JOURNALS

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

OF THE

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

THIRD SESSION OF THE SIXTY-FIRST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2026-2027

THE HONOURABLE LOUISE IMBEAULT, LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Fredericton, N.B.
Tuesday, October 20, 2026

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS I have proclaimed that the second session of the sixty-first Legislative Assembly of this Province be prorogued on the twentieth day of October 2026 at 11:00 in the forenoon;

AND WHEREAS I have thought fit to call the third session of the sixty-first Legislative Assembly of this Province into session, I hereby issue a Proclamation that the same be called to meet on the twentieth day of October 2026 at 1:00 in the afternoon.



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the Province at Fredericton this 10th day of September, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Six, and in the fifth year of His Majesty's Reign.

BY COMMAND OF THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Robert K. McKee, K.C.
Attorney General.

Louise Imbeault, O.C., O.N.B.
Lieutenant-Governor

This being the day appointed for the opening of the Third Session of the Sixty-First Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick for the dispatch of business pursuant to the proclamation hereinbefore annexed, and the Members being present:

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor was announced and having been bidden to enter, took her seat in the chair upon the Throne and was pleased to open the session with the following speech from the Throne:

Opening remarks

Madame Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, invited guests, and fellow New Brunswickers, welcome to the opening of the third session of the 61st Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick.

We respectfully acknowledge that New Brunswick is situated on the unceded and unsurrendered territories of the Wolastoqey, Mi'gmaw and Peskotomuhkati peoples. We seek to repair and rebuild meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples and honour these lands which hold the hopes for future generations. This acknowledgement is given as a continued commitment to action so that we can achieve meaningful reconciliation.

Since taking office, your government has continued to focus on New Brunswickers and their priorities. Thanks to that attention, New Brunswickers are starting to see results.

In our ever-changing world, it is more important than ever to be innovative and bold, to work as a team at all levels and to support one another. It is together that we will reach our goals and deliver positive change.

As we begin today's session, we want to highlight some of the inspirational people and groups who are already making those positive changes in communities across our province.

Congratulations / Recognition

Many New Brunswickers have had noteworthy achievements over the past year and deserve recognition for their accomplishments.

We recognize the 10 individuals who have been named to the Order of New Brunswick in 2026 for their significant contributions to the province: Paul Marcel Albert of Caraquet, Brian J. Francis of Elsipogtog First Nation, Patsy Gallant of Campbellton, Ali A. Ghorbani of Fredericton, Émé Lacroix of Caraquet, Patricia McKinney of Fredericton, Edward L.D. McLean of Saint John, Paul Ouellet of Moncton, Jean-Guy Poitras of Edmundston, and William Whalen of Moncton.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2026 Human Rights Awards: Bronwen Cunningham of Fredericton, who was posthumously awarded the Human Rights Award, and Danika Sirois-Wallace of Grand-Bouctouche for the Youth Human Rights Award.

Congratulations to the recipients of the VIVE Awards, for their outstanding work in advancing gender equality here in New Brunswick: Jovial Orlachi Osundu of Moncton; Joanna Owuor of Fredericton; O Strategies of Moncton; Mary Matilda 'Tilley' Winslow of Woodstock (posthumous); Kelley McIntyre and Mary Henderson, both of Quispamsis; and Miigam'agan of Esgenoôpetitj (Burnt Church) First Nation.

We congratulate the 2026 inductees into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame: Marc Beaudoin of Moncton, Tom Coolen of Fredericton, Sam Johnston of Miramichi, Geneviève Lalonde of Moncton, Donald Ryan of Fredericton, and Heather Smith of Tantramar.

Congratulations to the New Brunswickers who competed in the 2026 Olympic Games: Courtney Sarault of Moncton and Rikki Doak of Fredericton representing Team Canada, and Brendan Corey, originally from Fredericton, representing Team Australia. Congratulations as well to Mark Fawcett, originally from Rothesay, who joined Team Canada as coach of the para snowboarding team.

Congratulations to Austin MacLellan of Fredericton for being New Brunswick's first athlete to represent Canada at the world wheelchair rugby championships.

We extend congratulations to the 10 Étincelles award recipients who were recognized as leaders in their fields, ensuring environments where students can thrive.

Congratulations to the 10 recipients of the 2026 Excellence in Education Awards for the anglophone sector, as well as the nine recipients in the francophone sector.

We congratulate the 16 recipients of the inaugural Minister's Excellence in Early Learning and Child Care Awards, recognized for their commitment to high-quality early learning and child care.

Congratulations to Lesley Anthony and Nicole Poirier for receiving the Council of the Federation's 2026 Literacy Award, an award that recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy.

We honour the recipients of the Disability Awareness Week Awards, including the winner of the Provincial Award, Chrystal Venator; the winner of the Honourable Andy Scott Award, Louise Tardif; the winner of the Employer Award, OPAL Family Services; and the recipient of the Randy Dickinson Scholarship, Ryder Piper.

We celebrate the eight top exporters this year who were recipients of the 2026 Export Awards.

We congratulate the New Brunswick lawyers who have been appointed to the King's Counsel within the past year.

Congratulations to Ami Assignon, Marc Philippe Savoie and Renée Roy, who were appointed as provincial court judges in Moncton, and Rose Campbell, who was appointed as a provincial court judge in Woodstock.

We congratulate Shane Perley-Dutcher for being named Laureate for the Indigenous Artist Award of the 2026 Lieutenant Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts. Shane is also one of six finalists for the Sobey Art Award.

Congratulations to Clarence LeBreton, the Acadian historian and author from Caraquet who was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada.

We honour Graydon Nicholas, who was presented with the Caritas Award, a rare international honour bestowed by the Knights of Columbus for his acts of service trying to bridge the gap between past actions of the Catholic Church and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Thank you to those who stood for municipal and district education council elections across the province and congratulations to those who were successful in their bid to serve their communities.

Condolences

We would also like to take a moment to remember those we lost this year.

We honour Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, former lieutenant governor, who will be remembered for her work as a politician and literacy advocate, and dedication to improving the lives of those around her.

We mourn the loss of Gerry Pond, whose advocacy for innovation and entrepreneurship will have a continued impact on our province.

We remember Robert Irving, business leader and former co-CEO of J.D. Irving Ltd., who leaves behind a strong legacy of his many contributions to New Brunswick.

We honour Roméo LeBlanc, a Second World War veteran and one of the founding members of a branch of the Canadian Legion in Memramcook, who passed away at the age of 102.

We mourn the loss of Randy Dickinson, who will be remembered for his important work as a disability and human rights advocate.

We remember Sebastian Halmagean, a gunner with the Canadian Armed Forces, who was from Hamilton and based at the 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown in Oromocto.

We remember former MLA Sheldon Lee for his service to the community and his commitment to the people of this province.

We mourn the loss of former MLA Wayne Steeves, who will be remembered for his passion for politics and ability to connect with people.

We remember George LeBlanc, the former mayor of Moncton, for his commitment and passion for the people and city he served.

We honour Michel Soucy, the mayor of Campbellton.

We remember Gaëtan Cormier, a Campbellton municipal councillor, and his wife, Rose-Marie Charest, dedicated volunteers and fundraisers who were both known for their community involvement.

We mourn the loss of Hermante Ayotte, a mentor and entrepreneur who transformed the vision of health care in her home province of New Brunswick as well as Quebec.

We remember Agnès Doiron, a devoted teacher, tireless activist, community supporter and former mayor of the Village of Bas-Caraquet.

We honour Nelson Landry, former journalist and editor-in-chief of l'Acadie Nouvelle.

We remember Acadian activist and former director general of the Société nationale de l'Acadie, Hector J. Cormier.

We mourn the loss of artist Georges Goguen, one of the pioneers of modern art in Acadia.

We remember Moncton businessman and philanthropist Wes Armour.

Introduction

Today marks more than the beginning of the third legislative session – it is also the halfway point for the mandate that the people of New Brunswick have given this government.

They took office two years ago with a focus on New Brunswickers' shared priorities – health care, affordability and economic development. And now we are seeing results.

Your government is motivated to continue delivering on its priorities.

Your government knows that leadership is measured not only by the goals it sets, but by the results it delivers. That means understanding the challenges and opportunities facing our province, listening to New Brunswickers and being transparent about the choices government makes.

This approach is especially important at a time of persistent uncertainty. Over the past two years, New Brunswick has faced rapidly changing economic conditions, global instability and new pressures at home. They have had to adapt and deliver through changing circumstances. And through it all, your government has remained focused on the priorities that matter most to New Brunswickers.

Health care

Accessing quality health care close to home is essential to the well-being of every New Brunswicker. It is your government's top priority, and their focus has not wavered since day one.

Your government is determined to ensure New Brunswickers can access the health care they need, when and where they need it. They will continue making investments to deliver your health care close to home.

PRIMARY CARE

On April 7, 2025, your government opened its first collaborative care clinic. Over the last 18 months, 22 collaborative care clinics have been established across the province. Clinics have been opened in: Campbellton, Moncton, Miramichi, Carleton North, Tantramar, Île-de-Lamèque, Edmundston, Fredericton, St. Stephen, Bathurst, Saint John, Eastern Charlotte, Nackawic-Millville, Saint Andrews, Perth-Andover, Beaurivage, Memramcook, Hampton, Moncton West, Grand Falls, Caraquet, and Woodstock.

These collaborative care clinics are delivering change in how primary care is provided by connecting patients with the right health-care professional at the right time, whether that is a physician, nurse practitioner, nurse or another allied health professional. Work continues with physicians, nurse practitioners and communities to bring even more clinics online.

Thanks to these efforts, government's target will be achieved ahead of schedule. Thirty collaborative care clinics will be delivered by the end of 2027.

For the first time, your government is using Medicare data to directly measure patient attachment, providing a reliable and clear picture of access to primary care and a stronger basis to track progress toward its goal of 85 per cent attachment by the end of 2028. By investing in better data, your government is laser focused on attachment needs across the province – and will transparently share that information with New Brunswickers monthly.

Investments in collaborative care clinics not only provide better care close to home, but we are seeing the impact in emergency departments as well. Since taking office, the proportion of cases seen at the emergency department for non-urgent issues has decreased by 20 per cent. This demonstrates the importance of investing in primary care. Not only is this the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. And we're seeing results.

INVESTING IN HEALTH CARE

Your government is delivering strategic investments to ensure New Brunswickers have timely access to care.

They recently signed an agreement with the federal government to provide $155 million to support province-wide health-care infrastructure over the next three years.

Ambulance New Brunswick advanced care paramedics are now fully trained on thrombolytics and can administer the clot busting medication pre-hospital. Research shows that not only does receiving thrombolytics improve survival rates, it also improves rehabilitation time and other patient outcomes. To date, six patients have received this critical care.

HEALTH-CARE WORKFORCE

Enhancing the retention and recruitment of health-care professionals, including nurses, doctors and long-term care workers remains a key priority for New Brunswick.

One of the first commitments your government delivered on was $15,000 retention payments to nurses, demonstrating that they care about those providing care to New Brunswickers. These investments are now delivering results. Nursing turnover has decreased significantly, and since 2025, your government has recruited 917 net new nurses to work in our province.

In March, your government signed a transformational four-year physician services agreement with the New Brunswick Medical Society. This agreement focuses on improving access to primary care and supporting physicians across the province. It is one of the most competitive packages in the country and offers incentives for doctors to work in collaborative care clinics to help meet the goal of attaching more patients. Since 2025, 179 net new doctors, including 72 family doctors, have been recruited.

New Brunswick continues to collaborate with partners across the province to advance initiatives to address workforce shortages and ensure New Brunswickers have access to high-quality care. Your government will launch a health and long-term care workforce strategy by the end of this year, with a focus on four key objectives: data and knowledge, education and training, recruitment and retention.

By supporting health-care professionals to work to their full potential and providing innovative, coordinated pathways for education and professional development, government is ensuring our health-care system can meet the needs of New Brunswickers now and in the future.

One way they are accomplishing this is through the Practice Ready Assessment New Brunswick program, which provides an alternate route to licensure for internationally trained physicians in family medicine. In 2025-2026, nine internationally educated physicians graduated and are now practising in the province. The fourth cohort started its assessments in fall 2026 and will begin practising in spring 2027. Your government is pleased to share that moving forward, there will be two cohorts per year, totaling 20 physicians annually.

Government renewed its commitment to a tuition bursary program for priority occupations like paramedics and medical technicians to help recruit and retain more front-line health-care professionals. In the first year of the program, 73 paramedics received the bursary and are well on their way to providing care to New Brunswickers.

Planning is underway for the province's first physiotherapy program. Government has partnered with the Université de Moncton and the Université de Sherbrooke on a four-year program that is expected to begin accepting students for the 2027-2028 academic year.

Eight medical seats have been added at the Centre de formation médicale, increasing the number of seats to train francophone doctors in New Brunswick from 32 to 40 in 2026. This brings the province's total to 80 seats when combined with those at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick. Additionally, francophone residency seats in New Brunswick will continue to grow from 18 to 26 by 2030. This will help to address doctor shortages and increase access to French-language health care across the province.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

New Brunswickers facing mental health and addiction challenges deserve timely care, appropriate treatment and hope for recovery.

Work continues on a new substance use treatment facility for adults on the Kingston Peninsula, with an initial 35 beds to become operational this fall. The facility will provide 50 live-in treatment beds for people with complex substance use and behavioural addictions in various stages of recovery.

The Moncton Addictions and Mental Health Court Program is now underway, providing an alternative pathway within the justice system. The focus of the voluntary program is treatment and recovery under court supervision. The program will expand to other jurisdictions in the future.

Your government will deliver on its commitment to create a mental health advocate this legislative session so that New Brunswickers living with mental health challenges have a strong, independent champion.

Your government recently announced a mobile health-care team to enhance support for Fredericton's vulnerable population, adding to the Moncton and Saint John teams that were already delivering this important care.

Government is also investing $1.3 million for the first year of a Moncton-based initiative called PRISME (Program for Regional Interprofessional Specialization in Mental Health and Education). The program serves as a hands-on training hub, with a mental health primary care team working alongside psychiatrists.

In the coming session, government will work with non-profit organizations to develop individualized case management services to assist individuals on their recovery journey.

SENIORS AND LONG-TERM CARE

Supporting our senior population in ways that best serve them so they remain healthy and active continues to be a focus.

By recognizing a full minister responsible for Seniors, your government has underscored the importance it places on the seniors of New Brunswick, and its commitment to ensuring New Brunswickers can live and age with dignity and independence while receiving the care they need, where and when they need it.

The Stronger Care for Seniors: A Long-Term Care Plan was launched earlier this year, supported by a $993 million investment. The plan includes 624 new long-term care beds and wage increases for personal support workers. With the launch of the report, 240 beds were committed in Riverview, Fredericton and Quispamsis.

In July, Social Development also launched an expression of interest process to develop 360 long-term care beds to relieve hospital pressures and improve care for seniors. Your government moved rapidly to deliver change, and has already announced three innovative projects in Neguac, Riverview and New Maryland through this process with more on the way.

The Nursing Home Without Walls program is also a component of the 2026 long-term care plan, with 39 sites across the province as of September. Since it began, it has provided more than 208,000 services to more than 7,280 participants. This made-in-New-Brunswick initiative will continue to grow not only in our province, but across the country, with Healthcare Excellence Canada working to share it nationwide. Your government will continue to expand this award-winning program.

Your government believes that home care is one of the smartest investments that can be made to help seniors age in place and remain in their homes as long as is safely possible. They invested $10 million to make home care support more affordable for seniors and people with disabilities.

In January, your government committed $4.3 million over four years to expand dementia-care training for front-line workers and caregivers in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick, with 2,031 individuals trained as of September 30. They also unveiled the Strategy and Action Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. Since then, significant progress has been made to improve supports for people living with dementia, their families and caregivers across the province, including launching the provincial Dementia Helpline NB, expanding U-First! dementia care training and expanding community-based supports.

Affordability and housing

The rising cost of living continues to be a challenge for too many New Brunswickers.

Your government is listening to your concerns and has delivered numerous measures aimed at improving affordability. As soon as they were elected, they hit the ground running. Within the first 100 days they implemented a three per cent rent cap and 10 per cent off your electricity bills.

They also delivered free school breakfast in September 2025, and affordable lunch this past September, saving families between $900-$2,000 on their annual grocery bill.

They are also helping with the price of fuel. Earlier this year, a regulatory amendment was made that dropped the price of gasoline over seven cents per litre by switching from conventional to E10 blended fuel pricing.

The spread between conventional and E10 fuel pricing has been on an increasing trend since the beginning of this year. As of last week's regulated price setting, the government's regulatory amendment is now saving New Brunswickers 17.4 cents per litre at the pumps.

In October, your government announced that all newborns in New Brunswick are now eligible to receive the RSV vaccine free of charge.

Your government has also launched the first comprehensive public review of minimum wage in the last 10 years, and the results will be published in a What We Heard report by the end of the year.

Your government remains committed to removing barriers so that all New Brunswickers can succeed. For 2026-2027, they increased the overall budget for income security from $363.6 million to $420 million – an increase of 15.5 per cent and raised income security rates by inflation.

They have been working to build a property tax system that is more transparent, predictable and stable. In the spring, your government passed legislation that included new rate stabilizers which can help keep tax rates in check as assessments rise. This is intended to help keep property taxes more stable while ensuring local governments can continue to meet the needs of their communities. A spike protection mechanism remains in place for properties with an assessment increase greater than 10 per cent.

Amendments to the *Local Governance Act* will be introduced this session to provide local governments with additional discretionary tools to prioritize and encourage growth in their communities.

In the spring session, further legislation aimed at helping make life more affordable for New Brunswickers is planned.

Housing New Brunswick is delivering real progress in addressing the affordable housing shortage in New Brunswick.

One of the first actions your government took was removing HST on multi-unit buildings. That change is delivering results, as seen in last year's historic 7,587 housing starts in 2025 and we're on track to see similar success in 2026.

Between January and the end of September, the department has delivered 407 affordable housing starts and is on target for 430 starts in 2026 with additional units coming in the near future – including a new public housing development in Grand Bay-Westfield, a new affordable housing project in Saint John, a new Habitat for Humanity home in Fredericton and another affordable housing project in Moncton, all before the end of this year.

Since 2025, Housing New Brunswick has delivered 750 affordable housing starts, putting them on track to meet their goal of 1,760 units by 2028.

They have opened or acquired 218 public housing units since Housing New Brunswick was reestablished in 2023. They currently have 83 public housing units under construction or in the tender phase, and an additional 141 units in the design phase of construction.

For much of 2026, the New Brunswick Housing Corporation has been engaging with tenants, landlords, property owners, developers and other interested parties to gather feedback on the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

Your government will deliver a modernized *Residential Tenancies Act* this spring.

In the year ahead, government will provide more funding to enable our growing communities to develop infrastructure to support new housing.

Homelessness continues to be a challenge in communities around the province. Your government released *A Path Home: New Brunswick's Provincial Strategy on Homelessness*. Recognizing that ending chronic homelessness requires sustained commitment, collaboration and accountability, government has taken concrete steps to strengthen housing stability and mental health supports.

Across the province, 583 supportive housing units have been funded by Social Development, and additional units are in development. Supportive housing provides a pathway to stability and improved well-being for people experiencing homelessness, helping them reclaim their lives and start down a path of long-term success.

Your government will continue to work in lockstep with communities and partners to deliver on their goal of reducing chronic homelessness by 40 per cent.

Economic development

To ensure we can invest in the programs and services that residents need, including health care and affordability measures, your government delivered an economic development strategy focused on creating good paying jobs, building a more productive, investment-ready and globally connected New Brunswick. This strategy will grow provincial GDP by 10 per cent by 2030.

This is especially important given the growing trade tensions with the United States, as Donald Trump's tariffs threaten jobs and industries in our province.

We need to stand up for New Brunswick businesses and workers.

As part of government's response to tariffs, Service New Brunswick banned procurement of goods and services originating from the U.S. valued over $5 million. Government will continue to recommend New Brunswick's public agencies prohibit the purchase of products or services originating from the U.S., except for critical goods and services where no equivalent Canadian products are available. Your government continues to explore opportunities to support local and Canadian business in its public procurement practices.

We know that New Brunswick has what the world needs.

This fall, government will launch a market diversification plan focused on high-potential non-U.S. markets that align with New Brunswick's priority sectors, helping to grow and diversify the province's exports. Their objective is to build a more resilient export economy, one that balances international market development with domestic supports. This will allow our industries to compete globally while deepening connections with new trade partners in Europe, Asia and beyond.

New Brunswick is also collaborating with provinces, territories and the federal government to break down barriers, open new markets and create opportunities within Canada.

New Brunswick's *Free Trade Within Canada Act* came into effect on July 1. This underscores the commitment to expanding trade in goods and services by helping to create opportunities for businesses and workers in New Brunswick and across the country.

New Brunswick has led the way with direct-to-consumer sales of alcoholic beverages. In July, government signed an operating agreement with eight provinces, giving alcohol producers in our province the ability to ship their products directly to consumers across most of the country.

Key changes were also made to labour mobility legislation to streamline certifications and reduce unnecessary barriers, making it easier for skilled workers to contribute their talents where they're needed most.

We will continue to build here at home.

Your government is delivering change in the mining sector, with renewed interest in exploration and development following the release of the Comprehensive Minerals Strategy and passage of the modern *Mineral Resources Act*.

Mineral claims have increased by 5.2 per cent since March, reaching the highest level on record, while promising projects, including the Murray Brook – Caribou project, continue to advance throughout the province. Mineral exploration at closed mine sites and evaluation of resources in tailings ponds brings the potential to turn environmental liabilities into economic opportunities. There is an increase in mineral exploration activity in New Brunswick as a result of the priority this government has placed on the mining file. Osisko Critical Minerals Corporation just announced a major exploration initiative in Northern New Brunswick where the company secured $250 million in investments. In addition, companies like Puma Exploration and Galaway Metals are actively exploring gold deposits in the province.

Your government is committed to delivering economic growth and regional development. They look forward to working with partners like the City of Dieppe on the expansion of the Dieppe Industrial Park. This project will deliver 55 acres of investment-ready land, with an estimated $15.4 million GDP impact and the creation of approximately 250 jobs. This initiative is a key step in attracting new investments and aligns directly with the Economic Development Strategy of promoting private-sector growth through the development of investment-ready sites.

Government has collaborated with many partners to deliver the Saint John Trade Corridor. This project will build lasting economic resilience while improving safety, increasing capacity and removing key trade bottlenecks.

Your government is working with the Port of Belledune as a strategic transshipment and logistics hub for Arctic operations and key sectors, including mining, defence and energy, while strengthening trade connections between Canadian resources and global markets.

Government will work alongside partners to ensure recent enhancements to the Small Business Investor Tax Credit are delivering support for New Brunswick small businesses, promoting innovation and encouraging economic growth by fostering greater investment in strategic sectors.

New Brunswick is a trusted and ambitious partner in Canada's defence sector and is the home of the Canadian army at Base Gagetown. Modernization of CFB Gagetown is currently underway, backed by $1 billion in federal investment. New Brunswickers will see the benefits of this investment. Your government will release a New Brunswick Defence Growth Framework this fall.

Your government looks forward to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages' forthcoming report next month highlighting the many economic benefits of bilingualism through an update on the 2015 study: *Two Languages, it's good for business*.

The New Brunswick Agriculture Growth Action Plan developed in collaboration with the agriculture sector, will be launched this fall. The plan will guide coordinated actions across government and industry, optimizing farmland use, strengthening agricultural businesses, expanding markets and supporting long-term growth in the sector.

Your government has signed a new five-year federal-provincial agreement that continues the essential work under the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to support our fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing sectors.

Forestry is not just part of New Brunswick's economy, it supports communities, provides employment and contributes to the prosperity of our province. Projects like the Strategic Innovation Centre in Digital Forestry will modernize the industry, strengthen competitiveness and enable us to leverage our strengths, helping drive productivity and attract new investment.

Tourism is driving economic growth across New Brunswick. Visitor spending reached a record $2.5 billion in 2025, supporting jobs, businesses and communities. Building on this success, your government will advance the implementation of Fresh Perspective: New Brunswick's Tourism Strategy 2026-2031, with a goal of growing annual visitor spending to $3.7 billion by 2031.

In the year ahead, your government will be investing in new and enhanced year-round tourism experiences that encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more of the province and spend more in New Brunswick communities.

Tourism, Heritage and Culture will be releasing and begin implementing a new five-year Cultural Action Plan this year focused on maximizing the economic and social benefits of the cultural sector.

Your government remains committed to closing the gaps in rural cell coverage, as not only does this serve the needs of New Brunswickers, but it also makes our province a more attractive place to do business.

To support this work, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will be introducing legislation this fall amending the *Salvage Dealers Licensing Act* to strengthen safeguards around the sale and purchase of copper wire to help protect critical infrastructure and reduce service disruptions.

Government has launched a public review to examine whether the conditions associated with the province's moratorium on natural gas development still reflect today's science, technology, market and regulatory best practices.

The review is part of the government's broader work to reduce dependencies on the United States, to explore all options to strengthen New Brunswick's economy, and to support our country and allies while creating new opportunities in a changing global economic and geopolitical environment.

Your government sought feedback from New Brunswickers on a draft data centre framework. It will use the insight gained from this process to guide legislative amendments to the *Electricity Act* to be introduced this session. The framework will set high environmental, social, economic and energy standards that data centre projects will be required to meet. If they do not meet those standards, they will not be approved to move forward by your government.

Growing New Brunswick's economy also means growing wages and good paying jobs for New Brunswickers. Your government delivered an important change in bargaining practices, with a focus on respect and timely, positive negotiations. Since October 2024, your government has signed 18 collective agreements covering more than 55,000 public sector workers, including a historic first master agreement that combined 11 bargaining units into one.

It is also key to ensure that New Brunswickers are able to access training so they have the skills they need for the jobs they want.

By eliminating the tuition fee for apprenticeship-level training, government has made this training more accessible and affordable, helping more people gain the practical skills and credentials they need to build successful careers.

As well, your government has signed an agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada to increase the number of certified tradespeople by expanding the delivery of virtual learning supports to help apprentices through the certification process.

Education

Education provides the foundation needed for a good life, opening doors and providing opportunities that wouldn't be available otherwise. It is also the key to economic development, as it prepares our youngest residents to be strong contributors to society. That is why government has delivered many changes to ensure students in this province have access to a quality education.

In June, new education plans were released for both the anglophone and francophone sectors, setting a collaborative long-term vision for education in New Brunswick. They were developed in collaboration with over 14,000 educators, experts, parents, school districts, rights-holders and stakeholders to meet the evolving needs of our children and students, providing them with the tools they need to succeed.

The plans will track progress on key student outcomes, including literacy, numeracy, attendance and student well-being, and are supported by clear implementation and accountability measures.

Government has set a goal to lower chronic absenteeism rates in both the anglophone and francophone systems and to improve literacy and math outcomes, all of which are reflected in the education plans.

In the year ahead, the francophone sector will update and develop new training to support inclusion in daycare centres, develop and implement a professional integration framework tailored to the needs of new teachers and implement an updated literacy curriculum for students in kindergarten to Grade 2.

The anglophone sector will draft an intervention framework for literacy and numeracy; provide guidance on how to establish best practices for literacy and numeracy instructional minutes for kindergarten to Grade 8 teachers and administrators, including the development and roll out of necessary professional training.

It is widely recognized that children can't learn if they come to school hungry.

As mentioned, in the face of increasing affordability challenges, your government took action and in the 2025-2026 school year provided all schools with access to healthy breakfast foods through the Universal School Breakfast Program.

In the 2026-2027 school year, they are proud to take that one step further by providing all schools with an affordable lunch program, expanding access to affordable, nutritious lunches across public schools.

While ensuring students have healthy local food to eat is key, so is reducing distractions children can experience in the classroom.

This school year, your government is reducing distractions from technology in the classroom and keeping the focus on real social connections.

The department has revised Policy 311 on the Responsible Use of Digital Technology and introduced Policy 902 on Screen Time and Personal Mobile Device Use in Licensed Early Learning and Child Care Facilities. The changes address a growing body of research about the negative effects of cellphones, screen use and social media on children and youth and on in-class learning. They also incorporate recommendations from the province's child and youth advocate.

In addition, legislation will be introduced this fall aimed at making digital services safer for children under 16.

Another important part of ensuring students get a quality education is recruiting and retaining the right educators and staff.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has launched retention and recruitment action plans for both the anglophone and francophone sectors, focused on retaining and supporting the current education workforce, promoting New Brunswick as a place to study, live, work and thrive, and building a sustainable and responsive workforce. These changes are already delivering results, with over 600 teachers hired this year alone.

As well, government recently signed a new five-year collective agreement with the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, representing more than 7,800 teachers. This agreement includes measures to support recruitment and retention.

In September, the department signed new agreements with education facilities at the University of New Brunswick, St. Thomas University and Crandall University to strengthen literacy programs and improve student learning. The goal is to equip the next generation of teachers with literacy-focused tools, benefitting New Brunswick students for years to come.

Earlier this month, the department updated the Linguistic and Cultural Development Policy to reflect today's realities. The policy aims to foster the linguistic and cultural vitality of New Brunswick's Acadian and francophone community by engaging the francophone education system and its partners through a social project based on educational success and identity-building.

This session, amendments to the *Université de Moncton Act* will be introduced to enable the Shippagan and Edmundston campuses to offer other degree programs, resulting in more educational options in predominantly French-speaking communities.

Environment

New Brunswickers want a government that is a responsible caretaker of the natural beauty we are surrounded by.

Your government has had continued success with increased funding for energy conservation and efficiency initiatives delivered in 2025-2026, which resulted in 694,698 gigajoule (GJ) of in-year energy savings across all fuels and lifetime greenhouse gas (GHG) savings of 513,633 tonnes.

Your government, in partnership with NB Power, is also investing in more energy projects focused on reducing GHG emissions. Earlier this fall, NB Power announced the conversion of the Belledune coal plant to biomass. This will be the largest biofuel conversion in North America. This transformation will get New Brunswick off coal by 2030.

NB Power has procured approximately 700 megawatts (MW) of wind generation, the majority of which is led and owned by First Nations. This includes projects expected to begin entering service in 2027 and 2028.

NB Power is also evaluating proposals for 50 MW of grid-connected battery storage. Batteries can help manage short-duration fluctuations in wind and solar generation and support grid reliability. The battery procurement complements other generation and grid investments.

As a result of these investments, New Brunswick is emerging as a leader in the region's energy future. Your government will continue to pursue major energy and transmission projects that position the province as the Maritimes' energy hub – attracting investment, creating jobs and delivering direct benefits to New Brunswickers, including through partnerships with First Nations communities. By strengthening our ability to connect energy resources to regional markets, they are building a stronger, more prosperous future for the province.

Your government is leading a technical working group to strengthen collaboration and coordination across governments, stakeholders, First Nations and non-governmental organizations and will release a State of New Brunswick Coast Report next spring to promote long-term resilience of the province's coastal communities.

Government has set a goal of increasing protected and conserved areas in the province to 15 per cent by 2027. Work will continue in the coming year to ensure they deliver on this target, as they build a roadmap to an overarching goal of achieving 30 per cent.

Building on lessons learned during the challenging 2025 wildfire season, the Department of Natural Resources released a multi-year wildlife management preparedness plan. Thanks to enhanced capacity and favourable conditions, New Brunswick was able to support six other Canadian jurisdictions in their fire response efforts this year through the mobilization of staff, airplanes and equipment. The department will continue to focus on public education, continued implementation of the FireSmart Program and the rollout of wildfire-fighting equipment to volunteer fire departments across the province in the coming year.

The Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture is advancing New Brunswick's commitment to active transportation use through the development of an active transportation action plan. The plan will provide a road map to make walking, cycling and other active modes of transportation safer, more accessible and easier for New Brunswickers to choose.

Trusted leadership

Your government understands that trust is something that must be earned and it continues to do that through transparency, getting out into communities and listening to people. By doing so, they hope to rebuild relationships and assure New Brunswickers their trust is well placed.

The Comprehensive Review of NB Power is complete, and work to implement its 50 recommendations are now underway. There are 22 actions that have a completion date of 2027. Four of these are already complete and government will continue the work to implement the remaining 18 actions this year, addressing recommendations that cover the utilities financial sustainability, governance and structure, customer relations, and investor attractiveness and strategic partnerships.

New Brunswick is proud of its status as the only officially bilingual province. In the last year, your government launched a new review of the *Official Languages Act* and looks forward to receiving the Standing Committee's report in the coming year.

Work on rebuilding the relationship between the province and First Nations leadership has advanced this year. A leadership table has been established and meets regularly to discuss topics of importance.

The premier and Chiefs have also agreed to an Indigenous-led public inquiry into systemic racism. They will continue to collaborate on the details of this public inquiry in the year ahead.

To improve access to justice for Indigenous persons, government collaborated with the First Nations to make smudging and eagle feathers available to persons appearing in any courthouse.

Last session, your government passed the *Pay Transparency Act*, which requires salary and wage disclosure in job postings, prohibits seeking or relying on a candidate's compensation history, and includes anti-reprisal measures. This Act applies to all provincially-regulated employers in both the public and private sectors.

In September, New Brunswickers were invited to participate in public consultations as part of a review of the *Pay Equity Act*. The information collected will help with the modernization and expansion of the Act in the spring session.

In the last session, the Department of Justice and Public Safety amended the *Limitations of Actions Act* to improve access to justice for survivors of sexual violence. The department also funded a new Sexual Violence Investigation unit to focus on complex cases including trafficking in persons. The first team was based in Shediac, with teams planned for Tracadie and Oromocto in the year ahead.

Your government is making investments to ensure those experiencing gender-based violence can access timely and responsive crisis support. This includes implementing New Brunswick's National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

The Department of Social Development has implemented reforms to ensure child and youth well-being in the province based on findings from the child and youth advocate.

Government has outlined how departments will work together to reduce barriers and improve accessibility over the next three years. In the coming year, an interdepartmental committee will implement the plan and monitor progress.

A comprehensive review of the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* is complete. In the year ahead, the focus will shift from review to delivering reform, with legislation expected in the spring session.

Your government launched a five-year justice transformation, implementing new technology in courtrooms in Moncton and Bathurst and improving the reliability and clarity of remote appearances and digital evidence. This will be expanded to other courtrooms in the coming year.

In this session, amendments are expected to the *Provincial Court Act* to help alleviate pressure on New Brunswick's court system.

Conclusion

It is exciting to see the changes government has been delivering over the past two years take root and grow.

Your government remains committed to the priorities New Brunswickers have asked it to focus on: better health care, greater affordability and a growing economy.

They have continued to listen to and work with residents and, as promised, they are delivering change.

Measurable progress has been made, but there is more work ahead. Your government will deliver on its commitments, including reaching 30 collaborative care clinics, advancing new housing and long-term care capacity, opening new opportunities for trade and investment and continuing reforms that make government more responsive and accountable.

Your government has embraced the challenges and opportunities we face and is more motivated than ever to deliver positive change for New Brunswickers.

They are asking that you join them on this endeavour, as it is only by working together that we will reach our full potential and the bright future that New Brunswickers deserve.

Thank you.

Her Honour then retired from the Chamber.

Madam Speaker resumed the chair.

Ordered that the Hon. Susan Holt, Premier, have leave to introduce a Bill entitled *An Act to Perpetuate a Certain Ancient Right*. (Bill 1)

She accordingly presented the Bill to the House and the same was received and read the first time.

Madam Speaker then informed the House that in order to prevent mistakes she had obtained a copy of Her Honour's speech, which she offered to read. (Reading dispensed.)

On motion of Ms. Wilcott, seconded by Mr. Doucet,

RESOLVED, that the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be forthwith taken into consideration.

Ms. Wilcott, a Member for the electoral district of Saint John West-Lancaster, proposed an Address to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to the speech, which she read in her place, and being seconded by Mr. Doucet, a Member for the electoral district of Moncton East, it was handed to the Chair where it was again read and is as follows:

Fredericton, N.B.
October 20, 2026.

To Her Honour,
The Honourable Louise Imbeault,
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New Brunswick.

May It Please Your Honour:

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick, now in session, beg leave to extend our humble thanks to Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has addressed to us, and we assure Your Honour that all matters which may be submitted to us during the session will receive our most careful attention and consideration.

And a debate arising thereon, after some time, it was on motion of Ms. M. Johnson, the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for the electoral district of Carleton-Victoria, adjourned over.

And then, 3 p.m., the House adjourned.