

Lieutenant Governor Community Spirit Award Entry Form

Community Name: Lismore & Area

Names of Groups within the community who have joined together to put forward this nomination:

1. Lismore Community Center
2. Karen Lynn MacDonald Allergy Awareness Society
3. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church
4. Lismore & Area Community Fitness Group
5. Lismore & District Garden Club
6. Lismore Harbour Authority

By submitting your nomination you are agreeing to allow the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award to post your stories on the Award's website and to share these stories online with the Award's media partners.

History

Let me take you on a wonderful adventure to the eastern most end of Pictou County. As you travel east on the TCH, take exit 27 at Sutherland's River and follow highway # 245 down along the Northumberland Strait until you come to the communities of Ponds, Lismore and see signage to your right identifying the little hamlets of Bailey's Brook and Ardness. With roughly one hundred families and three hundred people, this is the vibrant community of "Lismore & District."

The firsts European settlers arrived in the late seventeenth hundreds and into the nineteenth century, many of the early pioneers came from Scotland, arriving in boats like the Hector and the Betsy in Pictou Harbour.

They quickly carved little farms out of the wilderness, establishing homesteads, and using the warm waters of the Northumberland Strait for fishing, and for travel.

These Gaelic speaking Highlanders loved the fertile soil and rolling landscape which reminded them of their homeland. They delighted in the freedom to not only raise their families in a peaceful surrounding, but also to build community.

In 1834 St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church was erected. Still serving the religious needs of the people to this very day, it is the oldest wooden Catholic Church build by Highland Scots in all of Nova Scotia. It has been described in **More Stately Mansions** by Elizabeth Pacey, as being a masterpiece of pioneer architecture. The style is quite clearly in the New England meeting house tradition with classical and Gothic embellishments.

A few men who fought beside Bonnie Prince Charlie in the 1745 Battle of Culloden later settled in our community. A cairn, along the shore, indicating where they landed, was erected in 1938. For the past thirty one years a commemorative service at the cairn, followed by a hot meal, speeches and Scottish music are held in the Lismore hall. More than three hundred people attend annually.

In 1986 a monument was erected by Parks Canada in Bailey's Brook, in memory of Margaret C. Macdonald, the first female in the Canadian Armed Forces to achieve the rank of Major. Today, the Margaret C. Macdonald Memorial Park enhances the community where she grew up. This beautiful little park is maintained by volunteers.

Over the past couple of years a committee has been gathering historical information on the community. A kiosk has been erected across from St. Mary's Church and contains three large panels outlining our proud heritage up to the present day. On June 16th the kiosk will be officially opened. Not only will it be a source of information, it will also promote tourism.

In 1972 the two roomed school in Lismore was closed and students were bused to a large elementary school in Sutherland's River. The community purchased the school from the municipality in 1976. The size was then doubled. The main floor features modern bathrooms, a large multi-purpose room with a full stage at one end. The lower level has a large dining room and an industrial kitchen.

This hall is the center of our community. It is here we gather to celebrate birthdays and weddings, as well as to mourn the lost of our loved ones. But it is much more. It is fully equipped to be a disaster relief center. In the event of prolonged power outage or other acts of nature, people can gather here and receive the necessities of life until the disaster is over.

Our rural community is located 40 kms. From New Glasgow in one direction and 40 kms. from Antigonish in the other. We are not a "bedroom community." Because of the distance, our social and recreational needs are met right here in the community. Just as our ancestors did many years ago, we too have learned to be creative and caring. Let me explain how by first listing the active groups in the community and secondly by listing the activities we undertake annually.

Organizations:

Lismore & District Garden Club: Formed in 1998, the garden club boasts a membership of fifty enthusiastic gardeners. Not only do they strive to enhance the appearance of their own grounds, they also look after flower beds at St. Mary's Church, the hall and at the Margaret C. Macdonald Park. During the past two years a number of the members have become mentor to junior gardeners. Last year 17 young people were enrolled and we anticipate a similar number this year.

Karen Lynn MacDonald Allergy Awareness Society: Karen died at the young age of 27, six years ago, due to an allergic reaction to peanuts. The society was formed soon thereafter as a tribute to Karen. Their goals are to educate people on the dangers of allergic reactions and to provide epee pins to all who need them. The pins have a shelf life of one year, thus must be continuously replaced. They cost approximately one hundred dollars each. Last year 107 pins were provided. They answer all requests in Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties. On special occasions, they have reached out and helped others across the province. Many referrals come from doctors and pharmacists. To fund these ambitious goals, a variety concert is held on the last Friday of each month in the Lismore Hall. All talent is donated. There is a loyal following of supporters and it would appear this organization will be providing a valuable service well into the future.

Terry Fox Run: For the past fifteen years the community has hosted a Terry Fox Run. Rain or shine a dedicated group of runners and walkers show up to complete the 10 km distance. Between twenty to thirty participate while many others generously fill the role of sponsors.

Oceanaires Singing Group: Under the direction of a very talented musical director a group of approximately fifteen adults from the community meet in the hall to enhance their singing skills. They sing for relaxation and for enjoyment. They also perform at various churches and concerts.

Rug Hooking Group: A dozen ladies from the community meet on Tuesday mornings during the winter months to create beautiful rugs and wall hangings. It is a time to socialize and to enhance their skills by teaching one another.

Art Classes: Instruction is given every Wednesday afternoon, all year round, to a dozen artists from the community and surrounding area. They are delighted with their master pieces and usually have an art show each summer where the public can view their work and in some cases, purchase paintings.

Lismore & District Community Hall Association: This is the group which oversees the maintenance and running of the community hall. They do a lot of fundraising and applying for grants. In recent years they made extensive renovations to the bathrooms, added a back entry way, built a storage building, which also serves as an outside stage and maintain the grounds.

Lismore & Area Alcohol Anonymous Group: Functioning for the past twenty years, they are a strong chapter. They have made a significant contribution to enhancing the lives of many people in this area. The group meets every Tuesday evening.

Lismore Dinner Theatre Group: Now in its fifteenth year, this has to be one of the most successful dinner theatre groups in the province. They put on a three day show each March. Tickets go on sale three weeks before the show. Within a few days the 432 tickets are sold and a waiting list compiled. The show has been a sell out since it began. It

is written and directed by people in the community. As well, the actors and musicians all come from the community. Basically, it is a combination of music and skits which obviously delights the audience because they keep coming back year after year.

To provide a full course meal three evenings in a row calls for the entire community to become involved as cooks, waiters, dish washer, vegetable peelers and table setters. A huge number of volunteers are required. Lining up workers has not been a problem. Many locals will take in one of the shows and work at the other two. Financially, it is our biggest fundraiser. In 2011 our profit was over twelve thousand dollars. In this day where country folks do so much to support metro areas with all their business, it is gratifying to see hundreds of people coming to the county to attend this popular event.

Senior's Outreach: On January 17th we began our first senior's Outreach Program. Basically, we provide a light lunch and an interesting/informative speaker. The program will run for eight weeks and is being well received by the twenty plus seniors who attend.

Yoga Classes: These are held every Wednesday evening during the fall and winter months. We have an excellent instructor. A dozen ladies faithfully attend the sessions.

Community Health Committee: This group first began meeting in late 2010. Being 40 kms from hospitals in either direction, means our people must travel for every medical need. Given our remoteness, and the number of seniors in the community, the group feels some services should be provided right here in the community.

In an effort to gain input from our citizens and to "build a case," the committee applied for and successfully secured the services of five young men from St. F.X to carry out a survey. This is under the Schwartz School of Business at the university. The five senior business students will gather, tabulate and present their findings to a public meeting at the Lismore hall in late March.

It is the committees hope that a Family Practice Nurse will be hired, on a part time or full time basis to provide and co-ordinate health services in Lismore.

Fitness Challenge Committee: In an effort to make people of the community more physically active during the winter month we issued a fitness challenge in 2010. Our goal was to accumulate 6,400 kms, - the distance from Lismore to Vancouver, B.C. where the Winter Olympics were being held. To involve people of all ages, we devised a plan where people could add points by walking, knitting, swimming, school sports, rug hooking and aerobics. We ended up with 35 people from 90 years of age to 7. We surpassed our goal. In our second year we had 50 people sign up. Our goal was 13,000 kms. – the distance from Lismore to Vancouver and back to Halifax, the site of the Canada Winter Games. Again we exceeded our goal. This year we our goal is 15,000 kms, the distance to walk around our beautiful province four times. We also decided to issue a challenge to other rural communities in the county. So far, three have signed on. On February 19th we gathered at Lismore hall to tabulate our individual kms. To our delight we reached the grand total of 20,000 kms. We enjoyed a great pot luck meal.

Everyone was in a joyful mood because of our collective efforts. Plans are already underway to start up the program again in the late fall..

Activities

Card parties: Auction 45 card parties are held in the hall every Thursday evening from fall until last spring. It provides an evening of fun and socializing, particularly for seniors.

Swim Program: Each summer we run a two week St. John's Ambulance Swim program at the Lismore Beach. Many summers it turns into a four week program. Being a fishing community it is vitally important that all our children learn to swim. We usually have 30 to 40 children enrolled.

Operation Christmas Child: Each fall we participate in the Operation Christmas Child program where boxes of useful items are assembled and shipped to children in third world nations. It reflects the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts.

Old Fashion Christmas Concert: As in the days of one-roomed schoolhouses, we have carried on the tradition of skits, songs and the visit of Santa Claus for our annual Christmas Concert. This is an event which delights both young and old.

Senior's Appreciation Dinner: In an effort to say thank you to our seniors who have done so much for the community and are still pitching in, we serve a full turkey dinner. This was our 15th year and we served/delivered 90 dinners. Our seniors really look forward to this day.

Salmon Supper: Each November we hold a Salmon Supper/Christmas Craft Sale. As an example of co-operation, one year the proceeds go to the hall, the next to the church. We serve over 200 people. A local business donates the salmon, the ladies make delicious home made pies and all the food is cooked on site. The youth help with the serving.

Incredible Community Brunch: We strive to promote Nova Scotia products by serving a delicious brunch each February. Almost everything on the menu is produced in the province. The fact that we are featuring Nova Scotia products is an added attraction.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program is offered to interested teenagers. Over the years we have had five recipients of the Gold medal. These medals are presented by a member of the Royal family or the Governor General.

Ball Tournament: Usually run as a co-ed slow pitch tournament, the event is a real crowd pleaser and takes up an entire weekend.

Summer Recreation Program: For children four to fifteen years of age, this 8 week program encourages physical activity and a cooperative spirit among the children. We

have 20 to 30 students participating each year. This program has been going for almost thirty years.

Natal Day Celebrations: Folks gather at our beach for barbeques during the evening. Just at dusk one of the local fishermen takes his boat off shore and sets off fireworks.

Voter turnout: We consistently have a 90% turnout at provincial and federal elections. It is closer to 80% for municipal and school board elections.

Trail of Terror: We have a three km. walking trail which was developed about ten years ago. Each October a committee decorates the wooded area with all things Halloween. Almost five hundred people annually go through this trail of terror. It is fun!! The young people and adults have fun also as they do the decorating and scaring of anyone brave enough to venture through the haunted woods.

Shear Wind Picnic: In 2011 the largest wind farm in the province was opened in our community. A small group of residents loudly opposed the construction of the farm. To their credit the company made concessions which made the project more acceptable in the eyes of many. Not all. Six months after the 27 towers were up and functioning, we decided to have a picnic. It was an opportunity for the community and the sub-contractors to say “congratulations and welcome” to Shear Wind.

Organizers were nervous as to how this celebration would be received. Their fears were unfounded. Over three hundred people showed up to celebrate this milestone in our community. The mood was festive, no negative comments were heard. It was an important day for a number of reasons. It showed that we are capable of speaking our minds, and then moving forward as one. It also showed that we are capable of letting go of the old ways and embracing future technology.

One of the turbines is located on land the church owns. For the next twenty years the church will receive a generous annual rental fee to ensure its sustainability.

Lismore and area is a vibrant rural community with spirit and commitment. We recognize that we must always be conscious of building community. In doing so there are many spin offs. Spin off like attracting new residents and retaining our young people. Our ancestors came here over two hundred years ago. Their concern for the social, spiritual and overall well being of their neighbors was commendable. In our own way, as you have read in the above paragraphs, we too strive to make our community a caring independent place where all live in harmony.

Municipality of Pictou County

Office of the Recreation Co-ordinator

46 Municipal Drive - P.O. Box 910

Pictou, NS - B0K 1H0

February 7, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Municipality of Pictou County, and Pictou County Recreation, I offer this letter of support for the nomination for the community of Lismore for the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award.

I work with a number of volunteer community organizations throughout Pictou County in my role as Recreation Co-ordinator. The amount of volunteer hours that are given in this area is truly astounding, and quite rare! For a community small in population, they certainly are one of the most vibrant rural communities I have ever worked with. The commitment to betterment of their community and their sense of community pride is admirable. The needs of the area as a whole are always taken into consideration, and

residents young and old are included in and involved with the many projects and activities.

It gives me great pleasure to add this letter of support for this very deserving nomination. Please contact me if you have any questions, or if I can further expand on the reasons I feel this group to be deserving of such recognition.

Sincerely

Cindy Fraser

Cindy Fraser
Recreation Co-ordinator

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To whom it may concern.

Re: Lismore and Area

On behalf of the Pictou Regional Development Agency, I am pleased to support the nomination of Lismore and Area for the 2012 Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award for Nova Scotia. Our agency has worked with the citizens of Lismore and the area along the Northumberland Shore for a number of years. At present we are partnering with the community to create a unique historic information kiosk in celebration of the heritage and history of the area.

But beyond our direct relationship with the people of Lismore and Area, we are aware of the many community based activities that have been initiated by this rural community. In particular, they have maintained a well used community hall and have shown leadership to other local communities in their efforts to promote more active, healthy lives among those who live in rural Nova Scotia.

The citizens of the area have also taken a reasoned approach to wind power development in their part of Pictou County and are active as community advisors to the wind power development company which operates along the Antigonish-Pictou County border.

For those of us who work to improve communities, Lismore and Area has been a leader, despite having limited resources and a relatively small population. The spirit of our early settlers is alive and well in this community and we believe they would be deserving recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's annual award.

Jack Kyte

Executive Director

Forward Together

Congratulations.

There are great leaders in our communities, Lismore exemplifies what it takes to sustain community engagement. The community spirit award is awarded to communities that do as such. Lismore represents this as they have built it all from courageous collegian neighborly participation. It takes a community to build a community.

Lismore is located on the beautiful Northumberland shore. Many businesses live and thrive here, projects are accomplished, such as planning actions to improve the infrastructure and more importantly the social well being of each other, which requires commitments. This also ensures everyone feels welcomed.

Art and culture are pillars of the Lismore community, as well as fishing, agriculture, forestry, wind development, tourism and lots more.

I am pleased to provide support by way of this email,

Kelly McVicar
Municipal councillor
District one