

Year in Review

HF-Develop

Riverview saw growth in 2002

■ Big things in store for Albert County communities in coming year

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Albert County's rural character, marked by rolling landscapes, forests, mountainous terrain and tidal outcrops has been an attraction for local residents and tourists alike for generations.

Whether travelling along the main highway heading for Fundy National Park or twisting the winding interior roads that seem to lead everywhere, travellers can sense a quiet, unhurried lifestyle.

What is less evident is the slow but steady development occurring in some of the communities that dot the Albert County map.

Riverview, the first municipality you meet after crossing the Pet- itcodiac River and that calls itself the "Gateway to Albert County," is poised for a major expansion once the new bridge across the river and the east-west connector road open up vast tracts of land for commercial and residential development.

Travelling down Highway 114, Hillsborough representatives see a flurry of activity ahead as the municipality recovers from a difficult year. They, too, see themselves as the focal point for the surrounding region and the motoring public as the Eastern Gateway to the Fundy Tidal Zone. That's what the new sign purchased by the village will proclaim.

Next is Riverside-Albert, situated midway between Hillsborough and Alma, the gateway to Fundy National Park. Tourism is still the main industry in the region with the communities striving to find ways to attract more visitors to their sector. Alma officials are working on different projects to enhance their community and economic development.

* and library.

By contrast, Hillsborough residents and village administrators have had a most difficult year, beginning with municipal water woes. That problem is still in the process of being resolved but the prognosis looks good, said Hillsborough Mayor James Reid. All that's needed is an infusion of cash.

The water quality was never in doubt. It was the quantity of water available to supply the municipality.

Reid, who was elected to office in a byelection last December to succeed the late Eric Steeves, got a fiery baptism beginning with tackling the water problems and bringing in a new municipal budget with two new councillors on board. The village council has four councillors plus the mayor.

"It was a real can of worms. I knew there were a lot of problems. I just didn't know how many," he said.

The village's one-man utility department fell ill, which meant getting the arena icemaker to drive the snow plows during storms. At the same time, the new fire chief was sworn in and a new RCMP member arrived.

The compressor used to make ice at the arena died after more than 60 years of operation. It came from the former Moncton Stadium after the collapse of the stadium roof in 1970. A new compressor costing about \$40,000 had to be bought.

"It was a good way to break in" a new council, Reid joked.

The village spent \$50,000 to meet the requirements for good water and part of another \$50,000 to look for a new source of clean water. The town found a source about five miles (eight kilometres) away that can double the current capacity. The issue now is to find about \$1.2 million to bring the water to the town.

The municipality will be knocking on doors looking for funding for next year.