outage duration times and improving public safety accounts for the remainder of the energy supply budget, she said.

Related story, page 42

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<b>NEWSWATCH</b>	The Advertiser Grand Falls-Windsor, NF	POSITION	
<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: September 28, 2000 PAGE: A6		

## Newfoundland Power files capital budget

(St. John's, NF) Newfoundland Power filed its 2001 capital budget with the Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities (PUB) Friday.

"Our proposed capital budget for 2001 is approximately \$39 million," said Philip G. Hughes, president and chief executive officer. "More than half of the expenditures are directly related to improving reliability, enhancing customer service and ensuring the safety of the public and our employees."

Newfoundland Power's 2001 capital budget responds

to customers' expectations for reliable service and keeping electrical rates the lowest in Atlantic Canada by taking a proactive approach to maintaining the provincial electrical system.

"Our customers consistently tell us, through quarterly customer research, that their main concerns are reliable service and low-cost electricity," explained Mr. Hughes. "Our proposed budget will enable our company to continue our focus of improving reliability while minimizing costs over the long-term."

This year Newfoundland

Power has submitted its capital budget application earlier than usual. Obtaining regulatory approval earlier in the year will enable the company to commence detailed construction planning earlier and order materials well in advance of projects.

"By seeking approval now, we hope to be ready to begin capital work without delay should the winter be mild," said Hughes. "This will enable Newfoundland Power to better allocate resources, increase productivity and keep costs down for customers."

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		X
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 13, 2000 PAGE: 34	

PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

# Utility's budget gets approval

Justice Minister Kelvin Parsons responds to complaint raised by Glovertown businessman

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

Newfoundland Power's 2001 capital budget, recently approved by the Public Utilities Board (PUB), responds to customers' expectations, according to a company official.

The \$39-million budget, which was the subject of a public hearing by the PUB Sept. 22, has been granted approval by the regulatory authority.

"In 2001, Newfoundland Power will invest approximately \$39 million to further enhance customer service, reliability and safety by improving its electrical system," said Bob Pike, manager of corporate communications.

Pike said the budget responds to customers' expectations for reliable service and keeping electrical rates the lowest in Atlantic Canada by taking a proactive approach to maintaining the provincial electrical system.

He said the utility continues to focus on improving reliability while minimizing costs over the long term.

"This focus is driven by our customers' expectations for reliable service and low-cost electricity as

**"I don't see any reason why he wouldn't proceed to ask his questions."**

Justice Minister  
Kelvin Parsons

The utility official also said that by receiving approval for the 2001 capital budget earlier, the company can begin capital work earlier.

"This is yet another way that Newfoundland Power can increase productivity and keep costs down for our customers."

Capital programs scheduled for next year include rebuilding distribution feeders, rehabilitating hydro plants, and replacing deteriorated equipment.

The largest expenditure is \$18.7 million for distribution, followed by \$5.4 million for energy supply, and \$3.6 million for information systems.

Other expenditures include \$2.2 million for substations, \$2.1 million for transmission, and \$2.6 million for general expenses capital.

## Businessman's complaint

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Kelvin Parsons has responded to a complaint raised by Terry Burry, a Glovertown businessman who wanted to be given intervenor status at the public hearing at which Newfoundland Power's capital budget was reviewed.

In a letter to Parsons, Burry said although he was granted permission by the board to proceed with the 25 questions he wanted to ask the utility, he felt he could not do so because of a

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NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF 55523	POSITION
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 18, 2000 PAGE: 44	X

2/2

onshore clients and the offshore sector, and at a time when both are seeking to manage costs through the integration of quality and technical services."

In addition, he said, the new operation will provide an opportunity to "advance Newfoundland and Labrador's capability through local resources and people."

#### Greater value created

Bill Theriault, group manager with AQTS, said, "Being able to expand the application of our cutting-edge technology and blend our experience with ConPro Group adds up to greater value for all our clients, and that is what industry is looking for."

Theriault added, "We will be setting up shop (in St. John's) over the coming weeks and look forward to working closely with our Newfoundland partners."

At present, there are about 180 employees but that will be expended over the next three to five years, he said.

The new company has already begun advertising for employment opportunities in such areas as surveyors and survey technicians, welding technicians, inspectors, coating inspectors, crane service technicians and heat treatment technicians.

There are a number of long-term initiatives under way, as well, to bring quality and technical services to Newfoundland's industrial sectors, the company officials said.

Sandra Kelly, minister of industry, trade and technology, said Tuesday it is exciting to see this new partnership being launched.

"Combining the strengths of these two groups will enable Newfoundland and Labrador to diversify our expertise, both onshore and offshore, and become more competitive."



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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 23, 2000 PAGE: 8A		

## Newfoundland Power improves performance in third quarter

Newfoundland Power Inc. has reported further performance improvements in the third quarter of 2000.

Results released Friday indicate the company has further improved earnings, system reliability and customer satisfaction while reducing operating costs.

"On a year-to-date basis we have improved earnings per share by 16 per cent," said Philip G. Hughes, President and Chief Executive Officer. "Earnings per share were \$2.09 at the end of the third quarter 2000 compared to \$1.80 for the same period in 1999."

"This improvement is a direct result of our company's efforts to upgrade the provincial electrical system in a manner that improves reliability and customer service, while at the same time minimizing long-term maintenance and operating costs," he added.

Newfoundland Power's system reliability has significantly improved in the first three quarters of 2000 as a result of the company's reliability initiatives and favourable weather conditions. The number of outages and length of service interruptions have been reduced by 34 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

In the third quarter, Newfoundland Power received a customer satisfaction rating of 90 per cent, placing the company's year-to-date average at an all-time high of 89 per cent. Since 1996, customer satisfaction has increased by 27 per cent.

In the first three quarters of 2000, the company's operating expenses were reduced by \$2.8 million compared to the same period in 1999. Approximately \$1.3 million of this reduction resulted from lower labour costs associated with a 1999 early retirement

program, aggressive cost control measures and productivity initiatives. The remainder of the reduction resulted from the adoption of new accounting rules for pensions.

In May 2000, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency reversed its position with regards to a reassessment of the company's general expenses capitalized. As a result, income taxes for 2000 have been reduced by \$1.8 million to record the full deductibility of general expenses capitalized for both 1999 and 2000. This has contributed to higher year-to-date earnings.

In the third quarter 2000, earnings applicable to common shares were \$2.9 million compared to \$2.5 million for the same quarter last year. On a year-to-date basis, earnings applicable to common shares were \$21.6 million compared to \$18.6 million for the same period last year.

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NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF	POSITION
		X
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 24, 2000 PAGE: 31	

## UTILITY

# Utility reports improved earnings

*Newfoundland Power's customer satisfaction up 27 per cent since 1996*

BY PAT DOYLE  
The Telegram

**N**ewfoundland Power says its just-released third-quarter results show the utility has further improved earnings, system reliability and customer satisfaction while reducing operating costs.

"On a year-to-year basis we have improved earnings per share by 16 per cent," said Philip Hughes, president and chief executive officer.

"Earnings per share were \$2.09 at the end of the third quarter 2000, compared to \$1.80 for the same period in 1999."

Hughes said, "this improvement is a direct result of our company's efforts to upgrade the provincial electrical systems in a manner that improves reliability and customer service, while at the same time minimizing long-term maintenance and operating costs."

In the period ended Sept. 30, 2000, Newfoundland Power's earnings applicable to common shares amounted to \$2.9 million, compared to \$2.5 million for the same quarter last year.

On a year-to-date basis, earnings applicable to common shares were \$21.6 million, compared to \$18.6 million for the same period last year.

All of the common shares of Newfoundland Power are owned by its parent company, Fortis Inc.

The utility also reported that in May 2000, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency reversed its position with re-

gard to a reassessment of the company's general expenses capitalized.

"As a result, income taxes for 2000 have been reduced by \$1.8 million to record the full deductibility of general expenses capitalized for both 1999 and 2000," the company said. "This has contributed to higher year-to-date earnings."

The company's system reliability has significantly improved in the first three quarters of 2000 as a result of reliability initiatives and favourable weather conditions, Hughes said.

"The number of outages and length-of-service interruptions have been reduced by 34 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively, compared to the same period last year," he said.

He also said in the first three quarters of this year, the utility's operating expenses were reduced by \$2.8 million, compared to the same period in 1999.

"Approximately \$1.3 million of this reduction resulted from lower labour costs associated with a 1999 early retirement program, aggressive cost-control measures and productivity initiatives."

The remainder of the reduction resulted from the adoption of new accounting rules for pensions, he said.

Hughes also said Newfoundland Power received a customer satisfaction rating of 90 per cent in the third quarter, making the year-to-date average an all-time high of 89 per cent.

"Since 1996, customer satisfaction has increased by 27 per cent."

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**Please see page 4**

### Newfoundland Power improves performance in third quarter

#### Continued from page 3

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 24, 2000 PAGE: 11	8/10/22

# Linemen and firefighters put their lives on the line

**By BILL BOWMAN**  
*The Compass*

Safety and community involvement were the two key issues which Bob Pike emphasized in a speech in Carbonear Oct. 14.

The manager of corporate communications with Newfoundland Power was the guest speaker at the Carbonear Volunteer Fire Department's 28th annual Firefighters Ball.

The Carbonear native told the approximately 250 guests who turned out at the Lions Den for the event that, "Newfoundland Power line crews and firefighters have several things in common - we both carry out dangerous jobs that are accom-

plished only through extensive training and the proper use of equipment. We both provide essential services to our communities, and are ready to respond when we are needed, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Mr. Pike described safety as an "uncompromised priority" with Newfoundland Power. He said the president of his company wants each and every employee, and the contractors that work for them to go home every day safely to their families.

"It is this awareness of what safety means to individuals and their families that is the heart of the safety commitment at Newfoundland Power," he said.

As firefighters, he suggest-

ed, "you, obviously, have to make a similar commitment to yourselves and to your fellow firefighters. We've made it a priority to develop this awareness to ensure every employee approaches each action, project, and job with safety as their main priority.

"Likewise, as firefighters, you must approach each fire in the same manner. We believe improving the safety of the work environment is the most significant contribution we can make to ourselves and to each other."

Referring to firefighter Geoff Moore, who acted as emcee for the event, Mr. Pike noted, "as a linesman with Newfoundland Power, Geoff works in a high

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EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 24, 2000 PAGE: 11	842042

## *Safety should be top priority: Nfld. Power spokesman*

risk environment every day. To carry out his job in a manner that ensures his own personal, and his co-workers' safety, along with the safety of customers and the general public, Geoff undergoes extensive and ongoing training."

He also spoke of Geoff's "personal commitment to safety, and his awareness of the implications of unsafe work practices. Thanks to the dedication of people like Geoff, we're steadily improving our workplace, and making a real difference in the lives of our employees, contractors, community members and their families."

Similarly, he said, "as a volunteer fire department, there has to be a commitment to train-

ing, and ensuring you have the proper tools and equipment to fulfill your role.

"It is essential that this fire department and other fire departments have the continued support of all levels of government," he said.

Turning to the importance of volunteerism, Mr. Pike said members of volunteer fire departments are to be commended for giving freely of their time to protect families.

He said Newfoundland Power, which has been involved in a series of ongoing programs dealing with safety and community awareness, is, once again, partnering with the provincial Fire Chiefs and Firefighters association in devel-

oping a new promotional campaign to help recruit more volunteer firefighters throughout the province.

The recruitment and public awareness campaign is designed "to illustrate the essential role volunteer firefighters play in our communities."

Mr. Pike explained a woman firefighter is being featured in the promotional posters "to break the traditional mindset Newfoundlanders hold that only men are volunteer firefighters." With many men, especially in smaller communities, having to leave home for work, more and more women are becoming volunteer firefighters.

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NEWSWATCH	The Advertiser	POSITION
	Windsor-Grand Falls, NF	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 30, 2000 PAGE: 11	

# Cancer connection?

Continued from page 1  
and has been trying to help the family as much as he can.

"This is obviously a very sensitive issue for his family, and I've talked to him on numerous occasions," said the Newfoundland Power employee. "He was concerned about electric magnetic fields, so we sent him an information package on what we have on that. In addition to that, we actually sent someone out to do testing and measurements for him in and around his house.

"Basically the only thing we can show someone in a situation like that is that there are no concerns about the level of electromagnetic fields coming from power lines," he added. "In actual fact, to put things in perspective, the readings from normal household appliances are actually higher than anything from a power line."

Mr. Pike said there have been numerous studies done around the world which have tried to find a connection, but there is no conclusive evidence to date that actually links cancer and transformers.

"Someone may find a study that raises some doubts, and someone else may find one that says it's not an issue," he said. "It's one of those things that's up in the air. But when you have someone who's concerned, I know it's just got to be frustrating for him."

As for what's in a transformer, Mr. Pike said it's oil.

"Mr. Higgins was concerned with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyl), and I told him there hasn't been anything manufactured with PCBs in it for years," he said. "But transformers have been changed since then, and testing been done on them so there's not an issue from that perspective either."

At this point, Mr. Pike said moving the line away from

Mr. Higgins' home is not an option for the company.

"We have had discussions with him about moving it, and we have been out to do all the measurements," he said. "But where the line is meets all of the specifications, both from the electrical standards, and also from the safety perspective. So there's no need to move it.

"The way it is now, there's no issue that says we have to go down there and move it," he added. "Likewise, where would we move it? The line has been there for a long time. In actual fact, the house was built underneath it. Now that the houses are around it, is his neighbour going to say, 'That's okay, you can put it closer to my house?' It becomes problematic when you try to find another route that doesn't cost \$5,000."

## PUBLIC SAFETY

According to Newfoundland Power, the bottom line is there is no public safety concern.

"There's no health issue here and that's something he has to come to grips with," said Mr. Pike. "I think the big thing for everyone to keep in mind is that this is a sensitive issue for him and for his wife. We just can't disregard his concerns, even though there is no need for concern.

"To him these concerns are very real, and it's fine for me to say something, but I'm not the one dealing with cancer in

my family," added Mr. Pike. "I think we've done everything we can. Some people would think we have done more than we are required to, but recognizing the situation we've sent our engineering and technical people go down and talk to him and do readings. We've sent out all the information we have from environment groups, trying to keep him as informed as any one person can possibly be."

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NEWSWATCH	The Advertiser Windsor-Grand Falls, NF	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: October 30, 2000 PAGE: 7		

## Newfoundland Power receives environmental award

Continued from page 4

pany and, in particular, the employees who worked on this project to see our environmental focus recognized in this manner."

In developing the Rose Blanche Hydro Plant, Newfoundland Power worked in partnership with various environmental organizations, such

as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding environment. In addition to refurbishing an existing fishway, the company created two new fishways, constructed a one kilometre long fisheries habitat compensation channel and installed a valve on the hydro plant to ensure a minimum flow of

water at all times for fish.

The hydro plant, which was officially opened in August 1999, has six-megawatt capacity and provides a more secure and reliable supply of electricity to customers in the Port aux Basques area. Customers on the southwest coast were previously served by a 185-km transmission line connection that tra-

versed some of the roughest terrain in Newfoundland.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation, Newfoundland and Labrador division, nominated Newfoundland Power for the APEGN award. Newfoundland Power was presented with the award during APEGN's Annual General Meeting in Gander Saturday.

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<b>NEWSWATCH</b>	Corner Brook, NF - The Western Star A/C	POSITION	
		X	
<b>EXPRESSCLIP</b>	DATE: October 31, 2000	PAGE: 2 1/2	

### Newfoundland Power receives award

ST. JOHN'S - Newfoundland Power will receive the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Environmental Award for 2000 for its Rose Blanche Hydroelectric plant.

The Rose Blanche project demonstrated that work can be selected, designed and executed in an environmentally friendly manner, according to Colin Kurasek, chair of the APEGN environment committee.

In developing the plant, Newfoundland Power worked in partnership with various environmental organizations to ensure minimal impact.

An existing fishway was refurbished, two new fishways were created, a habitat compensation channel was constructed and a valve was installed on the plant to ensure a minimum flow of water at all times.

### Kelly named tourism minister

ST. JOHN'S - Sandra Kelly has been appointed acting minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. The appointment comes after the resignation of Charles J. Furey who is running in the upcoming federal election.

"I am sure that Sandra Kelly will draw on her previous experience as tourism minister and will do an admirable job for the department in her acting capacity," said Premier Beaton Tulk.

The appointment is effective immediately.

### Policy committee visits Labrador

ST. JOHN'S - Mines and Energy Minister Paul Dicks, chairman of the province's Economic Policy Committee, says the committee will be making a two-day visit to Labrador.

The visit began at Blanc Sablon Monday afternoon and includes several communities along the Labrador coast. Other communities part of the tour include L'Anse au Clair, Point Amour, Red Bay, West St. Modeste, L'Anse au Diable, L'Anse au Loup and Forteau.

EPC is the committee responsible for making recommendations to cabinet on economic and resource policy matters.



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NEWSWATCH	Corner Brook, NF - The Western Star A/C	POSITION	
			X
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 2, 2000	PAGE: 4	1

(NFID)

## Companies pay for flu shots to keep employees healthy

By COLLEEN LEWIS  
Star Staff Writer

### CORNER BROOK

Ten local companies are offering flu shots to their employees, and for some, the effort is paying off.

The Canadian Coalition for Influenza Immunization estimates during the 1997-98 flu season, businesses lost in excess of \$500 million due to absenteeism and lost sales.

As a preventive measure, local businesses including Newfoundland Power have offered to pay the cost of the vaccination for all their employees.

This year Newfoundland Power has also expanded to provide shots for employees' families.

"It's certainly worked out for us," said Dianne Drover, office coordinator. "We see a real benefit from it."

Newfoundland Power has monitored the results of the vaccination program at the office to see whether there would be fewer sick days used.

Drover said there has been a "vast improvement" and each year new employees participate in the program.

A New England Journal of Medicine study showed vaccinated employees had 43 per cent fewer days of sick leave and 44 per cent fewer visits to the doctor due to upper respiratory infections.

The vaccination clinics are being offered through the VON in Corner Brook as part of the workplace influenza immunization program using Fluviral influenza vaccine from BioChem.

Eileen Pitcher, executive director, said while the flu is costly for companies, it can also endanger the lives of people who are high-risk.

In businesses where employees deal directly with the public, a flu

shot may save the lives of high-risk people including senior citizens and those who suffer chronic illnesses.

For up to 1,500 Canadians a year, the flu or complications from the illness actually lead to death.

But studies have shown that only 40 to 60 per cent of those who are "strongly urged" to get a flu shot actually do so.

Pitcher said those figures are probably accurate when applied to the number of people in Corner Brook who get the shot.

She said some people probably don't get the vaccination because they think the shot will give them the flu.

"The flu vaccine is a dead virus," she said. "You don't get the flu from the vaccine."

The dead virus that people are injected with usually match those strains circulating in the Far East at the end of Canada's flu season, from October to April.

This year the threat is deemed to come from a Moscow flu, a New Caledonia strain and a Beijing bug.

Immunization is 70 to 90 per cent effective in preventing or reducing the severity of the disease in healthy adults.

It is the third year the VON has offered the program, and Pitcher said by protecting themselves, people also protect others.

The disease spreads easily through the air and direct contact. It can leave you in bed for five to 10 days, and leave victims feeling exhausted for up to a month.

Incubation is one to four days and people can pass it on before they have symptoms.

Health Canada says it has been told by its two vaccine suppliers that no delays or shortages are expected this fall.

People with egg allergies, and allergies to Thimerosal (which is used in some contact lens solutions) should avoid the vaccination.

NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 2, 2000 PAGE: 5		X

## HEALTH/BUSINESS

## Companies benefit from flu shot program

The Western Star—Corner Brook

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82

NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF 55523	POSITION	
		X	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 3, 2000 PAGE: 36		

2/2

tion has increased by 20 per cent to 66,000 barrels a day and gas production by 15 per cent to 750 million cubic feet a day.

Buckee said the company had hoped for more production from Canadian operations, blaming plant turn-arounds, bad weather and one-time operational issues for the smaller rise in output. However, the firm expects to improve production before year's end.

Talisman also said its purchases of the Central Foothills and Columbia gas collection systems in Western Canada "provide access to a relatively underexposed part of the basin."

"This increases our footprint in an area where the future of Canadian gas lies," Buckee said.

Production from the company's North Sea ventures was down by four per cent from the second quarter due to scheduled and unscheduled maintenance at its operations off the U.K.

coast. However, Buckee said operational costs have been cut.

Despite political tensions in Sudan, which the company entered in 1998, Buckee still sees growth opportunities in the area, a major source of oil for the company. One new well will be tested this month and two more next month.

"Sudan is a great asset financially and operationally," he said.

Talisman is also actively exploring opportunities in the oil-rich Middle East, he said, and an office could open in Bahrain in the next few months.


"Lots of people are looking around the world to find oil, and generally speaking, it's in the Middle East," he said, adding the company is searching for "another core oil area" and natural gas possibilities in Canada.

Generally, however, new development will focus on areas where the company already has solid footing.

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NEWSWATCH	Gulf News – Port Aux Basques	POSITION
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 6, 2000 PAGE: 1A	

# Quickread

## Environmental award

 Newfoundland Power was awarded the AKPEGN 2000 Environment Award for their Rose Blanche Hydroelectric Plant.

The Rose Blanche Project was the first hydroelectric development undertaken by Newfoundland Power since 1983.

Environmental planning accounted for approximately \$1 million, or seven per cent, of the total cost for the Rose Blanche project.

The hydro plant will displace 38,000 barrels of oil and eliminate approximately 19,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually in Newfoundland. In addition to refurbishing an existing fishway, the company created two new fishways, constructed a one kilometre long fisheries habitat compensation channel and installed a valve on the hydro plant to ensure a minimum flow of water at all times for fish.

Customers on the southwest coast were previously served a 185-km transmission line connection that traversed some of the roughest terrain in Newfoundland.

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NEWSWATCH	Corner Brook, NF - The Western Star A/C	POSITION X	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 9, 2000	PAGE: 4	4

# Power outages leave Springdale council in the dark

By JERRY BRETT  
Star Correspondent.

## SPRINGDALE

Newfoundland Power's slow response to recent power outages have left both residents and the Springdale town council in the dark.

At a recent council meeting, Councillor Len Wellman was left groping for answers after receiving a complaint from a resident whose electricity had been out for over four hours. The delay in having electrical service restored left Coun. Wellman dismayed following council's efforts to see Newfoundland Power improve service by stationing a full-time repair technician in town.

Wary of any cutbacks in service, council had pressed Newfoundland Power for a full time repairman when the company had earlier seemed likely to transfer the position out of Springdale.

What council hadn't counted on, however, was the red tape involved in dispatching the repair service from Newfoundland Power's St. John's office.

Based on his work experience, Coun. Wellman claimed that the recent outages could have been quickly repaired but that the problem lay in the delay in dispatching the local Newfoundland Power employee to the site of the outage.

"We should send Newfoundland Power a letter saying we are unhappy with the dispatching," said the councillor. "They'll probably say they had problems elsewhere, but so what. This could have been a problem at the hospital or anywhere."

Mayor Louise England agreed that the method of dispatching repair service seemed to be the issue. She gave the example of a resident who had to call the repair service directly after having already twice called the company dispatch office without results.

The mayor also recounted her own dissatisfaction with Newfoundland Power's repair service following an electrical fire at her place of business. The repair crew, she said, interrupted the busiest part of the day to correct a problem which she claims originated with the company's equipment. Instead of arranging a more agreeable time, the repair crew was a disruption, which Mayor England blamed on the dispatch office.

The delays may be caused by a lack of staff, according to some councillors. When Coun. Wellman said Newfoundland Power should hire enough personnel to fix the outages quicker, Coun. Dorman Croucher proposed that the company revert to having two service employees in town as once was the case.

Coun. Wellman wasn't convinced that more employees were the answer.

"It doesn't matter if there are 10 here if they won't dispatch," he said.

Coun. George Yates tried to point to the poor weather as being partly to blame, but Coun. Wellman insisted that high winds or not, "taking four or five hours to check things out would make you mad."

In other business, the town manager reported that repairs to the roof of the curling club were progressing despite bad weather. Approval was given to spend up to \$2,000 for a fence to guard an open culvert which was considered to be a hazard.

Coun. Wellman objected to the project which he called unnecessary. "I haven't seen any drawings on this. I don't agree with any of this. What's next - a bridge?"

Gerald Pelley, the town's public works chairman, was not swayed by Coun. Wellman's objections. Pelley said the fence project had been duly approved and will proceed within the spending limits set by council.

Coun. Rick Goudie thanked the town's public works department for adding a crosswalk at a school bus stop located near St. Luke's church. The decision was taken, explained Coun. Pelley, upon the suggestion of the school board.

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NEWSWATCH	Corner Brook, NF – The Western Star A/C	POSITION	
		X	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November <u>9</u> , 2000	PAGE: <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	

## Newfoundland Power investing \$40 million in capital projects

By MACHELLE CURTIS  
Star Staff Writer

### CORNER BROOK

Philip Hughes says with Newfoundland Power spending approximately \$40 million in the last year, customers can look forward to an increasingly reliable electrical service at a reasonable cost.

Hughes, the company's president and chief executive officer, brought his message to members of the Corner Brook Chamber of Commerce during a luncheon at the Glynmill Inn Wednesday.

"When we listen to our customers, without fail, the two things they say are important are reliability and cost," Hughes said.

In addition to this year's considerable investment, Hughes predicts another \$38 to \$40 million will be invested in the next two to three years in capital projects across the province.

The goal, he said, will be to address everything from refurbishing hydro plants to rebuilding distribution lines.

"I think one of the most important things about this large investment is that it will be used in areas where it is best needed," he said.

"We will also get more electronic intelligence out in the system and what that means is, we can find the problem quicker and then we spend less labour time looking for it."

Having come onboard in January 1997 Hughes said the company's cost has continued to decline over the last five years, assisted tremen-



PHILIP HUGHES

dously by employees' successful efforts to reduce operating cost per customer by about 15 per cent.

"I think that is probably where we have improved the most in the last five years. We have become much more focused as to where we spend the money," he said.

"We've reduced cost quite significantly when you think five years ago it was about \$300 per customer. Now it is somewhere around \$240 per customer."

With the recent increases in home heating fuel and the winter season just around the corner, Hughes is assuring customers his company has no planned increases for the near

future.

"In terms of future rates, from Newfoundland Power's point of view we believe we can hold the rates where they are," he said.

"However, we buy a lot of our power from Newfoundland Hydro so obviously if they increase their prices, then we would have to increase ours."

Pointing to the fact that electrical rates have only increased by 1.2 per cent in the last 10 years, Hughes said Newfoundlanders should take comfort in knowing their rates are currently lower than many of their neighbors.

"The bad news is, electricity bills in February are going to be high, but they are still the lowest in Atlantic Canada," he said.

"Our ability to keep electrical rates low is not something that just happens and when you're putting in \$40 million a year you have to make sure you are spending it in the right places."

To take the company into the future, Hughes said the electrical company will continue on the same path, working to give customers more of what they have been asking for.

"When you think about utilities in a lot of ways you want to be anonymous because when somebody flicks the light switch and they give it any conscious thought we are not doing our job," he said.

"It is automatic and that's what we are trying to do because that will mean we are successful."

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NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF 55523	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: November 10, 2000 PAGE: 4	X	

### No hike in power rates

With gas prices soaring, Newfoundlanders can take some comfort in the fact that at least their electricity rates aren't following the same short-term trend.

Newfoundland Power announced Thursday that customers will "enjoy stable electrical rates heading into 2001."

Under an automatic adjustment formula, adopted in 1998 by the Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities (PUB), there will be no change in power rates.

The formula is applied every November to determine the power rates for the upcoming year.

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NEWSWATCH	Evening News New Glasgow, NS      A/C	POSITION	
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: December 2, 2000 Page: <b>A2</b>		

## First storm of season closes business, schools in eastern Nfld.

The Canadian Press

St. John's, Nfld.

Schools and businesses closed across the Avalon Peninsula on Friday as the first winter storm of the season swept across eastern Newfoundland.

Environment Canada reported that 16 centimetres of snow fell on the city by mid-afternoon and another 15 centimetres were forecast.

The white stuff was brought by 90-kilometre-an-hour gusts that caused whiteouts and made travel almost impossible.

By early afternoon, non-essential workers with the provincial and municipal governments had been sent home and businesses soon followed.

By 3 p.m., city buses weren't moving and most flights at St. John's International Airport had been cancelled.

Newfoundland Power reported outages in parts of St. John's, as well as other communities.

In the capital, a power line fell on to a parked van with nobody inside. The electrical current was so strong it caused the van's tires to burn.



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NEWSWATCH	The Telegram St. John's, NF	POSITION
EXPRESSCLIP	DATE: December 20, 2000 PAGE: 6	X

## A Christmas cheer for hardworking linemen

I live on Sugar Loaf Road and experienced a "brown-out" Dec. 12, and called Newfoundland Power. An hour later a truck and two linemen were at my door, and within minutes they were in the "cherry picker" fiddling with the transformer opposite my house. They fixed it. On the 13th it went wrong again — another call. Again, within the hour they were here. It's finally fixed.

The reason I am writing is this: what a fantastic bunch of guys. Not only competent, but cheerful, friendly and impressively professional — to a degree that I am writing this letter.

It's hard to imagine the terrible con-

ditions that these people have to sometimes work under — and if you guys (linemen) are reading this, "Bloody well done," from me and my family.

To your company, make a note of these guys — if they were my employees, I would be very proud to have them. Merry Christmas, guys, and thank you!

To those who are reading this: next time anyone sees these guys in the snow, rain and storms, on the top of a pole fixing high-voltage equipment to keep us warm and safe, go up to them and say, "Well done, b'y."

Aaron Kfir  
St. John's