

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **ANTIGONISH/GUYSBOROUGH CHOSEN AS INCLUSIVE TRANSPORTATION PILOT SITE FOR NOVA SCOTIA**

The Honourable Ray White, Housing and Municipal Affairs Minister for Nova Scotia, has announced that Antigonish and Guysborough have been chosen as a key test site to develop new, community based inclusive transportation services in the region. The goal of the Inclusive Transportation Project is to test out a number of innovative approaches to delivering accessible transportation to disabled, elderly and low-income groups in the community. The lessons learned from this Project will be applied to other communities across the Province.

“Nova Scotia has a higher percentage of disabled persons than any other province in Canada,” said Minister White. “Without sufficient accessible transportation services they are unable to connect with the labour market and successfully participate in their communities.”

The Antigonish/Guysborough site was chosen as a result of winning a province-wide competition. A number of local non-profit groups – Antigonish/Guysborough Persons with Disabilities Coalition, The Care Van Society, L’Arche Antigonish and VON Antigonish – jointly submitted the winning proposal. The community steering group also had the support of numerous other government and not-for-profit stakeholders in the region.

“We are very excited about the possibilities of this Project” noted Tessie MacFarlene, the Director of the Coalition. “We look forward to working with the other stakeholder groups in the region to develop a leading-edge, sustainable model for inclusive transportation in Nova Scotia.” To this end a key meeting has been called for May 26<sup>th</sup> to bring the main stakeholder groups together in order to explore the issues and participate in the future direction of the project .

The Inclusive Transportation Project will be delivered in two parts. First will be a study period that will take place during the summer. Following the study period, implementation of the pilot projects will start and run until March 2000. The community steering committee has retained the services of Dr. Chris Galea, a professor with the Department of Business Administration at St. Francis Xavier University, to coordinate and manage the project. In addition, with the assistance of Human Resources Development Canada, two university graduates have also been hired full-time to assist Dr. Galea.

The public will be kept informed regularly of the progress of this important Project. However, for more information or to participate directly in the project please contact Dr. Galea at (902) 867-3932.