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The Newsletter of the Public Service Secretariat

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Message from the Deputy Minister



outlooks insights

news & info

Dear Colleagues:

It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce *Outlooks + Insights*, the new newsletter of the Public Service Secretariat (PSS).

This newsletter will provide information on the many current and upcoming initiatives of the PSS as we move forward with the implementation of the Provincial Government's *Human Resource Management Strategy*.

Our goal is to create a vehicle for communicating and enhancing awareness of the various activities and initiatives happening within our divisions, providing status updates on important policies, programs and services while highlighting the exciting opportunities that lie ahead for our public service.

It is also a new forum for exchanging information about the work that impacts not only our own divisions, but all departments throughout the Provincial Government. By sharing information about the work of the Public Service Secretariat, **Outlooks + Insights** will aim to build upon our important relationship with employees in other departments and divisions. The articles presented, therefore, will showcase what we can collectively accomplish working together in the public service.

I would like to thank our contributors for the Winter 2011 issue: Terry Kennedy and Gary Tiller (*Job Evaluation System*); Patricia Power, Jeff Butt, Nicole Harris, Krista Legge, Debbie Curtis, Marie Wells and Tracy Puddester (*Diversity and Inclusiveness*); Gail Hickey, Elizabeth Whitten, Marilyn McCormack and Mike Samson (*Critical Skills Inventory*).

It is my pleasure to also introduce our editorial team for **Outlooks + Insights**: Mark King, *Communications*; Steven Walsh, *Centre for Learning & Development*; Elizabeth Whitten, *Strategic Initiatives*; Anthony Allen, *Strategic Initiatives*; and Roma Bridger, *Corporate Services*.

As we move forward with this newsletter, we welcome your feedback, comments and ideas for future editions. In the meantime, I hope you find **Outlooks + Insights** an informative and valuable resource!

Brenda Caul

Deputy Minister
Public Service Secretariat

Exceptional People. Exceptional Public Service.

Newfoundland
Labrador

Public Service Secretariat

Being Prepared

Emergencies, disruptions and disasters can strike quickly.

With that in mind, the Public Service Secretariat has launched a new Critical Skills Inventory to assist the Provincial Government in identifying the qualifications, training, skills and abilities of staff employed throughout the public service – information that could prove to be very useful when faced with emergency situations.

This inventory is an online database that can be completed voluntarily by individual employees. The information collected will enable the Provincial Government to quickly identify staff that are available to be contacted in emergency situations to deliver important and vital services within the province.

Take, for example, the recent impact of Hurricane Igor. On September 21, 2010, over 90 communities throughout Eastern Newfoundland were impacted when Hurricane Igor brought powerful winds and heavy rain to much of the island portion of the province.

Representatives from Fire and Emergency Services NL advised that at the height of the storm, Newfoundland Power reported

Critical Skills Inventory



approximately 75,000 households were without power. Schools were closed and there was a disruption in the delivery of public services. There was also extensive damage to homes, businesses and provincial and municipal infrastructure.

The Avalon, Bonavista and Burin Peninsulas were the hardest hit areas. Severe flooding breached more than 125 culverts and roads and left 20 bridges destroyed. Eighty-nine communities on the Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas were left isolated. Flooding was extensive, resulting in numerous sections of roadway being closed and then re-opened when the water receded and inspections concluded. Many private homes were severely damaged due to flooding and residents were forced to move out of their homes and seek shelter in alternate accommodations.

Responding to Igor was a massive undertaking that demanded extraordinary access to human resources and capabilities at a moment's notice.

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Job Evaluation System Project



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O+I: What activities are involved when training employees and supervisors in the Job Evaluation System?

TK: Training involves attending a three hour classroom session where we provide employees and supervisors with information on the project and process. We also provide participants with detailed instructions on how to complete a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ).

O+I: What is a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)?

TK: The PDQ is a tool for collecting job content information that can be used to evaluate a job against the nine compensable factors of the established job evaluation system. They are designed so that employees can describe their job functions clearly and accurately. The PDQs focus on the requirements of the job rather than on employee performance or qualifications.

O+I: How many Position Description Questionnaires have been completed and received?

TK: 2708 PDQs have been completed and received to date.

O+I: Were there any challenges during the initial phase of the project? If so, how have these been addressed?

TK: As with any project of this magnitude, communication is essential. Getting information to participants and engaging them in the process of completing the training and the PDQs has been a challenging yet rewarding learning experience. Employees know their jobs the best, and to ensure the PDQs accurately reflect the work being done, employee participation is an integral part of this project.

Another challenge was the outbreak of the HINI virus, which meant resources were focused on the health and safety of the people of the province, particularly in the health care sectors. Holiday schedules and labour negotiations also presented challenges with scheduling implementation of the initial roll-out of the project.

We also discovered that resources to the project within the PSS had to be re-evaluated and enhanced for us to complete the project within the timelines. The team has been continuously reviewing the status of the project, making adjustments and modifications to ensure we meet the project goals and objectives.

O+I: What will be the expected impact of the Job Evaluation System on employees and the various departments and agencies within government?

TK: The JES will provide a more efficient, transparent, user-friendly and easier to understand classification framework to support a number of human resource processes in government, such as recruitment, succession planning and competency development.

O+I: What next steps are planned for the JES project?

TK: Now that training has concluded, the project team is fully engaged in reviewing and analyzing the PDQs to inform the development of Job Class Profiles. The Job Class Profiles will be rated to determine the relative rating of positions within the organization. Government will use this information in establishing pay levels.

O+I: Is there union participation in the JES project?

TK: Yes. The Association of Allied Health Professionals, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees and the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses' Union have participated on a joint steering committee which is advisory to government.

O+I: Is there additional information available for employees that would like to learn more about the Job Evaluation System?

TK: Yes. Our goal is to use as many methods of communication and engagement as possible. For more information about the Job Evaluation System, employees can visit the Classification and Compensation Division's website at:

www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/pss/newjobevaluation.html

Employees can also contact our office directly at 729-3383 (1-888-729-3383) or by email: JES@gov.nl.ca



Diversity and Inclusiveness

What's happening in the public service to support diversity and inclusiveness?

An interdepartmental team has been established to work towards the development of a comprehensive strategy in support of diversity and inclusiveness within the public service.

Diversity and inclusiveness involves supporting a work environment in which all individuals are treated with equity and respect, and are actively engaged in processes and have equal access to opportunities.

Diversity is the extent to which we encourage differences, including individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds and behaviours.

Inclusiveness implies a culture that values our diversity, where employees are valued not in spite of but because of their uniqueness.

In the interim, there are already a number of successful programs and initiatives throughout the public service that support a more diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees. The following highlight some recent successes and ongoing initiatives.

Employment for Persons with Disabilities

The Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities operates a number of employment programs and services designed to assist persons with disabilities attain employment in the public service. These programs and services also provide support to departments in identifying, recruiting and maintaining the employment of persons with disabilities.

The Office has formed a partnership with the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment to provide wage subsidies through the **Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities** to departments that hire persons with disabilities in positions related to their training. This is accomplished at little cost to the hiring department.

For more information about programs and services available, contact the Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities at 729-5881 or visit: www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/pss/disability_supports

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Diversity and Inlusiveness

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French Services

A part of promoting diversity in the public service is recognizing that various groups, such as Francophones, have different needs and access services in different ways. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recently signed the **Canada/Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement on French Language Services** with the federal government. The agreement serves as a blueprint for French language service delivery and support for Francophone and Acadian community development.

This agreement also supports language training, translation services, linguistic support, community liaison, policy development, support to the province's two Francophone community centres and support to the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs.

For more information on this agreement and how departments and employees can access translation services, contact the Office of French Services at 729-2223 or visit: www.gov.nl.ca/frenchservices

Policy Initiatives Supporting Diversity and Inlusiveness

The **Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace** policy is currently under revision. This policy supports a healthy and respectful workplace for all employees across government. Through increased awareness and education, the revised policy will strive to prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace through early intervention mechanisms.

A **Duty to Accommodate** policy is currently being developed to ensure all employees in the public service have equal opportunities to participate and fully contribute in government. Duty to accommodate

requires that employers make a reasonable effort to accommodate an employee on the basis of protected ground under the **Human Rights Act 2010**.

For more information on these policies, contact the HR Policy and Planning Division at 729-7170 or email: HRPolicyPlanning@gov.nl.ca

Partnering for Youth!

The Public Service Secretariat is conducting research to support youth employment initiatives in partnership with the Public Service Commission and Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

This partnership will explore how the public service can apply the insights of **Creating a Province of Choice: A Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy** within government, to show youth the benefits and opportunities when choosing a career with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For more information on this initiative, contact the Strategic Initiatives Division at 729-7593 or visit the Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy website: www.youth.gov.nl.ca/strategy/

did you know?

January:
National Braille Literacy Month

February:
Violence Prevention Month

March:
Women's History Month

April:
Diversity Month



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Emergencies, Disruption and Disaster

Provincial Government employees worked closely with municipal governments to coordinate emergency response measures to affected communities and individuals. Work crews were dispatched to complete repairs to municipal and provincial infrastructure while the Regional Health Authorities responded to emergency medical needs of residents.



In addition, volunteers from the Canadian Red Cross and the Salvation Army assisted in the distribution of essential items, including water, gasoline and flood clean-up kits. The Provincial Government also accepted an offer of assistance from the Department of National Defence for a frigate and associated Sea King helicopters. This was later expanded to include additional military vehicles and ground troops to help with rebuilding and humanitarian aid efforts.

Similarly, back in 2001, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center, many commercial flights heading to the United States were re-directed to our province.

A major emergency had just occurred, creating both a sense of uncertainty and urgency to respond in any way possible. A Canada-wide emergency measure known as Operation Yellow Ribbon was created to handle the diversion of civilian airline flights to airports across the country. As planes began landing in Newfoundland and Labrador airports, residents from St John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Stephenville,

Gander and other surrounding communities came together to provide assistance to thousands of displaced passengers from all around the world. For three days, people provided food, supplies and shelter to the passengers, even offering their own homes for comfort.

Whether it's a major flood that leaves a whole community homeless, a snowstorm that leaves residents without power or a forest fire that threatens our natural resources, people are needed to respond immediately to the challenges involved when these events occur.

We Need to Know About You!

In times of crisis, people from many different backgrounds come together to help out in any way they can. Realizing that there is a rich and diverse skill set within the public service, we are welcoming all government employees to participate in this new initiative.

You may have skills or experiences that we do not know about that can help us respond to emergencies, disasters or disruption in services. In emergency situations you may be called upon to apply your special skills acquired through volunteer work, general interests, past careers and/or work experience. Tell us about your unique skill set!

For more information on the Critical Skills Inventory and how you can complete your profile, visit www.intranet.gov.nl.ca/pss/criticalskills/ or contact your Strategic Human Resource Management unit.

We want to hear from you!

The editorial team of **Outlooks + Insights** wants to hear from employees as we move forward with this newsletter. Please send us your comments, suggestions or ideas, and what you might like to see in future editions.

Contact us at... outlooksandinsights@gov.nl.ca

Coming in the Spring 2011 edition:

■ Human Resource Strategy

■ Onboarding

■ Celebrating Public Service Work