

# Annual Accountability Report

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2004–2005

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PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA



**NOVA SCOTIA**

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## Message from Premier John Hamm

My government continues to work hard to help make Nova Scotia the best place it can be for individuals, families, and businesses to prosper.

During the period covered by this Government of Nova Scotia Accountability Report—the fifth produced by my Government—I am pleased to report that the overall picture is very bright. Nova Scotians have good reason to be optimistic.

Nova Scotia had a record year in 2004–2005, with employment numbers climbing to over 441,000, and the unemployment rate moving steadily in the other direction.

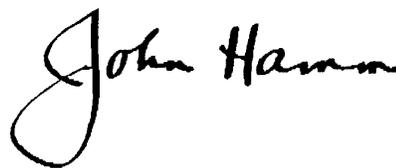
We had a third consecutive balanced budget in 2004–2005. We produced a surplus once again. And we have a debt-reduction plan firmly in place. We also negotiated an Offshore Accord that brought us \$830 million, every cent of which went on the debt.

Our commitment to live within our means also lets us borrow money at lower cost, when borrowing is prudent.

And it lets us invest more of our money straight back into our province.

Of course, there is still much we need to do to keep building the infrastructure that will ensure our economic and social success—such as schools, highways, and hospitals.

As this report shows, we are getting closer to where we want to be. Nova Scotians are making good progress. Citizens, communities, business and labour, public servants, elected officials and many others—we are all working together to create a wonderful future. Together, we really are making this province the best place in the world for our children and grandchildren to make their dreams come true.



The Honourable John Hamm  
Premier of Nova Scotia



# Annual Accountability

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**NOVA SCOTIA**

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## Annual Accountability

Nova Scotia measures performance by monitoring progress in meeting priorities and through the use of performance measures. Performance measures are often based on annual or bi-annual Statistics Canada publications and national surveys. These publications sometimes update prior-year information to reflect new data or correct prior-year errors. Information reported in this accountability report utilizes data from the most recent publications available at the print date. Therefore, data presented in this report may differ from the data given in previous reports.

# Introduction

The Government of Nova Scotia's *Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 2004–2005* outlines the government's activities and achievements during the reporting period, March 31, 2004, to March 31, 2005. The information contained in this report is linked to the priorities laid out in the *Government Business Plan* published in April 2004.

At that time, the government planned to deliver its third consecutive balanced budget, and was able to do so. With a surplus on the books, we are living within our means. This positive performance has freed up money to invest in the province's growth. Our progress is clear, from any recent examination of economic indicators, including the growing employment rate and steadily declining rates of unemployment.

Keeping Nova Scotia's books in the black improves the province's credit rating and our prospects for further growth. And it shows the world that Nova Scotia is a good place to live and do business.

To benefit the quality of life of our citizens as much as possible, throughout 2004–2005 government continued to focus on the health, prosperity, and self-sufficiency of Nova Scotians. We are

making significant investments in the infrastructure that supports our economy, including our schools, roads, and hospitals.

We are investing in research and development capabilities, in innovation and technology, and in export opportunities. And we are welcoming home expatriates, as well as new immigrants who want to share and contribute to the Nova Scotia experience.

To accomplish our objectives, the practice of this government has been to ground the government's plans in the fundamental business areas essential to our health and prosperity. These represent the basic products and services that citizens have come to expect from government, which include:

- health and health care
- education and learning
- the economy
- families and communities
- the environment
- government services



# Annual Accountability

# Health and Health Care

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## Priorities for 2004–2005

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The Department of Health continues to have the largest budget in government, because the province continues to make good health care for its citizens a priority. Despite federal funding shortfalls, the province makes ongoing investments to help Nova Scotians lead healthy lifestyles, reduce their risk of chronic disease, and enjoy access to quality health care. This approach helps people get and stay healthier and reduces strains on the health-care system.

Highlights from 2004–2005 include investments in an expanded childhood vaccine program, new treatments for autistic children, and major changes in the way long-term care is funded and how residents pay for it.

The province invested an additional \$9 million over three years to introduce new vaccines and expand existing programs. The new vaccines are being given to both babies and older children to protect against meningitis, pneumonia, blood infection, chickenpox, whooping cough, tetanus, and diphtheria.

In December 2004, the province approved funding for early intensive behavioural intervention (EIBI) treatment for autistic children. Therapists are being trained to deliver the treatment through the district health authorities and the IWK Health Centre. While it has been possible to treat some children throughout this process, it is expected that it will take three years before the program is operational across the province.

On January 1, 2005, the Department of Health brought in sweeping changes to funding for long-term care. Residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, and community-based options under the department's mandate no longer pay for their health-care costs and no longer have to use their assets to pay for their long-term care accommodation costs. These program changes came about as the result of multi-party efforts to promote fairness and equity.



## **Wellness and Health Promotion**

### **PRIORITY: Promoting Physical Activity**

*Government will continue to expand and support programs to encourage Nova Scotia's children and their families to be more physically active and to enjoy healthier lives.*

(Office of Health Promotion; Education)

Government continued to build on the physical-activity strategy launched in 2002, Active Kids, Healthy Kids. Six regional action groups composed of representatives from sport and recreation groups, health, education, and other sectors implemented six regional action plans to provide new programs and services to increase activity levels.

Active Kids, Healthy Kids also supported eight pilot projects that promoted more activity through the curriculum, through after-school programs, and by encouraging walking and biking to school. Nearly 100 schools signed up for the 2004 International Walk to School Day, a program coordinated by the Ecology Action Centre with funding provided through Active Kids, Healthy Kids.

To expand programs that encourage children and their families to be more

physically active, the Office of Health Promotion provided \$500,000 to 83 schools, municipalities, and sport and recreation groups through the new Physical Activity Grant Program.

To improve the quality of sport and recreation programs across the province, the Office of Health Promotion assisted financially in the training of coaches, outdoor leaders, lifeguards, and fitness instructors through programs such as Fair Play, High Five, and Sport Futures.

The federal/provincial Sport Futures Program (Phase II) has become a regular part of summer camp programs throughout Nova Scotia. In 2004–2005, the program trained nearly 1,500 leaders and delivered hundreds of clinics in more than a hundred communities, reaching 46,000 Nova Scotians.

A great deal of activity also took place in the province under the High Five program banner. Launched in August 2004 by Recreation Nova Scotia with financial support from the Office of Health Promotion, the High Five program supports healthy child development and quality recreation and sport experiences.

In 2004–2005, High Five trained hundreds of front-line recreation and sport leaders in the principles of healthy child development. Participants included representatives of municipalities and community groups, including the Boys

and Girls Clubs of Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaq Youth Active Circle for Living, and the YMCA of Greater Halifax-Dartmouth.

The Office of Health Promotion provided training to 170 outdoor leaders, under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Outdoor Leadership Development Program, and provided training to almost 70 lifeguards for over 20 supervised beaches, through the Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service in partnership with the Lifesaving Society.

The Office of Health Promotion partnered with the Nova Scotia Fitness Association and Nova Scotia Heart and Stroke Foundation to fund new training programs for youth fitness and physical-activity counselling.

Approximately \$840,000 went directly to 42 provincial sport organizations to help in the delivery of programs and services. Other funding helped host 15 national championships and annual general meetings in the province.

To help more children in low-income families find the money to cover the high cost of recreation and sport programs, the government laid the groundwork for 11 regional KidSport chapters across the province. Each year, KidSport will allocate more than \$300,000 directly to hundreds of children to help them participate in sport. More than 650 children benefited directly from the program in 2004–2005.

The Office of Health Promotion continues to assist Nova Scotia's high-performance athletes, contributing financially to the training of a dozen athletes who are working toward participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Office of Health Promotion also provided direct financial support to 28 Nova Scotia athletes through the Elite Athlete Assistance Program.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Promoting Healthy Eating**

*Government will work with school boards and many other partners in 2004–2005 to help children eat a balanced diet. (Office of Health Promotion; Education)*

Government developed a new food and nutrition policy in 2004–2005 to cover grades primary through 12. The policy covers food in school cafeterias, vending machines, school canteens, and food served or sold through fundraising.

The government released the Healthy Eating Nova Scotia strategy in March 2005, in co-operation with the Alliance for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity. The strategy promotes breastfeeding and more consumption of fruits and vegetables, and it looks for ways to increase the affordability of healthy food for all Nova Scotians.



In 2004–2005, the government worked with the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre to build the case for food security in the province, including policy tools and a food-costing model.

**PRIORITY:  
Preventing Injuries**

*Government will continue efforts in 2004–2005 to reduce the number of preventable injuries through implementation of the Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy, the only government-funded injury-prevention strategy in Canada.*  
(Office of Health Promotion)

The Office of Health Promotion is providing leadership for the strategy and promoting collaboration with partners. In addition to reducing the number and severity of motor vehicle collisions, the strategy focuses on preventing falls among seniors and on preventing suicides. Together, these three areas cause the greatest number of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations.

The Office of Health Promotion is developing a suicide-prevention strategy in co-operation with Mental Health Services, the Nova Scotia Community Network to Address Suicide, and many stakeholders. Funding has been provided to South Shore Safe Communities to

implement a suicide-prevention strategy that has been prepared for that region.

The Office of Health Promotion is part of an intersectoral falls-prevention committee that is looking for ways to identify program and policy gaps. The Office also funds the Preventing Falls Together Initiative (PFT) through Community Links. PFT promotes the development of a sustainable network of regional falls-prevention coalitions that helps seniors, caregivers, and health professionals in their own communities.

**PRIORITY:  
Promoting Healthy Sexuality**

*Government will help provide youth with timely, equitable, and confidential access to educational information and services to support informed decision making about their sexual health.*

(Office of Health Promotion)

The publication *Sex?—Healthy Sexuality Resource* was completed in August 2004 and distributed to youth between the ages of 12 and 17 through Public Health offices, schools, and other community organizations. The resource continues to be distributed by participating schools to grade 7 classes.

The Office of Health Promotion and key stakeholders developed system standards

for youth health centres this year. These standards will support the delivery of safe, confidential, and timely services to youth in many Nova Scotia communities.

The Roundtable on Youth Sexual Health followed up with an action plan after completing provincial consultations on a Framework for Youth Sexual Health in Nova Scotia.

**PRIORITY:  
Tobacco Strategy  
Implementation**

*Government will continue implementing its tobacco strategy in 2004–2005, expanding programs and services to align with new research and best practices to reduce smoking and increase healthful lifestyles.*

(Office of Health Promotion;  
Education)

The Office of Health Promotion stepped up its stop-smoking programs in 2004–2005, with more funding for district health authorities (DHAs) for nicotine treatment. Tobacco-reduction public-awareness campaigns also continued throughout the year.

In the schools, the Department of Education, in partnership with the Office of Health Promotion, produced *You Choose*, a media-literacy resource for high

schools, while the district health authorities continued to offer No More Butts, a peer-led, stop-smoking program for high school students.

In the elementary and junior high schools, the district health authorities continued to offer the curriculum supplement *Smoke-free for Life*.

In January 2005, the Office of Health Promotion released the first tobacco report card to the public. The *Tobacco Control Progress Report* highlighted declines in tobacco use among adults and youth between October 2001 and March 2004. The rate of smoking for Nova Scotia youth between 15 and 19 years of age decreased from 27 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2004. Similarly, the rate of smoking for the Nova Scotia population 15 years and older dropped from 25 per cent to 20 per cent during the same period.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Addiction Prevention**

*Alcohol consumption, other drug use, and gambling are all behaviours that can be problematic for an individual's health and well-being and can have negative economic as well as physical and emotional consequences. In 2004–2005, government will work with health providers to reduce problems associated with substance abuse and gambling.*  
(Office of Health Promotion)

The Office of Health Promotion is working on a plan to reduce alcohol-related harms, such as relationship problems with family and friends, legal problems, and problems at school or at work, and to raise awareness of the risks associated with other drug use and gambling.

Alcohol is a factor in many types of injury and disease, as well as in risky sexual behaviour, violence, crime, and other social problems. The Office of Health Promotion hired a provincial strategy coordinator in February 2005 to initiate a strategy for gathering Nova Scotia data on the scope of alcohol-related harms and to draft terms of reference for a provincial task force on alcohol, in partnership with

the district health authorities.

Focus groups have been conducted with young males (19–29) to better understand the context around harmful alcohol use. Public attention is also being drawn to the availability of help through Addiction Services, while students are being asked to consider new material to supplement the drug-education curriculum in the schools.

Nova Scotia's first gaming strategy, A Better Balance, developed initiatives in 2004-2005 to increase resources for problem-gambling treatment, prevention and early-intervention programs, community-based programming, and social marketing to increase awareness.

Initial social marketing efforts in 2005 focused on increasing awareness of the risks and consequences of using video lottery terminals (VLTs), as well as on encouraging people to seek treatment. Since the beginning of the campaign, calls to the problem-gambling help line have increased by over 50 per cent, compared to the same period in 2004.

**PRIORITY:  
Chronic-disease Prevention  
and Management**

*Government will work with a wide variety of partners on strategies to prevent and manage chronic diseases.*  
(Office of Health Promotion; Health)

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide. Four of the leading chronic diseases—cancer, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease—are linked by common and preventable biological and behavioural risks. High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and being overweight are the biological risk factors. The behavioural risks include unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, and tobacco use.

The Office of Health Promotion has hired a provincial coordinator for chronic-disease prevention and earmarked resources for several initiatives looking at the major risk factors. An advisory committee is operational.

The Office of Health Promotion has allocated \$348,000 to district health authorities to distribute to community health boards. They, in turn, distribute the funding to local health-promotion and illness-prevention projects and programs.

**PRIORITY:  
Communications and  
Social Marketing**

*The Office of Health Promotion will work with partners to increase awareness about risks to health and how to develop healthier lifestyles.*  
(Office of Health Promotion)

Based on research that shows that the most effective health-promotion programs use social marketing as part of the mix, the Office of Health Promotion developed a framework for a social-marketing campaign for parents of children up to 12 years of age. The campaign will target healthy eating, physical activity, injury prevention, and tobacco reduction.

The Office of Health Promotion continued development of a communications network of external stakeholders to keep them informed of progress in priority areas. A series of ads in provincial and community newspapers also publicly recognized and thanked stakeholders for their work.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Wellness for  
Government Employees**

*Government will develop programs to help government employees improve their health and physical activity levels.*

(Office of Health Promotion;  
Public Service Commission)

A healthy-workplace advisory committee has been established to guide this effort, with representatives from all departments. Already, a number of encouraging wellness initiatives are under way to help government employees improve their health and activity levels.

***Health-care Services***

**PRIORITY:**  
**Front-line Health Care**

*The Government of Nova Scotia will increase funding to district health authorities by \$79 million in 2004–2005, bringing total funding for DHAs to \$1.1 billion. The funding will enable the districts to operate the hospitals, clinics, and services that Nova Scotians need to get high-quality health care and shorter wait times for many tests and treatments.*

(Health)

The 2004–2005 budget increased funding to DHAs by \$79 million, bringing total funding to \$1.1 billion. Additionally, in December 2004, the province's Ministers of Health and Health Promotion announced \$62 million in federal funding commitments to support reduced wait times, more health professionals, and healthy choices, along with \$15 million for medical equipment.

Funding allocations include four capital projects totalling \$19 million, \$19.5 million allocated throughout the province to address key pressures affecting wait times, \$2 million for addiction prevention and treatment, and \$6.3 million for one-time operating costs such

as long-term care deferred maintenance and start-up funds for programming for children with autism.

**PRIORITY:  
Reducing Wait Times**

*Government will continue efforts in 2004–2005 to monitor and identify ways to reduce wait times for diagnosis and treatment.*  
(Health)

Government is committed to shortening wait lists for tests, treatment, and care. In January 2004, the government committed funding to begin the collection of standardized wait-time information across the province and to establish the Nova Scotia Wait Time Advisory Committee.

The committee, which helps find ways to avoid bottlenecks, held its inaugural meeting in March. It is made up of members of the public, physicians and administrators from the district health authorities, and representatives from the Department of Health.

In the meantime, data collected since 2004 on diagnostic services are giving preliminary results that will be released after review for accuracy.

Another project gathered wait-time data on plastic surgery, gastroenterology, dermatology, and neurology. Data will be reviewed for accuracy prior to public release.

**PRIORITY:  
Recruiting and  
Keeping Health Workers**

*Government will move forward with strategies in 2004–2005 to ensure that health-care workers are in place to care for Nova Scotians in the years ahead, as more and more workers approach retirement age.*  
(Health)

In April 2004, Dr. Peter Vaughan assumed the role of Chief Health Human Resource Officer to build on the work of the nursing strategy, physician-recruitment efforts, and other training and recruitment efforts for health professionals.

As part of the nursing strategy, 297 nurses graduated from Dalhousie University, St. Frances Xavier University, and the University of Cape Breton; 80 nurses graduated from the licensed practical nurse (LPN) program at the Nova Scotia Community College.

St. Francis Xavier University graduated 25 nurses from a new 20-month program and 10 nurses from the bridging program for LPNs to become registered nurses. This was part of the 60-seat expansion provided by the nursing strategy. The province will explore the possibility of further expanding nursing seats in fiscal 2005–2006, including new education sites.



The national Nursing Sector Study will be a valuable resource to the province as we move forward with the provincial Health Human Resource plan and nursing strategy. The sector study, which is the largest research initiative involving nursing in Canada, is endorsed by the three nursing stakeholder groups and represents the current state of affairs for nursing in this country.

The Department of Health purchased a 25-seat program to train medical laboratory technologists at the New Brunswick Community College, in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Community College. Health and Education are studying the feasibility of offering a similar entry-level program in Nova Scotia. In exchange for their agreement to work in Nova Scotia for two years after graduation from the New Brunswick course, students are eligible for a \$4,000 bursary for each of the two years of study. Training includes a 16-week placement at a hospital in Nova Scotia.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Training More Physicians**

*Initiatives for 2004–2005 will focus on the ongoing effort to increase the number of physicians available to serve the needs of Nova Scotians, including a review of recruitment activities. In 2004–2005, government will fund an additional eight new first-year medical students. An effort will also be made to reduce barriers to medical practice for international medical school graduates.*

(Health)

Nova Scotia is building a solid plan for health professionals who will support our health-care system today and into the future. The province is on track to submit a comprehensive health human resources strategy to the public by year-end 2005.

A study by Med Emerge International Inc. on Atlantic Canada's regional demand for health training and education programs will help develop a strategy to meet the commitments from the First Ministers Meeting of 2004, including setting targets for training, recruitment, and retention of health professionals.

The Department of Health is supporting an increase in the number of medical-school seats at Dalhousie University. The department will maintain funding for a

class size of 90 medical students. As part of a commitment flowing from the First Ministers Meeting, starting in the fall of 2004, government will fund an additional eight new first-year medical students at Dalhousie.

About 25 per cent of all practising physicians in Nova Scotia are international medical graduates (IMGs). Recruitment of physicians from other countries is one of several strategies to meet ongoing physician resource requirements.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia has developed a credential-assessment program and centre for internationally trained physicians. Their goals are to increase the number of physicians practising in Nova Scotia and to help attract and retain highly skilled immigrants to Nova Scotia.

The Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre and the Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre have set up a partnership to develop two programs. One is English as a second language for internationally educated health professionals, which began in January 2005. The other program is an orientation to the Canadian health-care system and professional practice in Nova Scotia. The partnership also includes the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia.

### **PRIORITY:**

#### **Primary Health Care Renewal**

*Major priorities include the creation of new ways to develop sustainable primary health-care networks, increase the number of community-based primary health organizations, and move the primary health-care system to an electronic patient record.* (Health)

In all nine district health authorities, primary health-care staff are working closely with their communities to identify the best models for primary health organizations in their areas.

Nova Scotia distributed its share (\$4.8 million) of the primary health-care transition fund for 2004–2005 to the district health authorities, in support of primary health-care infrastructure initiatives. The transition fund is shifting the focus of primary health care from physicians in solo or group practice to health-care teams that work with other sectors and organizations in the community.

The fund is also trying to expand upon the number of primary-care providers who use electronic patient records, in preparation for the future implementation of electronic health records.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Enhanced Cardiac Care**

*Cardiovascular disease is one of the most common causes of death in Nova Scotia. It contributes directly to disability, work loss, and premature death. Government will continue to work with a broad range of stakeholders across the province to improve the cardiac health of Nova Scotians.*

(Health)

In 2004–2005, the government set up a cardiovascular health advisory council to guide the development of the provincial cardiac program. The council is made up of members of the public and administrative and medical leaders from the district health authorities. They have developed a well-defined strategic plan, while efforts continue simultaneously to collect information on cardiac disease for the development of provincial standards in service delivery.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Enhancing Emergency Health Preparedness**

*The department will develop an emergency-response plan for all hazards—including SARS, West Nile virus, pandemic flu, and terrorist-associated chemical, radio-nuclear, or biological events. The plan's components will include surveillance, communication, public-health measures, and health and emergency services.*

(Health)

The Department of Health is moving forward with its Emergency Planning, Preparedness, and Response initiative for the Nova Scotia health system. A strategic plan for the whole system is ready and being reviewed, while a sub-group completes work on the province's Pandemic Influenza Plan. Several branches of the Department of Health are working on this in co-operation with the district health authorities, the Emergency Measures Organization, the First Nations Inuit health branch, the Department of Community Services, and the Canadian Forces.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Mental Health Services**

*During 2004–2005, the Department of Health will continue to implement core service standards and will also develop a plan for monitoring the effectiveness of mental health services.*

(Health)

An additional \$2 million was provided to the district health authorities and the IWK Health Centre in 2004–2005 to implement core service standards in three areas: child and youth mental health services, crisis emergency services, and community supports for the severely and persistently mentally ill.

A consumer-satisfaction survey known as the Health of the Nation Outcome Survey was pilot-tested in some of the health districts and will be further tested in 2005–2006.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Children’s Mental Health**

*Government will continue to treat children’s mental health needs as a top priority in 2004–2005, supporting new community-based mental health teams.*

(Health)

The government made \$3 million available to establish treatment programs for children in Cape Breton and Halifax. The IWK Health Centre established the Adolescent Centre for Treatment and set up an intensive community-based treatment team, while the Cape Breton District Health Authority established a similar team.

The province’s district health authorities and the IWK will offer treatment to young children with autistic disorders as part of a \$4-million funding initiative for early intensive behavioural intervention treatment. The program is expected to be fully operational in nine health authorities and the IWK within three years, following recruitment and training of staff. Treatment for some children can begin during the training process.

The IWK will also hire more therapists to help children with developmental, cognitive, and physical disabilities. A \$300,000 investment in pediatric



rehabilitation will allow the hospital to expand services offered by a team of physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, nurses, and doctors.

### ***Improved Services to Seniors***

#### **PRIORITY: Reducing Nursing Home Costs for Seniors**

*Government will fully implement its five-point plan to cover the health-care costs for nursing home residents, effective January 1, 2005. The new funding model will be applied to residents of all long-term care facilities under the Department of Health's mandate, including nursing homes, residential care facilities, and community-based options.*  
(Health)

The requirement for residents of long-term care facilities to pay for the health costs of long-term care was removed as of January 1, 2005. Thanks to an additional provincial investment of \$9.2 million in health-care services, long-term care residents now pay toward their accommodation charge only.

The government also began to assess the ability of people to pay when entering

nursing homes on their incomes rather than their assets. Changing to an income-based assessment responded to public concerns and also simplified the assessment process.

Nova Scotia is the first Atlantic province to develop a plan to fully cover senior's health-care costs in nursing homes. Before full implementation, about 80 per cent of seniors had their nursing home health-care costs subsidized by the government. This plan benefits the remaining 20 per cent.

#### **PRIORITY: Affordable Drugs**

*Government will work to keep drugs affordable for the 95,000 seniors insured through the provincial Pharmacare program.*  
(Health)

In 2004–2005, government paid 73.4 per cent of the total Pharmacare bill of \$146 million, keeping co-pays at the previous year's levels. The income level for total premium exemption was increased, and the late-entry penalty was brought down to five years.

More than half the seniors in the program saw no increase in the cost of their drug coverage this year, because they are premium-exempt, and the increase in premiums did not affect them. The co-payment per prescription and the annual

co-payment maximum did not change.

Despite an increase in annual premiums (from \$336 to \$390), seniors continue to pay 33 per cent of total prescription costs to an annual maximum of \$350. Low-income seniors are exempt from the premiums.

### **PRIORITY:**

#### **Task Force on Aging**

*Government will form a task force on aging to study the unique needs of seniors. The task force will develop recommendations on health and social programming, to ensure that Nova Scotia is ready to help its growing seniors' population enjoy a healthy, happy, and productive future. In 2004–2005, the task force steering committee will be formed, public consultations held, and a strategy for positive aging prepared.*

(Senior Citizens' Secretariat)

The Seniors' Secretariat budget was increased by \$100,000 in 2004–2005 to facilitate the work of the Task Force on Aging. A 22-member advisory committee was established in July 2004 to guide the creation of a discussion paper and the final strategy for positive aging.

The task force produced a discussion paper on topics such as financial security,

caregiving, transportation, and housing, as well as reducing social isolation, creating intergenerational bonds, and seniors' participation in employment and volunteer opportunities.

Extensive provincewide consultations followed the release of the discussion paper in October 2004. More than 1,000 Nova Scotians in more than 30 communities provided direct input at several dozen public meetings and through written responses.

The high number of respondents and the quality of information substantially increased the scope of the strategy and the volume of research required. The Strategy for Positive Aging was completed in the fall of 2005.

### **Health System Management**

#### **PRIORITY:**

#### **Accountability for Results**

*In 2004–2005, government will strengthen accountability and reporting on results of the health-care system.*

(Health)

The Department of Health provided statistical and other information to the federal government on how the province is meeting its obligations under the Canada Health Act.



## Annual Accountability

The Minister of Health released the second annual *Minister's Report to Nova Scotians: Working Together Toward Better Care*, a follow-up to the 2003 *Your Health Matters* strategic plan for health care in Nova Scotia. The 2004–2005 report accounted for areas such as health-care investments, health professionals, wait times, health-care delivery in communities, caring for seniors, and how we are helping people stay healthy.

In 2004–2005, the Department of Health also reported on the growing use of information technology in health care. The Nova Scotia Hospital Information System (NSHIS) is being used to ensure that state-of-the-art clinical information systems are installed throughout the province, including rural areas.

The NSHIS provides health-care professionals with quick access to patients' medical-history information, while at the same time protecting privacy. NSHIS is now operating in seven of the eight districts in the province, and the project is on target for completion by early 2006. Functions such as lab, diagnostic imaging, pharmacy, and patient processing and reporting of results are available and in use on a daily basis in district and rural hospitals. The goal is to establish a portable electronic health record for every Nova Scotian, so that health-care providers can serve them better.

In the meantime, expansion of the medical information system that captures images such as MRI, CT, and X-ray is under way. The Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) stores the digital images in a central archive for retrieval and reporting. Rural hospitals will have the capacity to capture images via a computer-radiography unit for transmission to the central archive. PACS is now operational in four of the province's nine district health authorities and IWK Health Centre. The rest of the province is on target for hookup by autumn 2006.

### **PRIORITY: Renovated Hospitals**

*The government will proceed with a number of projects in 2004–2005 to improve Nova Scotia's health-care infrastructure. (Health)*

In 2004, work included several major renovations and one new hospital project. In May, the new Women's and Children's Health Centre opened in the South Shore District Health Authority. The centre brings together a full range of services for women and children, including in-patient obstetrical and pediatric care, obstetric and pediatric clinics, and education programs.

In the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority, the department responded to the growing pressure on acute-care

services by giving approval to open 21 acute-care beds at the Valley Regional Hospital and to make emergency-room renovations.

The department announced the site for a new Truro hospital that, by 2008–2009, will replace Colchester Regional, at an estimated cost of \$110 million.

A \$2-million renovation project at the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital in Tatamagouche will improve access to health-care services for residents of that community and surrounding area. Renovations will be made to the emergency room, in-patient area, and lab services, and upgrades will add space for primary health-care services.

Because of the Cumberland Health Authority's success in attracting new medical staff, an increase in the number of surgeries and other health services means that a new operating room is being built at the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre in Upper Nappan.

The St. Martha's Hospital Renewal project in Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority has been approved, for completion in 2008.

In the Capital District Health Authority, the Emergency Room project at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre is in the planning stages, the IWK Health Centre Redevelopment Project is under

way, and the replacement for the Cobequid Community Health Centre is scheduled to open in February 2006.

### **PRIORITY: Hospital Information Systems**

*The Nova Scotia Hospital Information System (NSHIS) enables the health records of Nova Scotians to travel with them wherever they receive care in the province. A shared electronic record will allow health-care providers to access a patient's record and enter health history, medications, test results, and other relevant information.*  
(Health)

The NSHIS is a building block toward better care. The system allows a patient's attending health-care providers to share quick, secure access to complete patient information. Protection of individual privacy and confidentiality are built into the system.

More than 5,500 health professionals in 31 of the province's 34 hospitals are currently using the system for such functions as lab, X-ray, pharmacy, admitting, and discharge and transfer. The NSHIS project is on time and on budget, for completion by April 2006.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Medical Equipment—  
Capital Spending**

*A number of major equipment purchases will be made in 2004–2005.*

(Health)

The \$58 million in funding approved under the federal Medical Equipment Program over a four-year period has been expended solely on new equipment.

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**Health:  
Measuring Our  
Performance**

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**PERCENTAGE OF FAMILY  
PHYSICIAN POSITIONS FILLED  
IN UNDER-SERVED AREAS**

(Health)

*Outcome:  
Access to quality health care*

What does the measure tell us?

One measure of the supply and distribution of health personnel is the percentage of family physician positions filled in under-served areas. Under-served areas are those that have a history of recruitment and retention difficulties, where local recruiting has been unsuccessful for more than six months, and where the medical needs of the community are not being otherwise served. Those areas designated as “under-served” have incentive programs to support physician recruitment. The number of under-served areas changes over time, as does the number of physicians in under-served areas.

### Where are we now?

In 2004–2005, more physician positions were filled in under-served areas than in the previous year (36 versus 34). However unfilled positions in under-served areas increased (48 versus 42), reducing the percentage of positions filled (75 per cent versus 81 per cent).

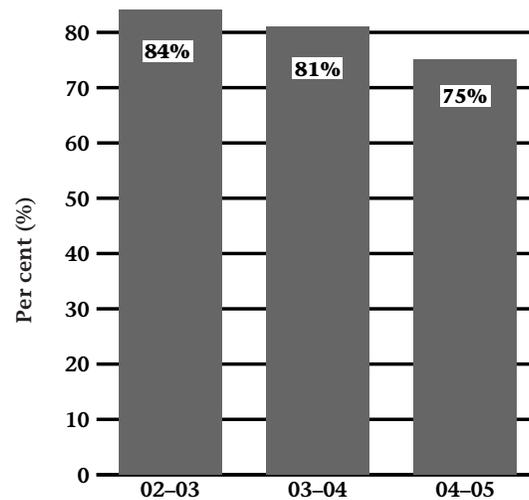
The number of family physicians in under-served areas changes rapidly due to natural fluctuations, such as deaths, retirements, and successful recruitment. Ongoing planning and recruitment efforts include website listings of vacancies, a recruitment guide, advertising, and incentives through the Physician Recruiter.

### Where do we want to be?

Nova Scotia's target is to have 80 per cent or more of health human resource positions filled in under-served areas of Nova Scotia. The province continues to support innovative physician-recruitment initiatives. A key focus is the building of multi-professional care teams for primary health care. There are now four funded pilot sites for the Strengthening Primary (Health) Care Initiative (SPCI) at the District Health Authorities. The Department of Health continues to implement the Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner initiative.

### Percentage of Family Physician Positions Filled in Under-Served Areas

Nova Scotia, 2002–2003 to 2004–2005



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Health.



## AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES (Health)

*Outcome:  
Access to quality health care*

What does the measure tell us?

In urban areas, the industry standard for response time for lights and siren calls, is under nine minutes, 90 per cent of the time. This standard is based on chances of survival after a cardiac arrest, which improve if an ambulance arrives within nine minutes. There are no standards for suburban or rural areas. Geography dictates that response times will be longer in suburban and rural areas than in urban areas.

Where are we now?

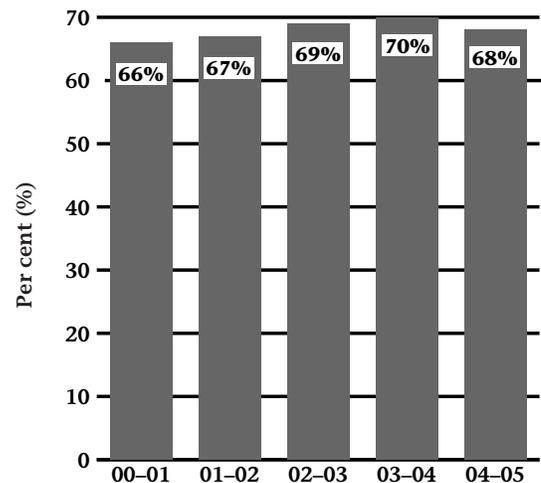
In 2004–2005, response time from the time a call is answered to arrival at the emergency scene was nine minutes or less 68 per cent of the time. This is an improvement since the 2000–2001 base year (66 per cent) but a slight decline from 2003–2004 (70 per cent).

Where do we want to be?

The province's target is to improve the percentage of ambulance response times within nine minutes to the industry standard of 90 per cent of the time. We are dedicated to continually improving response times by using methods and technology that will result in the most efficient use of ambulances.

## Percentage of Ambulance Response Times Within Nine Minutes

Nova Scotia, 2000–2001 to 2004–2005



Source: Emergency Health Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health.

## **YOUTH SMOKING (AGES 15–19)**

(Office of Health Promotion)

*Outcome: Healthier lifestyles*

What does the measure tell us?

Habits adopted during the teen years tend to continue into adult life. In addition to informing us about smoking among young people, this measure also predicts adult smoking rates for the future. Preventing or reducing smoking among young people has important long-term health benefits, including reduced smoking by adults and the prevention of serious illness.

Where are we now?

According to the Canada Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS), an annual survey used to monitor tobacco use nationally, 20 per cent of Nova Scotia youth (aged 15–19) smoked. This is a decline from 2000 (25 per cent), but a slight increase from 2003 (18 per cent).<sup>1</sup>

Where do we want to be?

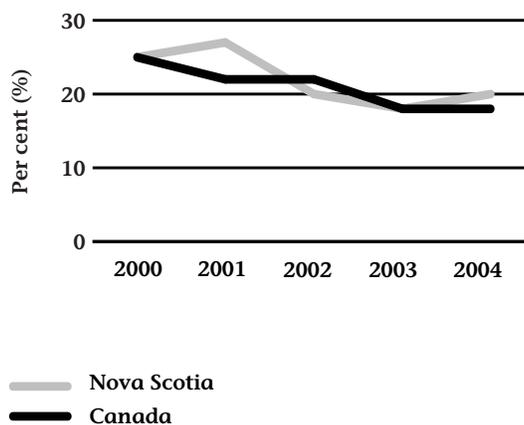
Our aim is to reduce the percentage of youth in Nova Scotia who smoke. Strategies include continued implementation of all components of the Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy, including taxation, smoke-free places legislation, treatment/cessation programs, and community-based programs.

1. The Canada Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS) data replaces the previously reported Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) data. CTUMS data is reported annually, is used to monitor progress nationally and is cited in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Progress Report on Tobacco Control.

CTUMS uses a narrower definition of youth (15–19 years) than CCHS (12–19 years). Therefore, CTUMS data cannot be directly compared to CCHS results.

### **Percentage of Youth (15–19) Who Smoke**

Nova Scotia and Canada 2000 to 2004





**Annual Accountability**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (ADULTS)<sup>1</sup>**

(Office of Health Promotion)

*Outcome: Healthier lifestyles*

What does the measure tell us?

Physical activity is an important contributor to physical and mental health and an important preventive factor for many chronic diseases. Self-reported data is collected every two years through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Active adults—those who receive 30 minutes of activity per day—obtain optimum health benefits. Moderately active adults—those receiving 15–29 minutes of activity each day—enjoy some health benefits.

Where are we now?

There is no new data to report this year<sup>2</sup>. As reported last year, since 1997 there has been a consistent increase in the number Nova Scotians who report being physically active enough to obtain health benefits.

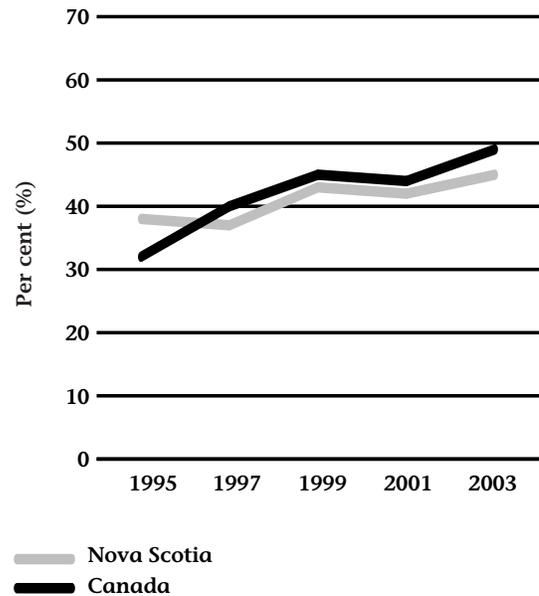
Where do we want to be?

Our goal is to increase to 52 per cent by 2009–2010 the number of adults active enough to obtain health benefits. Government encourages participation by all Nova Scotians, at home, school, work, and in the community through initiatives

such as the Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy, the Active Kids/Healthy Kids Strategy, and increasing access to opportunities for sport, recreation, and physical activity.

**Percentage of Adults Physically Active or Moderately Active**

Nova Scotia and Canada 1995 to 2003



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

1. The performance measure published in the 2004-2005 business plan measured physical inactivity in adults. In recognizing health promotion as a positive process for improving the health of Nova Scotians, the measure was recast to report adult physical activity levels.
2. The last biannual CCHS survey covered the 2003 calendar year and was reported in the 2003–2004 accountability report. The next survey will cover the 2005 calendar year and will be reported in the 2005–2006 accountability report.

**BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)<sup>1</sup>**

(Office of Health Promotion)

*Outcome: Healthier lifestyles*

What does the measure tell us?

The body mass index (BMI) is a common measurement for calculating if an individual's weight is in a healthy range based on their height. A healthy body weight, in relation to height, is associated with reduced risk of health problems including high blood pressure and diabetes. Body weight is influenced by genetics, gender, age, and lifestyles.

According to new Health Canada guidelines (2003), a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is within a healthy range. This measure is the percentage of Nova Scotians aged 20-64 who report a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9.

Where are we now?

There is no new data to report this year<sup>2</sup>. As reported last year, the percentage of adult Nova Scotians reporting a healthy BMI has decreased slightly since 1997. The Nova Scotia average remains lower than the national average over the same period.

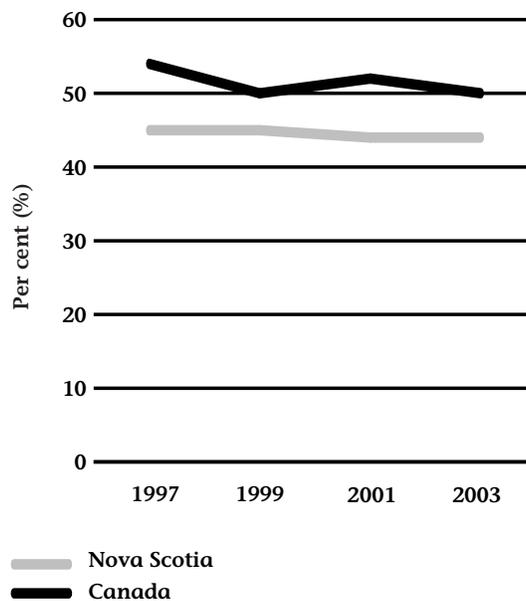
Where do we want to be?

Our goal for 2004–2005 was to increase the percentage of Nova Scotians reporting a healthy BMI over time. We continue to work toward this goal through health

promotion efforts targeting healthy eating and physical activity. By 2009–2010, our goal is to increase by 10 per cent the number of Nova Scotians reporting a BMI within a healthy range.

**Percentage Reporting Body Mass Index in Healthy Range (18.5 to 24.9)**

Nova Scotia and Canada 1997 to 2003



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Note 1: The performance measure published in the 2004-2005 business plan measured adult BMI in excess of a healthy range. In recognizing health promotion as a positive process for improving the health of Nova Scotians, the measure was recast to report adult BMI within a healthy range.

Note 2: The last biannual CCHS survey covered the 2003 calendar year and was reported in the 2003–2004 accountability report. The next survey will cover the 2005 calendar year and will be reported in the 2005–2006 accountability report.



## VACCINATION COVERAGE (FLU SHOT)

(Health)

*Outcome: Healthier lifestyles*

What does the measure tell us?

Vaccination coverage is measured by calculating the percentage of people (aged 65 years and older) who reported having a flu shot in the past year. By increasing the number of people who receive flu shots, we can decrease the burden of illness on vulnerable populations—such as the elderly—and reduce the strain on the health system.

Where are we now?

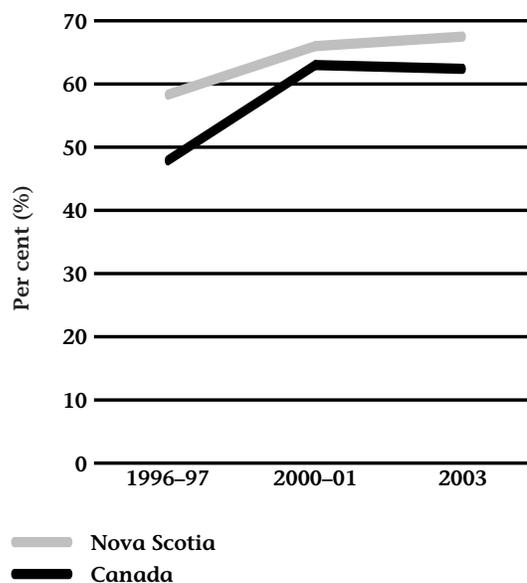
There is no new data to report this year<sup>1</sup>. Starting in 2003, data is reported through the biannual Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). As reported last year, this shows an improvement since 2000-2001, when 66.0 per cent of Nova Scotians reported receiving flu shots. Canada reports a 1 per cent reduction in the number of those 65 years of age or older who received a flu shot. By contrast, Nova Scotia's percentage of the population reporting flu immunization continues to increase. Decreases in the hospitalization of people with influenza and pneumonia may also reflect the success of immunization programs and aggressive public awareness campaigns.

Where do we want to be?

Immunization against the flu is important in promoting and maintaining public health and preventing the spread of infectious disease. By 2004–2005, the province aims to increase to 80 per cent the percentage of the population aged 65 years and older who receive influenza vaccinations.

### Percentage of Seniors (65+) Immunized for Flu in the Past Year

Nova Scotia vs Canada, 1996–97 to 2003



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Note 1:  
The last biannual CCHS survey covered the 2003 calendar year and was reported in the 2003–2004 accountability report. The next survey will cover the 2005 calendar year and will be reported in the 2005–2006 accountability report.

# Education and Learning

## Priorities for 2004–2005

Education continues to be a priority for government, providing all students with the quality education and training they need to enjoy a rewarding and successful future here in Nova Scotia.

Expected increases in retirements and declines in the number of new labour market entrants make it important for the province to have a skilled workforce that is committed to lifelong learning.

In 2004–2005, government worked closely with schools boards, higher education institutions, and community providers to continue implementation of Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success.

The focus of Learning for Life in 2004–2005 was on smaller class sizes, support for students with special needs, testing initiatives, more supports to bolster student improvement, and quality teaching.

An education partners forum attended by parents, students, teachers, and school-board officials resulted in a new four-year plan for the public education system, Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together. This plan builds on the

foundation of the first Learning for Life plan introduced in 2002; it fulfils the remaining commitments as well as those outlined in the government's *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia*.

Other highlights for 2004–2005 included a Memorandum of Understanding with the universities to cap most tuition-fee increases for three years, in exchange for guaranteed provincial funding, the continuing expansion of the Nova Scotia Community College, and improvements to the Canada Student Loan Program.

### **PRIORITY: Reducing Class Sizes**

*The cap of 25 students per class will be extended from grade primary to grade 1 for the 2004–2005 school year, and to grade 2 for the 2005–2006 school year.*

(Education)

The Department of Education allocated funding to school boards to complete the first year of class-size reductions for grade primary (\$1.25 million) and to begin the reductions in grade 1 (\$2.25 million).

By year end there was 95 per cent compliance in grade primary and grade 1.



**PRIORITY:  
Literacy Programs**

*The government will focus on literacy development for young Nova Scotians at all grade levels in 2004–2005.*

(Education)

The department undertook a variety of curriculum and professional-development activities to support struggling readers and writers and to help teachers assess student literacy needs. Among other initiatives, the department

- supplemented the Active Young Readers program with professional resources for lead teachers in grades primary to 3 and with more than 56,000 books for grades 4 to 6 classrooms
- developed *Teachers in Action: Reading and Writing in Primary to 3*, as well as a nine-segment DVD for conducting professional development on reading workshops
- administered the elementary literacy assessment to all grade 6 students, both French and English, released school-by-school results, sent each child's individual results home to parents, and targeted funding to support individual students who did not meet the levels expected

- provided in-service training for the Active Readers Assessment program for teachers and administrators of grades 7 to 9, assessment workshops for more than 100 lead teachers of grades 7 to 9, and assessment resources for 145 schools
- sent Active Readers professional resources to all grade 9 teachers and more than 92,000 books to grade 9 students
- held a Writers in Action 6 implementation workshop for 100 lead teachers, supported by in-service education for all teachers and administrators in grades 4 to 6
- implemented the English 10 Plus pilot project in September 2004, which included professional development, curriculum materials, and professional and student resources

**PRIORITY:  
Comprehensive Assessment Program**

*Learning assessments will continue to ensure that strengths and weaknesses of individuals and their schools can be identified and addressed.*

(Education)

The junior high Math program assessment was administered in May 2004, and exam development was completed. Also in early 2004, a national Science assessment was

administered, in which both French and English students performed below the Canadian average. A new national assessment tool is in development and will be administered to 15-year-old students to create new baselines to set new targets.

In June 2004 and January 2005, grade 12 students wrote Nova Scotia Examinations in English, Math, Advanced Math, Physics, and Chemistry. Some took the exams in English, and some in French. The most marked improvement was in Physics, in which 51 per cent of students got a passing grade, up from 43 per cent in 2003. Seventy-six per cent of the students passed the English exam and 68 per cent passed Chemistry. Neither percentage changed from 2003.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Mathematics Strategy**

*Improving mathematics education will continue to be a priority for 2004–2005. The Mathematics Strategy will include new textbooks, teaching resources, and parent information to support math learning.*

(Education)

The department organized extensive Math training activity in 2004–2005, including the following:

- cognitive coaching training for 52 Math mentors
- workshops for 140 junior-high resource teachers
- professional development for principals and Math leaders in grades primary through 9
- a summer institute for 138 participants

The department provided school boards with \$500,000 in targeted funding for Mathematics professional development for primary-9 school-based Math leaders, Math mentors, and classroom teachers.

A new grade 3 Math textbook, as well as teacher resources, went to all grade 3 teachers and students. Parents received an information pamphlet, *Let's Talk about Mathematics*, to help support their children in learning mathematical concepts early.

At the senior-high level, the department also provided textbooks and curriculum resources in support of grade 10 Math Plus courses. The Math Essentials 10 pilot project expanded to every school board, and workshops were provided for all pilot teachers. Curriculum was developed in preparation for Math Essentials 11 pilots in 2005–2006. The department finished piloting Calculus 12 and started implementing the course in February 2005.

Twelve professional-development workshops were conducted for 285 senior-high and adult-high-school Math teachers.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Helping Parents and Communities Support Learning**

*Efforts will continue, to ensure that parents and the school community have a meaningful voice in Nova Scotia's education system.*

(Education)

In December 2004, the department released the Minister's response to the issues raised through the school advisory councils' (SACs) consultation in 2003–2004. Preparatory work has started on a resource manual for SACs.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Creating Caring Learning Environments**

*Training to implement the Code of Conduct Guidelines will continue in 2004–2005, and the department will provide more funding to implement key recommendations from the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report.*

(Education)

One hundred schools took professional development on the Code of Conduct Guidelines in 2004–2005. There will be a two-day provincial in-service for all schools over the next three years.

To date, 22 of the 30 recommendations of the BLAC Report have been implemented, including funding to hire 10 additional student-support workers and for the Africentric Learning Institute at the Nova Scotia Community College, the introduction of African Heritage Literature 12, professional development for teachers, tutor training for adult-literacy workers, and scholarships for African Nova Scotian students pursuing post-secondary education.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Access to Public School Education**

*The government will continue to increase access to public school courses through correspondence and online study to meet the unique needs of high school students and adult learners who are unable to attend school.*

(Education)

In 2004–2005, the department expanded its range of advanced courses and correspondence courses to include English 11 and 12, Global History and Global Geography, Music, and Visual Arts. All will be available for delivery online as well as in the classroom.

Five new or significantly revised correspondence courses were offered in 2004–2005, and three additional courses were ready for use by September 2005.

The correspondence study program offers 39 public school courses in grades 7 to 12, with 1,870 enrolments in 2004-2005.

Additionally, a pilot project testing online delivery of 11 public school courses took place in small high schools throughout seven school districts in grades 10 to 12, while online courses in French are in development.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Expanding Language  
Education Options**

*Curriculum, teaching, and learning resources will be developed to support Mi'kmaq language courses at the junior-high level.*

(Education)

Development of these curriculum materials is under way for grades 7 through 9.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Student Loan  
Designation Policy**

*To improve the performance of the student-loan portfolio and to reduce the number of students who take on too much debt, the department will introduce a designation policy for post-secondary institutions.*  
(Education)

The designation of an institution for student-loan purposes means that students enrolled in that institution are eligible to receive student loans.

Student-loan repayment data have been calculated and a policy drafted that sets out the criteria universities will have to meet in order for their students to qualify for student loans. The policy will be implemented in 2005–2006, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by all designated institutions.

Designation puts a greater responsibility on educational institutions to ensure that their programs are relevant to today's labour market, that students are provided with information and advice about student loans, and that changes in student status are reported promptly to the department.

Over time, the designation policy is expected to increase the repayment rate



and thereby lower the bad-debt expense borne by taxpayers.

**PRIORITY:  
Community College Upgrades**

*Providing broader access to educational programming through distance education or college campuses in rural areas, the department will continue to invest in the development of the Nova Scotia Community College system. This will help more of our young people prepare to compete in a world of increasing educational requirements, including the demands made by technology-based work.*

(Education)

In 2004–2005, the department completed renovations at six rural campuses and the I. W. Akerley campus in Dartmouth, increasing the capacity of the college to deliver programming to more Nova Scotians. By the end of the fiscal year, construction of the new metro campus was on budget and on schedule to open in 2007.

**PRIORITY:  
Enhancing Public Libraries**

*The government will invest \$250,000 in public libraries in 2004–2005.*

(Education)

The department increased base funding for the Nova Scotia Provincial Library system by \$250,000, for a total of \$1 million in new funding for 2004–2005.

In keeping with their vital role in lifelong learning, Nova Scotia's 77 libraries also offer Nova Scotians access to high-speed Internet—and basic tools to use it—through the library's ongoing relationship with the Nova Scotia Community Access Program (CAP). Many of Nova Scotia's CAP sites are located within Nova Scotia's extensive library network.

In 2004–2005, a pilot project at six libraries and CAP sites offered people an easier way to use the Internet to access government services. As a result, Government @ Your Service (on the government of Nova Scotia website) is being rolled out at CAP sites in Cape Breton Regional Municipality and Victoria County, with the rest of the province's public libraries to follow.

Government @ Your Service makes it easier to find what you are looking for from government, whether it's a marriage licence, or information on education or retirement. The program organizes

information by topic rather than by department, so it can be customized to the needs of every individual who uses it.

### **PRIORITY:**

#### **Labour Market and Skills Development**

*The department will help develop initiatives under the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework and will stimulate discussion of emerging labour-force skill-development opportunities and challenges facing Nova Scotia.*

(Education)

During 2004–2005, government/industry committees on workforce development established standards for researching labour-market information, as well as pathways for career information to be used by students and teachers in the schools.

The department also renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Industry Sector Councils, which led to numerous initiatives on workforce development. The sectors included health care, education, aerospace and defence, homebuilding and renovation, and trucking and automotive.

To help increase the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeship and workplace education programs, the Department of Education continued to work with the Membertou

First Nation and Eskasoni First Nation in 2004–2005, to support their apprentices and to increase awareness of trades and apprenticeship.

Techsploration helped introduce grade 9 girls to trades and technologies. The department also supported employment projects at Maritime Forces Atlantic during March and summer breaks to increase under-represented groups.

Support went to the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre for English-in-the-workplace programming and to the African Nova Scotian community for programs and services.

The department hosted the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat for a second year and contributed to the development of federal/provincial work plans for workplace training and apprenticeship, literacy and essential skills, immigration, and aboriginal labour-market issues.

### **PRIORITY:**

#### **Helping At-risk Youth**

*Government and its partners will develop a program to help at-risk youth develop personal and employment skills.*

(Education)

In 2004–2005, the department developed partnerships that helped youth gain personal and other skills to enhance their



employability, through academic upgrading as well as work on construction projects and community development. Funding proposals are being developed for two YouthBuild Nova Scotia demonstration projects. Successful participants will be better able to access education and training for the labour market.

**PRIORITY:  
School Construction and  
School Building Improvements**

*The department will continue to build, renovate, and add to our school network across the province.*  
(Education)

In 2004–2005, three new school-construction projects were completed: Shelburne High, Truro Junior High, and Sydney Elementary. Three new projects got under way: Hammonds Plains South Elementary, Barrington High, and Western HRM High.

Additions and alterations to enhance or replace 20 schools began in 2004–2005 and should be completed within two years, at a cost of \$19.1 million. In addition, \$2 million of non-capital funding has been provided to school boards to carry out non-capital repairs to 94 schools. A database of school renovation and maintenance needs has been developed in conjunction with the local boards.

**PRIORITY:  
Francophone Family Literacy**

*The department will begin a francophone family-literacy strategy.*  
(Education)

The department helped Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse develop a multi-year family-literacy strategy. The J'apprends en famille workshops, which began in January 2005, reached more than 100 parents in six Acadian communities. Training in family literacy was given to practitioners.

**PRIORITY:  
Investing in Universities**

*Government will continue to invest in post-secondary education at a cost that Nova Scotians can afford. The Department of Education will continue to work on multi-year agreements with universities, which are essential to define expectations and provide more stable funding.*  
(Education)

The government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with universities in December 2004, guaranteeing three-year funding for the university system. For their part, universities agreed to cap tuition-fee increases at 3.9 per cent for

most programs. Both parties agreed to work on funding for infrastructure renewal from the federal government. They also pledged to work toward a research strategy and an economic strategy, partnership savings, credit transfers, and accessibility for under-represented groups.

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## Education: Measuring Our Performance

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### **SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS PROGRAM (SAIP) RESULTS** (Education)

*Outcome:  
Better-educated Nova Scotians*

What does the measure tell us?

SAIP assesses 13-year-old and 16-year-old students in Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing. The data reported below are based on the results for 16-year-old students only. These students have had the longest exposure to the public school program. SAIP, a national assessment, has five levels of performance. Each level has a description of student performance. The national standard for the performance of 16-year-old students is level 3.

This measure presents the percentage of Nova Scotia students achieving level 3 or higher.

Where are we now?

The last SAIP cycle was completed when SAIP Science was administered in spring 2004. In that assessment, Nova Scotia students in both French and English performed lower than the Canadian



**Annual Accountability**

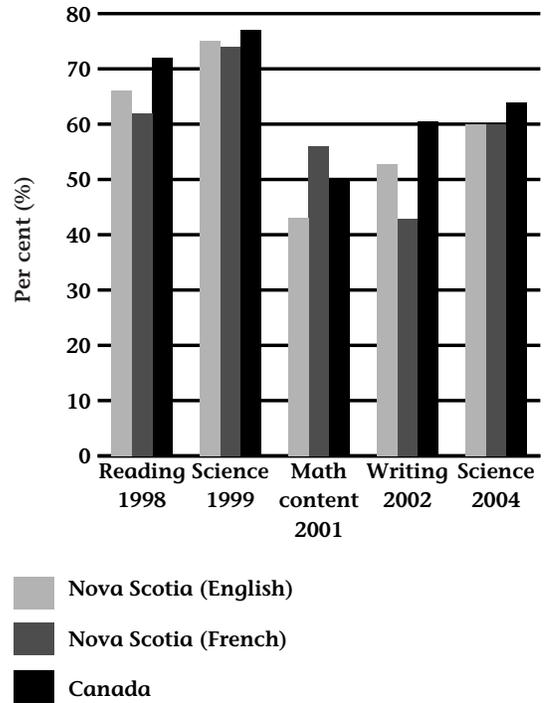
average. The 2002 results of Nova Scotia English and French students in SAIP Writing were below the national average. In 2001, our 16-year-old anglophone students' Math content results were below the national average, while the francophone students' results were above the national average. In 1998, the Nova Scotia results for Reading were below the national average.

**Where do we want to be?**

SAIP has been discontinued as a national assessment. A new national assessment, Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), is in development. This new assessment will be administered to 15-year-old students, and the data will create new baselines on which the department will set new targets.

**Nova Scotia SAIP Results**

Percentage of 16-year-olds at Level 3 or higher



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

(Education)

*Outcome:  
Better-educated Nova Scotians*

What does the measure tell us?

The graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma, compared with the number of students in grade 9 three years earlier.

Education is a key variable in improved employment prospects and higher earnings. The successful pursuit of further education depends upon high school graduation. This is the foundation upon which an individual's future success is built.

Where are we now?

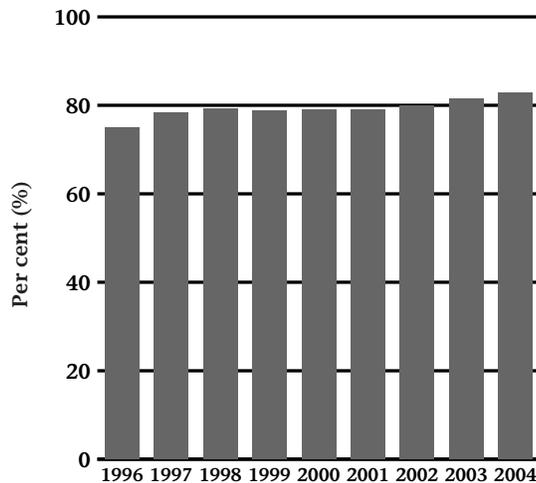
Our target was to increase the grade 12 graduation rate. This target has been achieved, with a steady increase in the graduation rate from 79 per cent in 2000 to 83 per cent in 2004.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to see this percentage continue to increase. Senior high students can choose course options that are consistent with their post-secondary plans, whether university, community college, trades, or the job market. It is expected that having opportunities to prepare for the various post-secondary pathways will keep students motivated to graduate from high school.

## Grade 12 Graduation Rate

(Compared to the Number of Students in Grade 9 Three Years Earlier)



Received High School Diploma

For the school year ending June 30th.  
Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education.



**PARTICIPATION IN THE  
NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL FOR  
ADULT LEARNING**

(Education)

*Outcome:  
Better-educated Nova Scotians*

What does the measure tell us?

The measure provides data on the number of Nova Scotians participating in literacy and upgrading programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL). The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning supports adult education programs that allow Nova Scotians to improve their literacy skills and earn credits toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. This measure is an indication of participation of adults in lifelong learning.

Where are we now?

Our target for 2004–2005 was to increase the number of Nova Scotians participating in literacy and upgrading programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. This target was met with approximately 4,900 Nova Scotians (4,800 in 2003–2004) participating in programs supported through NSSAL.

Where do we want to be?

As the need for lifelong learning continues to grow, we expect more adult Nova Scotians will participate in programs offered by the school.

**NOVA SCOTIANS WITH POST-  
SECONDARY EDUCATION**

(Education)

*Outcome:  
Better-educated Nova Scotians*

What does the measure tell us?

This measure shows the percentage of Nova Scotians aged 25–54 who have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree. Research conducted by the federal government suggests that 70 per cent of new jobs will require some form of post-secondary education.

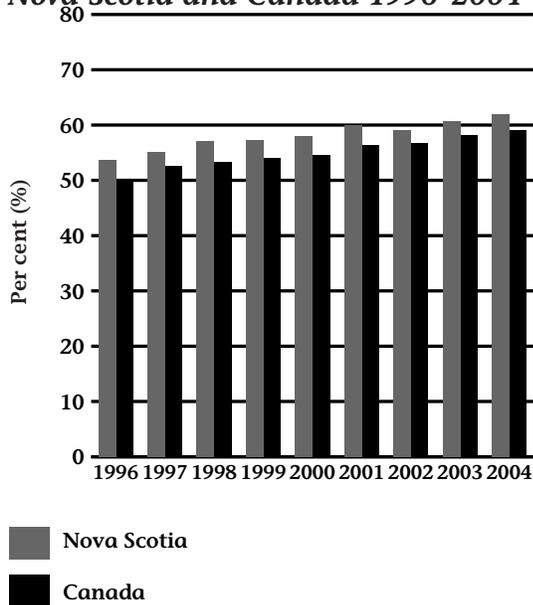
Where are we now?

Our target was to increase the percentage of Nova Scotians with post-secondary certificates, diplomas, or degrees. This target has been achieved, with a steady increase in the percentage of Nova Scotians with post-secondary education, a percentage consistently above the national average.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to see this percentage continue to increase. As explained in the priorities section of this report, there continue to be significant investments in expanding the Nova Scotia Community College, stabilizing university funding, limiting tuition increases, and providing additional funding for debt-reduction programs for students.

**Percentage of Nova Scotians and Canadians (25–54) with Post-Secondary Education Nova Scotia and Canada 1996–2004**



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education.

**GRADE PRIMARY TO GRADE 12 COMPUTER RATIO**  
(Education)

*Outcome:  
A technology-enhanced learning environment*

What does the measure tell us?

Student access to computers helps prepare students to compete in today's information technology-oriented labour market. Three measures are provided. The first reports the ratio of total students to total computers. The second reports the ratio of total students to newer computers, where newer computers are defined as those capable of running software used in the classroom. The last measure reports the number of classrooms with three or more newer computers.

What does the measure tell us?

Our target was a ratio of five students per computer overall by 2005–2006, with access to three or more computers in each learning space. As of March 31, 2005, there were 4.4 students per newer computer, and 3.8 students per computer overall. A total of 3,136 classrooms, or 44 per cent overall, had three or more newer computers.

The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) Extension has provided 2,384 new computers to grade 7 classrooms throughout Nova Scotia. An additional



## Annual Accountability

3,774 computers were provided to schools through the Technology Recycling Program, a private-public partnership that refurbishes used computer equipment for distribution to schools throughout Nova Scotia.

### Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2005–2006 is a ratio of 5 students to 1 newer computer. Target ratios vary from 8:1 in grades primary to 2 to 2.5:1 in grades 7-12. We need to replace approximately 7,000 older computers per year. Both the IEI and the Technology Recycling Program will help provide computers to our schools.

### P-12 Computer Ratio and Number of Classes with Three or More Computers

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Ratio of Total Students to Total Computers	6.2	5.1	4.4	3.8
Ratio of Total Students to Newer Computers (200MHz or better)	9.3	6.7	5.4	4.4
Number of Classrooms with Three or More Newer Computers	2,088	2,111	2,856	3,136

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education, March 31 figures.

# The Economy

## Priorities for 2004–2005

In 2004–2005, Nova Scotia continued its trend of consecutive balanced budgets and growing prosperity. Nova Scotia's 2004 business-climate index, which is based on Statistics Canada data, ranked the province's business climate third behind Alberta and Ontario. The province's strengths included economic performance and business vitality.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the rising numbers of employed Nova Scotians and the declining numbers of unemployed, which steadily reduced the province's unemployment rate.

With fewer of our resources tied to the debt, more has been available to diversify our economy, raise more of our own revenue, and grow stronger by investing in our future.

The government of Nova Scotia took many steps in 2004–005 to build the capacity of Nova Scotians to be more prosperous, self-sufficient, and confident of continued growth.

### **PRIORITY: Balanced Budget**

*The province will continue its drive to bring in balanced budgets that produce surpluses for the long-term benefit of all Nova Scotians.*

(Finance; Treasury and Policy Board)

Nova Scotia tabled its third consecutive balanced budget in 2004–2005, producing a surplus of \$165.3 million.

### **PRIORITY: Debt-reduction Plan**

*The government will continue to control debt-servicing costs through its debt-reduction plan. This involves the annual process of creating surpluses and contingency reserves for debt reduction. We will also establish a debt-retirement fund.*

(Finance; Treasury and Policy Board)

The province enshrined its commitment to reducing the debt in the Financial Measures Act of 2004, whose centrepiece was the Debt Retirement Fund. Enhancements to the debt-reduction plan began to take shape late in fiscal



2004–2005, as a result of the Offshore Accord, and will be applicable to fiscal 2005–2006 (pursuant to the Financial Measures Act, 2005).

**PRIORITY:**  
**Competitive Taxation**

*The province will remain committed to a fair, efficient, and competitive tax environment by managing the process against a backdrop of increased demands and real costs in essential services such as health care.*

(Finance)

The province adjusted the 10 per cent personal income-tax reduction in 2004–2005 to ensure that necessary funding continued to be available for health and education priorities. The adjusted rates took effect for the 2004 tax year, and payroll deductions were changed effective July 1 of that year. The 10 per cent cut remains in effect for Nova Scotia's lowest income earners. About 53 per cent of Nova Scotians kept the full 10 per cent cut, and more than 90 per cent paid less tax in 2004 than 2003. A fourth income-tax bracket is now included for personal rates.

In addition, the province introduced a number of new tax measures in 2004–2005 designed to bolster the

capacity of the economy to create new businesses and jobs. For example, new regulations for Nova Scotia investments in labour-sponsored venture capital corporations (LSVCCs) took effect during the year. For investors to qualify for the tax credit, the LSVCCs must now have a local base of operations and target their investments to Nova Scotia companies. This means that 75 per cent of an LSVCC's salaries and wages must be paid in Nova Scotia, or 90 per cent in Atlantic Canada, including affiliates. Also, the principal decision makers must live in Atlantic Canada.

Another 2004–2005 example of tax regulation designed to stimulate the business climate was the expected increase in the small-business threshold. The plan to increase the maximum ceiling at which the 5 per cent tax rate applies was accelerated by one year. The province will follow the formula announced in the federal budget to determine the small-business limit.

The province also allowed caregivers to claim more medical and disability-related expenses incurred on behalf of dependent relatives. As well, tax changes allowed people with disabilities who incur expenses for employment or educational reasons to deduct these expenses from income, instead of claiming them as a medical-expense tax credit.

Another change in 2004 allowed employees who take post-secondary education to be eligible for a tax credit on non-tuition-related expenses.

**PRIORITY:  
Promoting Immigration**

*The government of Nova Scotia will develop a comprehensive, coordinated immigration strategy in 2004–2005.*

(Education; Office of Economic Development; Intergovernmental Affairs; Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

Immigrants enrich the social, cultural, and economic life of Nova Scotia.

Demographic and economic challenges have led us to conclude that Nova Scotia needs to increase immigration to ensure our continued economic, social, and cultural prosperity and to address anticipated labour shortages.

In the spring of 2004, the three lead departments conducted preliminary discussions with stakeholders to determine support for an immigration strategy. In the fall, 45 consultations were held around the province to develop an immigration strategy for the province.

In January 2005, following several months of extensive community consultations, the government adopted a

formal Immigration Strategy, established a dedicated Office of Immigration, and appointed a Minister and Deputy Minister responsible for Immigration. The new office consolidated the main immigration activities that had been performed until then in the Department of Education and the Office of Economic Development.

In the meantime, immigrants continued to arrive in the province under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program agreement negotiated with the federal government in 2002.

Through the Nominee Program, immigrants are bringing business experience, needed skills, and new ideas to communities throughout Nova Scotia. The government believes the immigration strategy will help reverse the trend of declining immigration to Nova Scotia. In addition to increasing the number of arrivals each year, the strategy aims to increase the proportion of those who stay to 70 per cent.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Creating Brand Nova Scotia**

*The Brand Nova Scotia initiative will be further developed in 2004–2005 to promote Nova Scotia's image at home and abroad. Brand's objective is to grow Nova Scotia's economy by always conveying the same message: Nova Scotia is a great place to live, visit, invest in, and do business. You can live better in Nova Scotia.*

(Office of Economic Development)

The Premier unveiled Brand Nova Scotia in March 2005. It is a cluster of communication, marketing, partnership, and training activities. Although government has taken the leadership role, the participation of all Nova Scotians is essential for Brand Nova Scotia to be successful in growing the economy.

Workshops have been held within government and with the Nova Scotia business community to begin the necessary process of building partnerships with Nova Scotians to share the Brand Nova Scotia mandate.

Among the tools available to promote the Nova Scotia brand, the novascotialife.com web portal is key. A visual identity, music, and video tools have also been developed to strengthen the perception of Nova Scotia as much more than a vacation destination.

Brand Nova Scotia activities will continue through 2005–2006 and beyond.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Market Diversification**

*Nova Scotia Business Incorporated (NSBI) will continue to support exporters' efforts to open new markets and expand in existing domestic and international markets. Tools will include the Export Prospector program, targeted sales calls in selected markets and strategic sectors, trade-team missions, and federal/provincial international business-development activities.*

(Nova Scotia Business Incorporated)

NSBI worked with 112 export-oriented companies during 2004–2005. The agency's export-development team held more than a dozen information sessions from Yarmouth to Cheticamp to help Nova Scotia companies increase their exports in new or existing markets. NSBI also led or facilitated 16 trade missions and shows in 2004–2005, in traditional markets such as the US but also farther afield in places like Trinidad and Tobago and Northern Ireland.

In addition, the Service Export Program (SEP) was launched in December 2004 with the support of the Office of Economic Development. The program is designed

to help service-sector exporters close deals in new markets. From December 2004 to March 2005, 24 companies enrolled in the program, and through it, many have accessed non-traditional markets such as China, Sri Lanka, and Denmark.

In terms of financing, NSBI works with growth-oriented companies, operating in a wide variety of industry sectors from manufacturing to knowledge-based companies. Financing is available for qualified companies, and repayment terms and conditions are structured to match the unique requirements of each client.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Supplier Development**

*The government will introduce a supplier-development program in 2004–2005 to help small businesses bid on government goods and services. The program will include outreach services to promote understanding of how procurement works, how to access tender opportunities, and the importance of quality products and services.*

(Office of Economic Development)

The supplier development program is intended to use government expenditures on goods, services, and construction to grow and diversify our economy and to improve the competitiveness of Nova Scotia's businesses.

The program is up and running, with various tools produced to help Nova Scotia businesses bid on tender opportunities. They can flip through a directory of purchasers in the public sector to get contact information more easily than before. They can sign up to be notified by e-mail when a public tender is issued. And they can attend reverse trade shows where public purchasers are available to talk to them in person about procurement procedures and opportunities.

The province held reverse trade shows in five communities around the province during the year, and four more are scheduled for 2005–2006.

**PRIORITY:**  
**2004 Tourism Plan**

*In 2004–2005, government will continue to work toward its vision of 100 per cent revenue growth over the coming decade. (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)*

Through its vital links with the Tourism Partnership Council and industry, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage continued its drive to bring new visitors, new revenues, and new opportunities to Nova Scotia in 2004–2005.

Tourism receipts for the year totalled \$1.31 billion, providing 33,900 direct and indirect jobs in the province. Two-thirds came from out-of-province visitors, bringing new money into the province



for essential services like health care, education, and policing.

A \$4.2-million advertising campaign generated \$87 million in tourism business.

The province increased its support for tourism marketing, product development, and regional initiatives in 2004–2005, committing an additional \$15 million to help grow the sector, \$10 million of which went to investments in new and strengthened partnerships with industry; the other \$5 million is planned for expenditure in 2007–2008.

Highlights of the investment include improvements planned for the province's tourism infrastructure at Peggys Cove, the Cabot Trail, and the bid by the Joggins Fossil Cliffs for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**PRIORITY:**  
**L'Année de l'Acadie**

*The government will provide support in 2004–2005 to the Congrès mondial acadien, a family reunion of Acadians from around the world.*

(Tourism, Culture and Heritage; Acadian Affairs)

The third annual Congrès mondial acadien took place in July and August 2004, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the arrival of the French in North America. Acadians settled in Nova Scotia before the deportation, making their history an important part of Nova Scotia's ancestry.

In recognition of its place in our collective history, Premier John Hamm declared 2004 l'Année de l'Acadie.

In partnership with the Acadian community, the government supported living-history initiatives at historic sites, museums, and communities throughout the province and highlighted le congrès in the tourism-marketing program.

As part of a three-year commitment, the province also invested more than \$200,000 in community partnerships to support Port Royal's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Support went to community groups organizing activities in 2005 to mark the 400th anniversary of French exploration and settlement in Nova Scotia.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Promoting Cultural Industries**

*With some 28,000 jobs and more than \$1 billion in annual revenues depending on cultural activities, there are important economic and social benefits guiding our work with the industry in 2004–2005.*

(Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

To foster prosperity through creativity and build cultural identity at the same time, joint initiatives took place in 2004–2005 in such cultural sectors as the music industry, the craft sector, and the literary, visual, and performing arts.

The department implemented new programs in support of the province's first music strategy, in conjunction with the Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia (MIANS). Through these programs the government invests \$750,000 annually in our music industry. This helps business carve inroads into foreign markets and sharpens the skills needed to encourage competitiveness and economic growth.

MIANS' annual mid-winter festival, Bringin' It Home! Nova Scotia Music on Tour, paired emerging with established artists, in dozens of performances in every county in the province in 2004–2005.

The festival, which combines culture and tourism, creates new income-generating opportunities for the music industry.

In 2004–2005, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, working in conjunction with Nova Scotia's book-publishing industry, developed a new investment program to be implemented in 2005–2006.

Throughout the year, the cultural-industries program invested \$474,780 in 85 projects in Nova Scotia, which leveraged \$4.4 million of industry investment. Projects focused on the development of new markets, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles.

Organizations such as Visual Arts Nova Scotia received support to focus on market-readiness, while others such as the Inverness County Centre for the Arts led activities that took the work of Cape Breton visual artists to New York.

Seven music-industry professionals and three craft producers also received support to participate in a provincial trade mission to Los Angeles in July.



**PRIORITY:  
Heritage Strategy for  
Nova Scotia**

*The government will begin to develop a heritage strategy to protect and promote the things that Nova Scotians value most about the province: our communities, the diversity of our people, and the natural beauty of our land and sea. The initiative will be the foundation for major projects in the heritage sector.*

(Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

Important initial steps have been taken towards a heritage strategy:

- a partnership was established with the Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage, an umbrella group made up of more than 85 heritage organizations
- Voluntary Planning was engaged to conduct consultations with Nova Scotians in the fall of 2005 about their views on what a heritage strategy should contain
- a marketing plan was developed, including a web update for the Nova Scotia Museum
- Heritage-specific content was included in the tourism visitor-exit survey used to determine product that would attract visitors.

**PRIORITY:  
Improvements to  
100-series Highways**

*The government will continue to make improvements to Nova Scotia's 100-series highway system in 2004–2005.*

*Approximately \$20 million will be spent on design work, environmental screenings, and highway construction.*

(Transportation and Public Works)

The following work was undertaken in 2004–2005:

- Highway 103 twinning (Tantallon):
  - grading from Nine Mile River to west of Route 213: 70 per cent completed
  - Trunk 3 Interchange structure and Route 213 Interchange structure: 90 per cent completed
- Highway 103 new alignment (Barrington):
  - remainder of grading, including two interchange ramps: 60 per cent completed
  - Willis (West) Branch structure: 40 per cent completed
- Highway 125 twinning:
  - grading of Coxheath Road Interchange ramps: 70 per cent completed

- construction of Coxheath Interchange structure:  
70 per cent completed
- widening of Sydney River Bridge:  
60 per cent completed
- Highway 101 intersection replacements:
  - design for three locations, Joggins Bridge, Hectanooga Road, and Brooklyn Road:  
98 per cent completed

**PRIORITY:  
Increased Funding for  
4Rs Program**

*The government will increase capital program funding by \$6 million in 2004–2005 for resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (the 4Rs) on provincial highways and bridges.*  
(Transportation and Public Works)

The 4Rs program expands current capital and maintenance improvement programs. The Capital Program and Maintenance Improvement Programs contracts were advertised and tendered between March and November 2004.

The work on the Cabot Trail from Point De Havre Road north to Cape Breton Highlands Park is an example of the work carried out under this program.

**PRIORITY:  
Maintaining Rural Roads**

*The government will increase the amount of highway maintenance work carried out on rural roads in 2004–2005, including asphalt patching, ditching and gravelling, shoulder repairs, brush cutting, and installation of additional guardrails. This will be accomplished through increased funding for the Road Improvement Money (RIM) program, from \$10 million to \$20 million over a four-year period. In the first year, the increase will be an additional \$2.5 million, bringing the total for 2004–2005 to \$12.5 million.*  
(Transportation and Public Works)

The 2004–2005 provincial budget contained an additional \$2.5 million for the RIM program. As expected, the total budget available for RIM in 2004–2005 was \$12.5 million. Sixty-one RIM contracts were called and awarded across the province during the year.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Steel Truss Bridge-replacement Program**

*The government will continue the five-year, \$50-million Steel Truss Bridge-replacement Program. The year 2004–2005 was the second for the program.*

(Transportation and Public Works)

The following bridges were completed in 2004–2005:

- Route 348:
  - Sutherland’s Bridge and approach to West River St. Mary’s near Lower Caledonia (Cape Breton West)
  - Asylum Bridge: Little Mabou Road.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Supporting Research and Development**

*The government will continue to leverage national funding to support new research and development activity in Nova Scotia.*

(Office of Economic Development)

In 2004–2005, the government invested \$5 million in the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust, as it did the year before. This provincial contribution helped to secure financing by federal and private-sector partners that amounts to an investment of more than \$15 million in R&D infrastructure in this province.

In addition, Nova Scotia set aside \$3 million toward the building of the new Life Sciences Research Institute, a \$34-million project that will house the Brain Repair Centre, among other institutes. The provincial contribution is awaiting federal and private-sector matching funding.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Agricultural Business Risk Management**

*The government will implement a new generation of agriculture business risk-management programs under the Canada/Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement for the Agriculture Policy Framework. We will continue to support research and development of new life-science products, alternative-energy technologies, farm and food safety, and environmental stewardship in the agriculture sector.*

(Agriculture and Fisheries)

Throughout the year, government engaged in a wide variety of activities to increase participation in risk-management programming and other market-driven approaches to the agriculture and food industry.

As of March 31, 2005, 870 producers were enrolled in the Business Risk Management program, and \$8.7 million in payments

were made through other federal/provincial programming to encourage income stabilization. Production insurance under similar cost-shared programming provided \$16.3 million in coverage, with one-third of clients choosing 85 per cent coverage or higher.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries provided \$8 million to producers to help them weather the US border closure to beef exports, following the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Alberta. The funding was made available through the Ruminant Income Support Program.

Provincial funding to support regulatory compliance helped to strengthen food-safety systems throughout the meat-processing sectors of the agri-food industry, including on-farm slaughter facilities.

In 2004–2005, the government also invested in sustainable farm growth through the federal/provincial, cost-shared Farm Investment Fund (FIF), which committed \$5.1 million to more than 2,400 projects in the agri-food industry, ranging from business and human resources to land development, water management, and regulatory compliance.

The department was also active on the technology front in fiscal 2004–2005, making investments totalling \$1.1 million in 34 projects designed to increase the use of technology at the farm level and in the food-processing sector. Additionally, the

department invested more than \$200,000 to leverage another \$300,000 in 22 projects with companies and organizations working on new or value-added products and technologies.

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College and the Atlantic Farmers Council continued to develop an Atlantic alternative-energy centre, which will facilitate farm-level technologies such as bio-gas, wind power, and systems that use waste to generate energy.

The department, the fruit growers' association, and the agricultural college continued to build the economic value of the Nova Scotia apple and tree-fruit industry. Together, we are developing opportunities for fortified juice, nutraceutical powders (e.g., processed apple-peel powder), and health products designed to combat illness.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Streamlining the Natural Gas  
Regulatory Environment**

*Throughout 2004–2005, the province will work with the federal government to improve the regulatory environment for natural-gas development. This includes participation in the Atlantic Energy Roundtable III and the Regulatory Issues Working Committee.*

(Energy)

The Department of Energy played a lead role in the Atlantic Energy Roundtable, which in turn led to an agreement with the Government of Canada to reduce the time to get offshore projects from discovery to production.

By conducting all the approval applications including environmental reviews at the same time, instead of one after the other, approval times have been reduced from 21 months to 9–13 months, consistent with international averages.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Promoting Consumer  
Use of Natural Gas**

*The province will continue to promote the use of natural gas in residential, commercial, and public buildings to encourage Nova Scotians to take advantage of its benefits.*

*Information will be provided on conversion for space heating and hot water that focuses on efficiency and safety.*

(Energy)

The Department of Energy established incentive programs for residential conversions and commercial conversions of less than 15,000 gigajoules (GJ) per year.

The department negotiated federal funds to match provincial incentives for conversions to natural gas. Government also provided a loan from the Gas Market Development Fund to assist Heritage Gas with the expansion of its distribution system to Amherst, Airport Industrial Park, and downtown Dartmouth/Woodside.

By clarifying the testing and inspection provisions of new pipelines, the province provided customers with more timely access to natural gas without compromising public safety.

**PRIORITY:**

**Offshore Resource Revenues**

*The Nova Scotia government will continue to press Ottawa to fully deliver the commitment made to Nova Scotians under the Canada/Nova Scotia Offshore Accord Implementation Act. As stated in this law, passed by both the Parliament of Canada and the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Nova Scotia must be the principal beneficiary of its offshore resources.*

(Energy; Intergovernmental Affairs)

Nova Scotia became the principal beneficiary of its offshore resource revenues with the signing of the Offshore Resource Agreement on February 14, 2005. The agreement guarantees the province full benefit of provincial offshore revenues for 16 years. A prepayment of \$830 million for the first eight years is the absolute minimum the province will receive during that period. The \$830 million was received in August 2005 and applied directly to Nova Scotia's debt. This will result in annual interest savings of approximately \$50 million, which will be invested in infrastructure, education, health care, and other services that benefit Nova Scotians.

**PRIORITY:**

**Promoting Competition in the Electricity Market**

*The government will continue to implement the recommendations of the 2003 Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee.*

(Energy)

Changes in the electricity regulatory framework were introduced to allow open bidding for new generation capacity and to begin opening markets to competition, which offers more choices to Nova Scotia's consumers.

The Electricity Act of 2004 contained the provisions to allow for competition in the wholesale electricity market. The act also requires Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) to file an Open Access Transmission Tariff with the Utility and Review Board (UARB), which NSPI did.

In addition, the act requires that NSPI develop the operational systems required to enable open access to the transmission system by eligible market participants.

The UARB will be using a competitive process as an integral part of approving any new capacity supply in the future.

The new Electricity Act also provides for implementation of renewable energy standards.



NSPI accepted all 17 renewable-energy projects for less than 2 megawatts (MW) that it received from independent power producers (IPP). The IPPs were responding to an NSPI call for bids to sell electrical power made from a renewable energy source at a fixed price for a 15-year term.

NSPI made a request for an additional 100 gigawatt hours (Gwhs) of large-scale renewable energy supply from independent producers.

Atlantic Wind Power commissioned a 31-MW wind farm in Pubnico Point.

The Department of Energy continued to work with the Halifax Regional Municipality and others who are actively pursuing district energy systems or potential co-generation facilities. District heating projects allow large industrial and commercial users to make the most of fuel expenditures, by sharing the costs of one large facility. Frequently, district heating projects are associated with electrical generators that use more of the heat from the large burner. This is called co-generation.

District heating and co-generation projects benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and have economic benefits based on such factors as economies of scale and shared risk.

**PRIORITY:  
Community Development  
Policy**

*The government will finalize a new community-development policy in 2004–2005 to promote the long-term sustainability and growth of Nova Scotia's communities, especially small rural ones.*  
(Office of Economic Development)

Cabinet endorsed the new policy in December 2004. Its overall purpose is to improve the climate in which communities can lead their own development through more effective support from partners such as government.

The process of communicating and implementing the policy across the provincial government has begun.

**PRIORITY:  
Promoting Small-business  
Growth**

*The government will increase its focus in 2004–2005 on the needs of growth-oriented, smaller businesses in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Business Incorporated (NSBI) will focus resources on helping small businesses overcome key challenges, such as training and upgrading employees, keeping abreast of market trends, accessing growth capital, and developing exports.* (Nova Scotia Business Incorporated)

More than 90 per cent of Nova Scotia businesses have fewer than 50 employees, but they account for more than 51 per cent of total employment in the province and contribute significantly to economic growth and prosperity.

Helping small business grow helps Nova Scotia grow.

NSBI helps existing businesses in Nova Scotia grow and expand, through its three domestic units—the business-advisory team, the export-development team, and the financial-services team.

In 2004–2005, account executives on NSBI’s Business Advisory Team (BAT) continued their program of meeting face-to-face with company owners and operators and community partners to keep government policy informed, to provide businesses with information about government programs and services, and to identify opportunities for business expansion.

The BAT’s certified Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) practitioners met with 700 owners and managers during the year, resulting in 184 referrals to programs and services of partner organizations. Ultimately, these activities generated about 80 new jobs in rural Nova Scotia and helped 140 rurally based companies access NSBI’s financial and export-development services.

During 2004–2005, NSBI worked with 112 export-oriented companies, and its export-development team held more than a dozen information sessions across the province to help companies increase their exports in new or existing markets. NSBI also led or facilitated 16 trade missions and shows in 2004–2005, in traditional markets like the US, but also in places such as Trinidad and Tobago and Northern Ireland. Clients participating in these export programs reported sales of more than \$30 million. This translates into more than 300 jobs related to new



business activities. (Roughly one job is created for every \$90,000 in new exports.)

In terms of financing, NSBI works with a wide variety of growth-oriented firms across the sectors, from manufacturing to knowledge-based companies. Financing is available for qualified firms, and repayment terms and conditions are structured to match the unique requirements of each client. During 2004—2005, NSBI's financial solutions totalled \$12.3 million, created or maintained 552 jobs, and leveraged an additional \$27.3 million from public and private-sector investors.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Continuing the Coal Industry in Cape Breton**

*The government will work to provide for a continuing coal industry in Cape Breton by addressing the issuing of coal leases following surrender of Special Mining Lease 90-2 (coal) by the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC). This will involve surface-coal resources as well as those at Donkin.*

(Natural Resources)

Successful bidders from the first tender call for surface-coal resources, issued in December 2003, were announced in March 2004. Proponents had one year to

submit applications for mineral rights. One mineral lease and one exploration licence have been granted as a result of this tender call.

Consultants worked with the Department of Natural Resources to complete the Donkin resource tender, developing the terms in 2004, and issuing the tender call in December 2004.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Capital District Transportation Authority**

*The government will help to establish a transportation authority for the Halifax area that would be responsible for strategic transportation planning for the region, including resolving the traffic issues resulting from the growing population in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).*

(Transportation and Public Works)

The Department of Transportation and Public Works and the HRM are establishing the Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee to advise Halifax Regional Council on the transportation network. The committee will develop and implement a transportation plan and recommend programs to manage transportation demand and address environmental concerns such as air quality.

**PRIORITY:**

**Infirmary Demolition**

*In the fall of 2004, the government will begin the first phase of a two-year project to demolish the old Halifax Infirmery building on Queen Street and remediate the site, to allow for future development.*  
(Transportation and Public Works)

The project is underway and expected to be completed by December 31, 2005. A joint planning study, involving the province, HRM, and interested groups, is reviewing options for the land surrounding the site. The plan will lay out a set of possible best uses for the land and is expected by the autumn of 2006.

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## The Economy: Measuring Our Performance

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**BALANCED/SURPLUS BUDGET**

(Finance)

*Outcome:*

*Improved economic climate*

What does the measure tell us?

A key priority of government is to keep Nova Scotia's finances in order. A measure of the government's commitment to this priority is the achievement of fiscal targets.

Where are we now?

The government's audited financial statements reflect a \$165.3-million surplus for 2004–2005. This surplus is well above the budgeted provincial surplus of \$2.1 million published in the 2004–2005 Estimates. This is the third consecutive year of provincial surpluses.

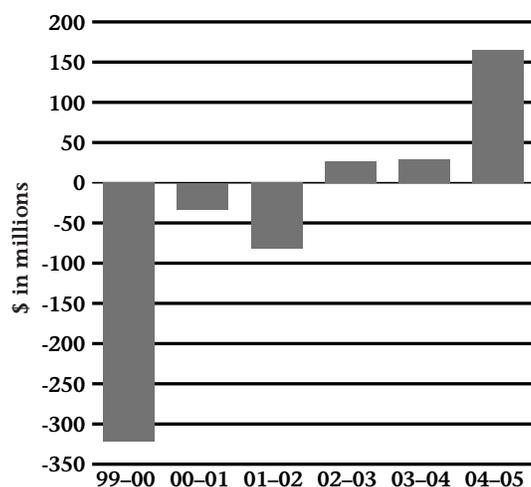
Where do we want to be?

The government is committed to continued balanced budgets.



**Annual Accountability**

**Provincial Surplus (Deficit)  
1999–2005**



Surplus before unusual items (as restated).

Source: Public Accounts Volume 1.

**PROVINCIAL NET DIRECT DEBT (NDD) AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP**

(Finance)

*Outcome:  
Improved economic climate*

What does the measure tell us?

Provincial debt to gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure of the province’s financial sustainability—the higher the ratio, the more onerous the debt burden for residents of a province. The measure is one that is commonly used by governments, rating agencies, and the media.

Due to accounting changes and corrections, NDD is often restated in the year-end financial statements of the province, resulting in changes to the NDD/GDP ratio. For information on the actual accounting adjustments, readers should refer to *Public Accounts, Volume 1—Financial Statements, 2004–2005*.

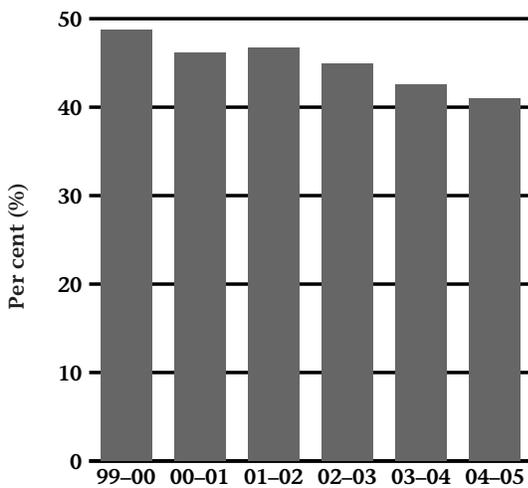
Where are we now?

Our target was to reduce the ratio of net direct debt to gross domestic product. This has been achieved. As of March 31, 2005, the NDD/GDP ratio decreased to 41 per cent. This represents a decrease from 42.6 per cent, the restated ratio for 2003–2004. This represents the fourth consecutive annual decrease in Nova Scotia’s percentage of Net Direct Debt to GDP.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to continue to reduce Nova Scotia's NDD/GDP ratio.

**Net Direct Debt as a Percentage of GDP**



Source: Public Accounts.

**CORPORATE INCOME AND CAPITAL TAX BURDEN**

(Finance)

*Outcome:  
Improved economic/business climate*

What does the measure tell us?

Corporate income and capital tax rates measure the overall business tax rate applied to Nova Scotia business<sup>1</sup>. These are the most visible forms of taxation for businesses looking to invest in Nova Scotia. This measure tells us the general tax rates applied to business income and to business capital—two major elements of business investment. By monitoring these rates, we can compare them to rates in other jurisdictions to ensure that the province remains competitive.

Where are we now?

The table provides a comparison of Nova Scotia business tax rates with the rates in other Atlantic provinces. Although the small-business rate has not changed in Nova Scotia, the threshold on which that rate applies has been increased from \$300,000 to \$350,000. These rates do not take into account tax-credit programs that exist in Nova Scotia and other provinces.

1. The current measure looks only at the general rates and does not include special tax incentives and targeted measures.



**Annual Accountability**

<b>Atlantic Canada Business Tax Rates, 2005</b>				
	<b>Nova Scotia</b>	<b>New Brunswick</b>	<b>PEI</b>	<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>
General Income Tax	16%	13%	16%	14%
Small Business Income Tax	5%	2%	6.5%	5%
Large Corporations Tax (Capital Tax)	0.275%	0.3%	NIL	NIL
Corporate capital tax	4%	3%	5%	4%

*Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance.*

**Where do we want to be?**

Although the 2004–2005 target of having the lowest tax burden has not yet been achieved, we want to ensure that our business tax rates remain competitive with other provinces, while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Continued balanced budgets will allow the province to deal with reduced taxation in the future.

**MARGINAL EFFECTIVE PERSONAL TAX RATES**  
(Finance)

*Outcome:*  
*Improved economic climate*

**What does the measure tell us?**

The measure looks at the marginal effective tax rates in four personal income ranges—commonly referred to as the low, middle, high, and high 2 brackets. It tells us how much tax an individual can expect to pay on the next dollar of

taxable income earned and allows us to compare this to other provinces. Some provinces also impose surtaxes. Surtaxes are calculated on basic provincial tax (BPT), not on taxable income.

As a result of the move to tax on net income, provinces can set individual tax brackets, so a nationwide standard does not exist. Nova Scotia uses the terms low, middle, high, and high 2 to distinguish the brackets. Generally, the low bracket is up to about \$30,000, the middle bracket to about \$60,000, the high bracket is over \$60,000, and the high 2 bracket, an additional high bracket, is on incomes over \$93,000 in Nova Scotia and over \$104,000 in New Brunswick.

**Where are we now?**

The table shows the marginal effective rates in Atlantic Canada.

## The Economy

### Personal Income Tax Rates, 2005

	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	PEI	Newfoundland and Labrador
Low	8.79%	9.68%	9.8%	10.57%
Middle	14.95%	14.82%	13.8%	16.16%
High	16.67%	16.52%	16.78%	18.02%
High 2	17.5%	17.84%	—	—
Surtax	10% over \$10,000 BPT		10% over \$5,200 BPT	9% over \$7,032 BPT

*Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance.*

### Where do we want to be?

Although the 10 per cent tax cut had to be adjusted to meet program needs, retaining the tax cut for taxpayers with the lowest rates indicates progress towards a long-term goal of having the lowest tax rate in Atlantic Canada.

### CREDIT RATING BY MAJOR RATING AGENCIES

(Finance)

*Outcome:  
Improved economic climate*

### What does the measure tell us?

Rating agencies assign a credit rating for the province, based on their evaluation of our ability to repay money we borrow plus interest. This credit rating affects the province's debt-servicing costs.

### Where are we now?

Moody's Investors Service raised the province's debt rating to A2 from A3, with a stable outlook on September 1, 2004. The investment group based its new rating on improvement in Nova Scotia's provincial debt indicators, economic gains of recent years, and the government's commitment to maintaining balanced budgets and achieving debt-reduction objectives. A higher credit rating makes the province's bonds more attractive to investors and helps to lower the overall cost of borrowing.

### Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2004–2005 was to maintain the improved credit rating achieved in 2003–2004. This target has been achieved. However, there is a need for continued



diligence in maintaining and improving the current higher ratings.

**BUSINESS CLIMATE INDEX**  
(Office of Economic Development)

*Outcome:*  
*Competitive business climate*

What does the measure tell us?

The Business Climate Index compares Nova Scotia's business climate nationally and with Atlantic Canada, under four main headings: development capacity, economic performance, tax and fiscal environment, and business vitality.

Where are we now?

The 2004 Business Climate Index ranks Nova Scotia third in Canada—behind Alberta and Ontario—based on Statistics Canada data available from 2001. The province's strengths are in the areas of economic performance and business vitality. Our challenges include development capacity and tax and fiscal environment.

Where do we want to be?

We will strive to remain the best business climate in Atlantic Canada and improve our ranking nationally.

**WORKING TIME LOST DUE TO STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS**  
(Environment and Labour)

*Outcome:*  
*Stable business climate*

What does the measure tell us?

This measure, compared to the national average, is an indicator of labour stability, an important factor in Nova Scotia's economic competitiveness.

Where are we now?

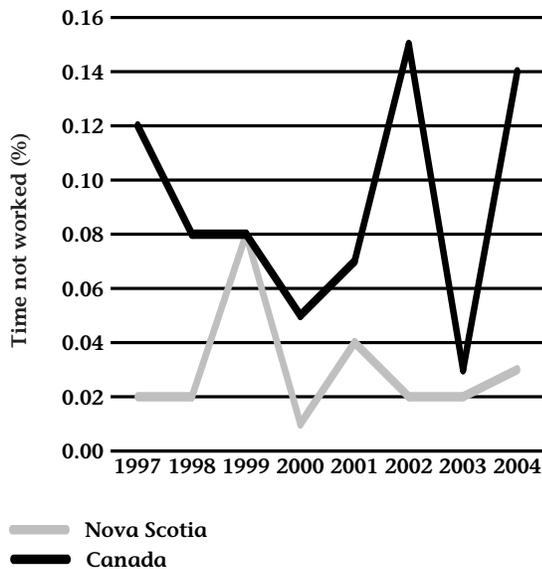
In recent years, Nova Scotia has shown a high degree of labour stability. Time lost has been consistently at or below the national average. The percentage of working time lost due to strikes and lockouts was 0.03 per cent for Nova Scotia and 0.14 per cent nationally in 2004.

Where do we want to be?

Our ongoing target is to remain at or below the national average for work time lost. The effective use of conciliation and mediation processes has contributed to Nova Scotia's success in achieving this target.

### Work Stoppages, 1997–2004

(Time not worked as a percentage of working time)



Sources: Human Resource Development Canada,  
Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.

### OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION WELLS DRILLED

(Energy)

#### Outcome: Economic growth

What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of the average number of oil and gas exploration wells drilled in Nova Scotia's offshore over a five-year period. Seismic exploration is a preliminary step in finding oil and gas reserves, occurring before exploration and development drilling. Exploration wells are drilled to discover oil and gas resources; development wells are drilled to recover known resources. New reserves can lead to new development projects, promoting the offshore area for further exploration and development activities.

Where are we now?

In 2004–2005, there were two seismic programs and two well-site surveys completed in Nova Scotia. Also, two exploration wells and one development well were drilled in the offshore region. One further exploration well is planned for the remainder of 2005, by Encana.

Where do we want to be?

We want to see exploration levels maintained or increased.



**PUBLIC/PRIVATE  
CAPITAL INVESTMENT**  
(Office of Economic Development)

*Outcome:  
Infrastructure that supports  
economic growth*

What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of the value of capital expenditure per person for new construction, machinery, and equipment. Information on capital spending provides an indication of infrastructure capacity and market conditions in the economy.

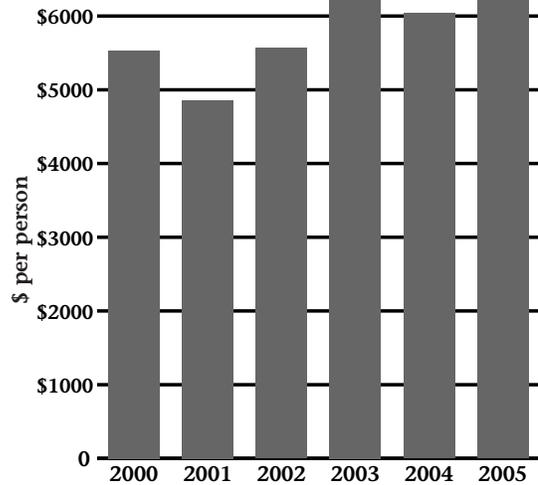
Where are we now?

In 2004, investment per person in Nova Scotia was \$6,239, or 82 per cent of the national average. There has been an increase in investment per capita since 2000. Investment in off-shore projects has caused fluctuations in investment per capita figures for a given year.

Where do we want to be?

Our goal for 2004–2005 was to increase investment per capita over time, which has been achieved.

**Public/Private Capital  
Investment per Person**



Source: Office of Economic Development.

## INTERNATIONAL ROUGHNESS INDEX (IRI) FOR HIGHWAYS

(Transportation and Public Works)

*Outcome:  
Infrastructure that supports economic growth*

What does the measure tell us?

The condition of our highway system is key to the development of the provincial economy. Good roads enable business to access raw material, transport goods, and provide mobility for workers and consumers. The IRI is an internationally accepted, standardized measure of the level of riding comfort on our highways that is comparable to other jurisdictions. Riding comfort is measured with a five-point "roughness scale," where 0 is the smoothest ride and 5 is considered unacceptable. A good quality ride is defined by the National IRI Survey as 1.6 or below.

Where are we now?

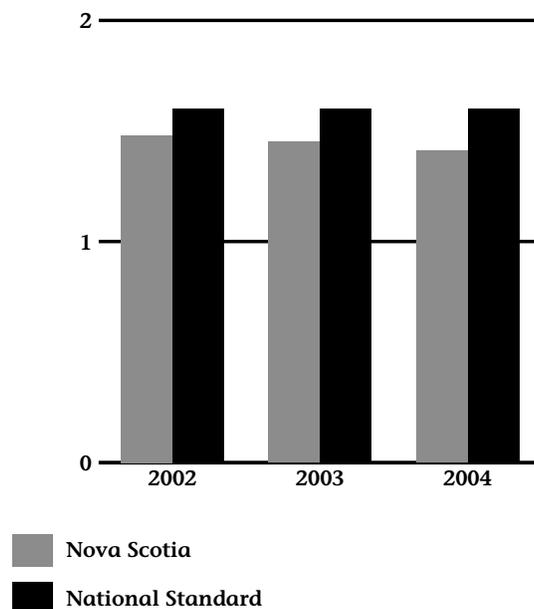
Our target for 100-series highways for 2004–2005 was to stay below the 2001 National IRI Survey standard of 1.6. The riding comfort on our 100-series highways has been consistently better than this national standard and continues to improve. In 2004, Nova Scotia's riding-comfort index was 1.41, an improvement from 2003 (1.45) and 2002 (1.48).

Where do we want to be?

The Department of Transportation and Public Works strives to maintain the level of riding comfort on 100-series highways at or below the national standard.

### *International Roughness Index, 2002–2004*

Nova Scotia versus National Standard



Source: NS Department of Transportation and Public Works.



## EMPLOYMENT RATE

(Finance)

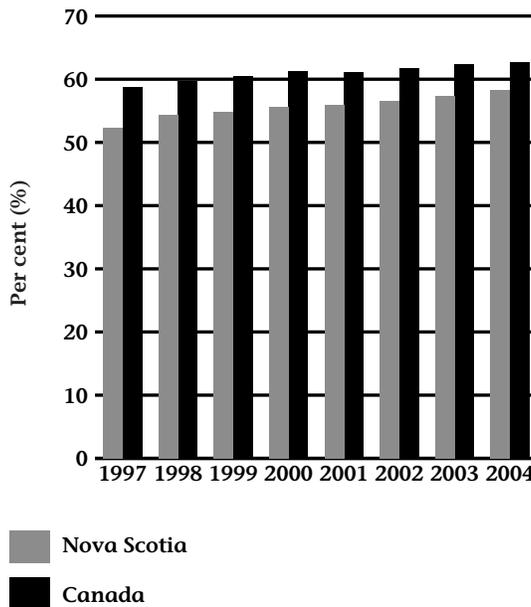
*Outcome:  
Improved economic activity*

What does the measure tell us?

The employment rate measures the number of Nova Scotians, 15 years and older, working in full-time and part-time jobs. The rate fluctuates throughout the year on a seasonal basis, so an average rate is the best indicator of performance over time.

### Employment Rate

Nova Scotia and Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, 2004 Labour Force Historical Review.

Where are we now?

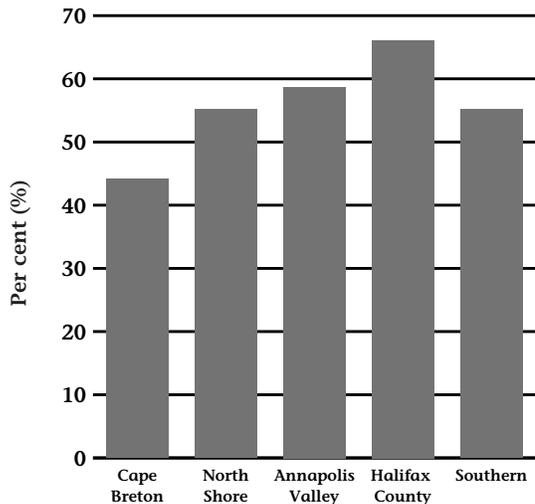
Nova Scotia's employment rate rose from 52.3 per cent in 1997 to 58.3 per cent in 2004. The overall rate for Canada was 58.8 per cent in 1997 and 62.7 per cent in 2004.

Employment rates varied within the province in 2004. The Halifax region, at 66.1 per cent, continued to perform above provincial and national employment rates. In Cape Breton, the rate was 44.1 per cent in 2004.

Where do we want to be?

Our aim is to continuously monitor employment rates and implement meaningful strategies that, over time, will help to improve employment rates and close existing gaps.

### Employment by Region, 2004



Source: Statistics Canada, 2004 Labour Force Historical Review.

# Families and Communities

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## Priorities for 2004–2005

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Throughout the year, the government continued to provide support for thousands of low-income Nova Scotians, families, children, and people with disabilities who need extra help with day-to-day living.

We took action to improve early child development and promote good health among our youngest citizens. Improvements also took place in emergency measures planning, road and workplace safety, and services offered through the justice and corrections systems.

### **PRIORITY: Employment Support Services Review**

*In 2004–2005, government will conduct an evaluation of the Employment Support Services component of the Employment Supports and Income Assistance Program (ESIA). Affordable, responsive services must be available to Nova Scotians in need, to improve their opportunities for employment and ability to support themselves. (Community Services)*

The Department of Community Services completed an evaluation framework in 2004 to help program managers and staff study the effectiveness of the ESIA program. The first of the evaluations—on the employment support services program—is now well under way.

The ESIA program focuses on helping people become more self-sufficient, which contributes to a growing economy that includes all citizens and regions of the province. Since the ESIA program began in 2001, the number of Nova Scotians in need of income assistance has been declining.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Early Child-development Initiative**

*The government of Nova Scotia will continue to invest in programs and services that enhance the lives of young children. In 2004–2005, this will include enhancements to programs that support language acquisition, child care, parent education, parent volunteering, children with special needs, and community-based home visitation.*

(Community Services)

The Department of Community Services provided funding to family resource centres to hire speech specialists and enhance their programming and outreach capacity. The department and child-care sector created a new stepped rate for the child-care subsidy program to replace the former flat rate. The changes resulted in increases that range from \$1.30 to \$4.30 per day, depending on whether a child is school age, a preschooler, toddler, or infant.

The number of subsidized spaces also increased in 2004–2005. The department approved 50 new portable subsidies, bringing the total to 2,756.

A child-care subsidy program review continues and will include recommendations on a revised grant-

funding structure for child-care centres and a review of eligible income levels. In the interim, the department distributed a grant of \$200,000 among licensed, full-day child-care centres that were providing subsidized child care in 2004–2005.

An additional \$200,000 went into early childhood-development resource centres under the child-care information and support program, funding four more programs for a total of 14 across the province. These programs are designed to build the quality of child-care options through training, information, and support for parents and caregivers.

Community Services invested \$20,000 in an effort to increase the involvement of volunteers from all age groups at family resource centres (FRCs). Early results indicate a 20 per cent increase over 2003–2004. In the meantime, a parent-education advisory committee is helping to develop quality parent-education programs.

To help licensed child-care centres care better for children with special needs, the department provided a \$300,000 Partnership for Inclusion grant. The partnership is currently in effect at 78 licensed child-care centres throughout the province.

The Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visiting program focuses on healthy development of babies and their families. To keep families linked to resources in

their communities, the role of community home visitor was added in 2004–2005 and should be appearing provincewide in 2005–2006.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Housing Services**

*Government will work with community agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector to help Nova Scotians get access to safe and affordable housing.*

(Community Services)

In 2004–2005, 178 new rental-housing projects were approved under phase one of the Canada/Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement. The units will be home to seniors, families, singles, and people with disabilities, from Sydney Mines to New Minas and points in between. In addition, 72 low-income households received assistance under the home-preservation program.

At the end of 2004, a request for proposals was issued for the development of an additional 250 new rental housing projects, attracting dozens of proposals for more than 900 units. The remainder of phase-one funding, or \$20.1 million, will be fully committed by the end of fiscal 2005–2006.

The Department of Community Services has signed a new agreement with the government of Canada for the second phase

of the Affordable Housing Agreement, worth \$18.9 million. By 2008, this will bring the total investment under the federal/provincial program to \$56.1 million.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Community Supports  
for Adults**

*In 2004–2005, government will launch a new support program for adults living in the community. The goal is to have a modern support system to ensure that people living with disabilities are healthy and safe and have the opportunity to participate in the life of their communities. The 2004–2005 budget set aside \$1 million to begin implementing the new program.*

(Community Services)

As of January 2005, families caring for a disabled family member at home could access the new Direct Family Support program. The program provides help with things like respite care and transportation, and it may prevent or delay out-of-home placements.

Work also began on expanding two other programs for the 2005–2006 fiscal year. The Alternative Family Support program provides assistance to those who offer a family-like setting for individuals with disabilities. The second is the Independent Living Support program, which provides



support to individuals who require minimal assistance to live independently/semi-independently in their community.

**PRIORITY:  
Responding to  
Domestic Violence**

*Government will continue to work with police and partners in the community to provide a well-coordinated response to domestic violence. An additional \$100,000 will go to the domestic-violence case-coordination program to help police improve case management. Resources for coordination are particularly important to identify high-risk situations and to ensure that referrals and ongoing information sharing take place with primary service agencies.*  
(Justice)

In 2003–2004, the government increased the funding level of \$157,500 to \$257,500. This new level continued in 2004–2005 and will be maintained on an annualized basis. Further efforts included training for educators and co-operation at the most senior levels with other departments. The Department of Justice is producing a police pocket guide on domestic violence that will give officers a quick checklist to

follow, as well as information on assessing risks, applying for emergency protection orders, laying a charge, protecting children in need, dealing with firearms, and following up with victims.

**PRIORITY:  
Redesign of Adoption Services**

*To help children in care have greater opportunities to live with families in stable home environments and to help families who want to adopt, government will continue to redesign Nova Scotia's adoption program.*  
(Community Services)

Work began on this initiative in 2003–2004, with a review of adoption legislation and programs across the country. In 2004–2005, options for changes to the current system were developed, and consultations were undertaken with existing service-delivery agencies and stakeholders.

As a result, 10 positions were approved and have been filled to respond to inquiries, conduct information sessions for adoption applicants, screen applicants, provide pre-service adoption training, and conduct adoption home studies.

The department continues to explore ways to recruit more adoptive parents and implement legislative amendments

to increase the opportunity for children in care and custody to be adopted.

**PRIORITY:  
Emergency Measures Planning**

*Government will increase funding to Nova Scotia's Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) to increase its efforts to help Nova Scotians avoid preventable emergencies and recover quickly when there is a problem.*

(Emergency Measures Organization)

To ensure that the province can continue to operate vital services and facilities during an emergency, Nova Scotia's EMO has been actively involved in negotiations with the federal government and other provinces and territories to update the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).

We are part of a provincial/territorial working group to develop a recovery-assistance framework, which will be the instrument for securing financial assistance in times of natural or human-induced disaster (e.g., pandemic, terrorism, etc.)

EMO Nova Scotia also has been very active in planning for the continuity of key government services and vital facilities in times of emergency. A subject-matter expert at EMO has begun to identify and assess best strategies in use across the country for a made-in-Nova Scotia, best-practices policy on business continuity.

Meanwhile, some departments have begun similar work. EMO Nova Scotia is developing training to help individual departments understand their role in business continuity. Delivery of the EMO training is expected in 2005–2006.

**PRIORITY:  
Public Safety and Security**

*Government will continue to work with the federal government, the RCMP, and local law-enforcement agencies to protect public safety in the face of new terrorist threats. We will also work with the federal government to implement a national sex-offender registry to improve public safety.*

(Justice)

The government has made a multi-year commitment to combatting organized crime, criminal extremism, and terrorism. The first phase involved developing a strategy, which has received support in principle at both the federal and provincial levels. Work then began to secure additional resources for Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia (CISNS). CISNS is one of nine provincial bureaus that operate under a national umbrella. More than 380 law-enforcement agencies are members of Criminal Intelligence Service Canada.



The Department of Justice prepared a Cross-Border Policing Act based on uniform legislation being introduced across Canada. The legislation, which contains civilian-oversight provisions, will make it easier for police to investigate crimes that cross provincial boundaries. Organized criminal activity often involves more than one jurisdiction. The legislation has the support of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and other law-enforcement organizations.

The department worked with justice partners, the RCMP in particular, to implement a national sex-offender registry that monitors offenders. The system went live in December 2004, with nine designated registration sites in Nova Scotia. Law-enforcement agencies have been provided with a 1-800 number to allow for inquiries to be made on the system by the Nova Scotia Sex Offender Information Registration Centre, in the event they have a crime of a sexual nature and require a search to be conducted.

Law-enforcement officials at the registration sites have been trained in the collection and registration of offender information. Prosecutors with the Public Prosecution Service and court officials are aware of the new procedures and will be making application for orders when a designated offence has occurred. Additional training continues.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Promoting Safety on  
Nova Scotia Roads**

*Led by Transportation and Public Works, the Office of Health Promotion, and the provincial Road Safety Advisory Committee, the government will continue the effort to improve safety on Nova Scotia's roads.* (Transportation and Public Works; Office of Health Promotion)

Reducing motor-vehicle collisions is one of the three main goals of the government's injury-prevention strategy. (See Health: Preventing Injuries.)

Nova Scotia's Road Safety Advisory Committee, with representatives from non-profit organizations, government, industry, policing agencies, and others, provides advice on the road-safety component of the strategy.

In co-operation with the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Road Safety Advisory Council, the Office of Health Promotion led the development of a comprehensive strategy for road-safety communications. The goal is to positively change the attitudes and behaviours of Nova Scotia's road users, leading to a reduction in the number of serious and fatal road injuries.

In the meantime, Transportation and Public Works is leading a process to

identify high-collision locations in our highway system. TPW has accepted a proposal to implement a road-safety management system based on a design by Delphi MRC consultants. The department expects the work to begin in December 2005 and to conclude by the fall of 2006.

With the role of seat belts now widely recognized as life saving, the Office of Health Promotion provided funding to Child Safety Link, a Maritime-wide organization working to reduce the incidence and severity of childhood injuries. The Office of Health Promotion funding is helping to establish a network of car-seat coalitions across the province and to strengthen education about car and booster seats for children.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Fire and Building Code Improvements**

*Government will implement the 2004 edition of the national fire and building codes under the Building Code Act and Fire Safety Act.*

(Environment and Labour)

National building, fire, and plumbing codes will be published by late 2005. Following their publication, the Department of Environment and Labour will complete a public consultation for input into the development of

amendments to the Building Code Regulations (including the plumbing code) and the Fire Safety Regulations, required for adoption of the new codes in the spring of 2006.

The new codes are the culmination of a 10-year national review. While they maintain rigorous safety standards, they also allow for greater flexibility in construction and fire-safety regulation.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Workplace Safety**

*In 2004–2005, government will implement criminal-code amendments (Bill C-45) relative to occupational health and safety offences. The Departments of Justice and Environment and Labour will work with other agencies to define the process whereby a criminal-code investigation may be triggered in an occupational health and safety matter.*

(Justice; Environment and Labour)

Nova Scotia played a significant role in moving this legislation forward, in the aftermath of the Westray mine explosion. Under the federal legislation, there is now an explicit duty among those directly responsible for the work of others to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm or fatal injuries to workers.



Provincial and federal departments, including Justice and Environment and Labour, worked with the Public Prosecution Service, the RCMP, Halifax Regional Police, the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association, Workers' Compensation Board, and Human Resources Development Canada to educate staff about the new law and ensure that criminal and regulatory investigations of workplace accidents are coordinated and carried out using common approaches.

All work has been completed, the only remaining requirement being the signing of the memorandum of understanding among the investigating agencies.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Enhancing Correctional Services**

*Government will continue to invest in the network of correctional facilities throughout the province and will update the Correctional Services Act in 2004–2005 to ensure that legislation reflects current theory and practice in the field.*

(Justice)

The \$8-million Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility opened in April 2004 to house up to 38 offenders and employ 30 people, with an annual operating budget of \$1.92 million.

The Department of Justice completed a comprehensive review and analysis of legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. Various gaps have been identified and further consultation is planned. The proposed legislation will give Nova Scotians a more modern approach to the delivery of correctional services.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Dispute-resolution Mechanisms**

*In 2004–2005, the government will continue to press the federal government to expand the services of the Supreme Court (Family Division) provincewide, given the positive public response to the services provided by this division of the court. Government will also help people who represent themselves in court gain access more easily and use the system more effectively.*

(Justice)

In 1999, the Family Division of the Supreme Court was established to deal with all family-law court matters in Halifax Regional Municipality and in Cape Breton. This court gives people the opportunity to resolve family matters in a less adversarial manner by providing an alternative to a court trial. The court provides conciliation and mediation services, as well as relevant educational programs.

Nova Scotia continues to wait for a federal government response to its June 2004 proposal to expand the family division provincewide. Consultations with the judiciary, federal officials, and stakeholders continued, with further action dependent on the federal response.

The Department of Justice continues to implement recommendations contained in the self-represented litigants' report, including the development of information materials. During the year, Court Services added four new plain-language brochures to the 35 it has already produced, to help the public understand the court process.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving the Justice Information System**

*Government will fully implement its new justice information system, putting Nova Scotia's system among the most integrated systems in the country.*

(Justice)

The Justice Enterprise Information Network, or JEIN as it is known, went live in February 2005, enhancing public safety through faster sharing of criminal-justice information. The system puts Nova Scotia in the lead, with the most integrated justice-information system in Canada.

JEIN is easier to use, less costly to run, and more technologically adaptable to future requirements than the system it replaces.

The system tracks offenders and supports the management of criminal cases through the entire justice process by allowing greater and faster connectivity among justice partners. For example, justice partners do not have to spend time contacting the courts for information about upcoming court cases or background checks. They can ask JEIN. JEIN also acts as a portal to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, through which police can make licence-plate inquiries.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Sunday-shopping Plebiscite**

*Legislation in 2003 authorized a provincewide plebiscite on Sunday retail opening hours for the fall of 2004, in conjunction with planned municipal elections.*

(Justice)

The plebiscite took place in October 2004, with Nova Scotians voting against more Sunday shopping. The results mean that Sunday shopping will remain as it is now—governed by the Retail Business Uniform Closing Day Act, which is enforced by local law-enforcement agencies and the Public Prosecution Service.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Special Building Access  
and Transportation**

*Government will continue to fund programs to improve access to community buildings and rural transportation for seniors, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged Nova Scotians.*

(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) provided funding and assistance to community-based transportation organizations to encourage the development and growth of sustainable transportation. SNSMR's Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) provided funding to eight accessible transportation services covering nine of the province's counties, while new services were developed in the municipalities of East Hants and Digby. The department completed a program review and made recommendations to improve both CTAP and the Accessible Transportation Assistance Program.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Treaty and Aboriginal Rights**

*In 2004–2005, the provincial and federal governments and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia will proceed under their June 2002 Umbrella Agreement to work on issues of mutual concern, including matters relating to treaty and Aboriginal rights.*

(Aboriginal Affairs)

In 2004–2005, the Mi'kmaq and provincial and federal negotiation teams prepared a draft framework agreement for internal review by the parties. The framework outlines the process and procedures to be followed in the negotiations and identifies the major issues to be addressed.

Discussions have been held with key stakeholder groups to inform them of the progress made to date. The Mi'kmaq have begun discussions throughout their communities about the process before proceeding with approval.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Resource Guide for  
Young Women**

*Through a resource handbook, increase awareness among young women about career, family, and health issues that affect them.*

(Advisory Council on the Status of Women)

The council worked with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, Hypatia Society, IWK Health Centre, Phoenix House, and teenaged girls to develop a Guide for Girls. The resource alerts young women to the choices they will make as they move into adulthood, including career opportunities and self-sufficiency. It identifies top-paying jobs, recommends community involvement and lifelong learning, and offers information about healthy lifestyles and personal safety.

The publication has been well received in focus tests and will be distributed in 2005–2006 through public libraries and organizations that serve teens.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Employability Support for  
Persons with Disabilities**

*The Canada/Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities will replace the Employability Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities. In 2004–2005, the Departments of Education, Community Services, and Health will develop a plan to provide services under the new agreement, which should assist about 2,000 Nova Scotians.*

(Education; Community Services; Health)

The Canada/Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities replaced the Employability Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities in April 2004. The departments of Health, Community Services, and Education collaborate to provide programs like career counselling, campus-based supports, addiction treatment, and mental health services. A review of the literature was completed on the impact of addictions treatment on employability. Consultations with post-secondary institutions produced memoranda of understanding that will help the institutions develop and implement three-year plans to improve accessibility.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Enhancing Community Access to Schools**

*School boards will adjust their practices in 2004–2005 to comply with a new policy framework developed to standardize access and rate charges and to ensure that school facilities are available.*  
(Education)

Amendments to the Education Act to provide rent-free use of school facilities for youth and seniors received Royal Assent. Department of Education staff continued work on a fees-for-usage policy framework in 2004–2005; in 2005–2006 the department will work with school boards to ensure that school facilities are available for the community to use for as many hours as possible.

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## **Families and Communities: Measuring Our Performance**

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**INCOME ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS SECURING EMPLOYMENT**

(Community Services)

*Outcome:*  
*Strong families, children reaching their potential*

What does the measure tell us?

Earnings from employment help reduce dependency on the income assistance program. This measure indicates the percentage of income-assistance recipients eligible for Employment Support Services who have secured full- or part-time employment.

Where are we now?

In 2004–2005, 28 per cent of Income Assistance recipients eligible for Employment Support Services (2,892) secured full- or part-time employment, representing an increase of 3 per cent over 2003–2004 (25 per cent). The target for 2004–2005 was 39 per cent, an increase of 5 per cent over the 2001–2002 base year (34 per cent).

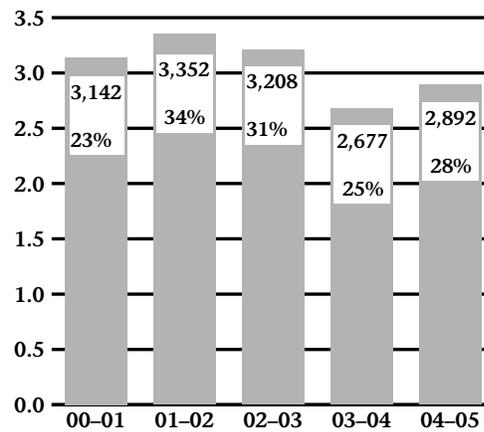
Actual results are below target, because the portion of clients with multiple barriers to employment—including literacy, changing family circumstances, disabilities, and education and training requirements—is increasing. Overcoming multiple barriers requires additional time and support for these individuals, reducing the number of successful clients in a given year.

**Where do we want to be?**

Our target for the future is for 25 per cent of recipients involved in Employment Support Services to secure full- or part-time employment, reflecting the multiple challenges faced by the clients served by Employment Support Services.

Individuals and families will continue to be supported in their efforts to become self-reliant. Programs include prescription drug coverage (Pharmacare) for up to one year after recipients leave income assistance and maintain employment, Work Activity Programs that develop skills for clients, and the One Journey Work and Learn partnership project, which provides skills development and direct employment experience.

**Number and Percentage of Income Assistance Recipients Securing Work**



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.



**INCOME ASSISTANCE  
RECIPIENTS PARTICIPATING  
IN APPROVED EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAMS**

(Community Services)

*Outcome:  
Strong families, children  
reaching their potential*

What does the measure tell us?

Many income assistance recipients need help to develop the skills they need to prepare for work and become more self-sufficient. Individuals may enrol in literacy or upgrading programs as well as specialized courses to acquire job-specific skills. This measure indicates the percentage of Employment Support Services clients who are participating in approved education and training programs.

Where are we now?

Of the 10,358 income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services in 2004–2005, 4,950 (48 per cent) participated in an approved education or training program. This is an increase over previous years and exceeds the 2004–2005 target, which was to maintain the 2001–2002 base-year level of 43 per cent.

The improvement is attributed to several initiatives:

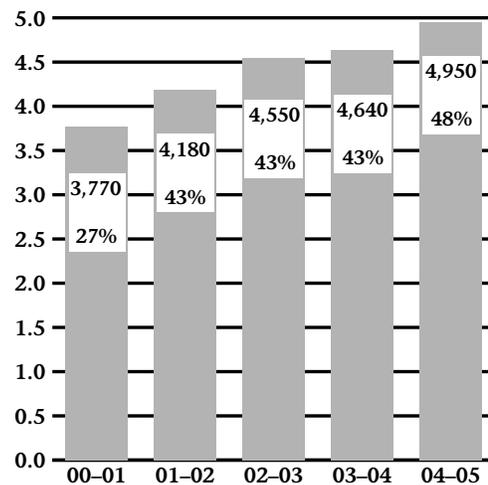
- partnering with the Department of Education through the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning

- support for individuals to attend the Nova Scotia Community College through the Educate to Work Program
- partnering with Work Activity Programs
- promoting and expanding the One Journey Work and Learn program.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to maintain or exceed the 2001–2002 base-year level of 43 per cent.

***Number and Percentage of  
Income Assistance Recipients  
Participating in Upgrading &  
Training Programs***



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

**CHILDREN LIVING IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**

(Community Services)

*Outcome:*

*Strong families, children reaching their potential*

What does the measure tell us?

Statistics Canada calculates the income level at which a family may experience hardship because a greater proportion of income is spent on basic necessities. This is referred to as the “low income cut-off” (LICO). The measure provides data on the number of children in Nova Scotia under the age of 18 who are living in households below the LICO level. There is a two-year delay in reporting from Statistics Canada; therefore the figure reported is for 2003.

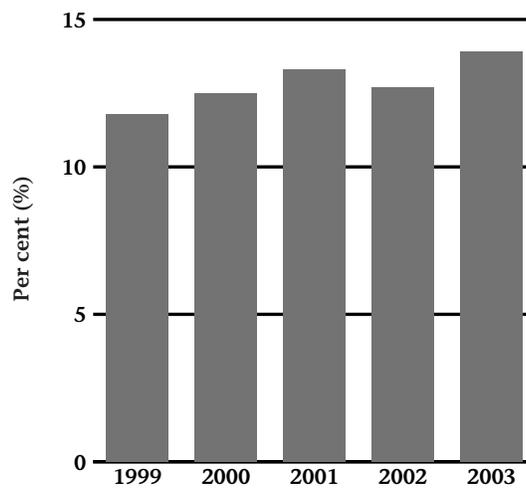
Where are we now?

The target for 2004–2005 was to lower the 2001 percentage of 13.3 per cent of children living in low-income households in Nova Scotia. In 2003, the number of children living in low-income families was 26,000, or 13.9 per cent of all children under the age of 18. The percentage of children has increased because of the declining population of children in the province, while the number of children in low-income households has remained fairly constant.

Where do we want to be?

We continue to look for ways to help families increase their overall household income and help individuals find and keep employment. Effective October 1, 2005, Employment Support and Income Assistance allowances will increase. In addition, an evaluation will be completed of Employment Support Services and the child-care subsidy.

***Prevalence of Children in Nova Scotia Under 18 Years of Age Living in Low-income Households After Taxes***



Source: Statistics Canada, *Income in Canada, 1980–2003*, Cat. No. 13F0022XCB.



## OVERALL CRIME RATE

(Justice)

*Outcome:  
Safe communities*

### What does the measure tell us?

The overall crime rate is a key indicator of social and economic well-being within a society. It indicates how many criminal incidents have been reported to the police for violent offences, and property, drug, and other charges. Statistics Canada excludes Criminal Code traffic offences from the overall crime-rate definition. The number is standardized per 100,000 of the population so that rates can be compared over time and among geographic areas with differing populations.

### Where are we now?

In 2004, there were 8,764 criminal incidents per 100,000 people—higher than the national rate of 8,051 criminal incidents per 100,000. The overall crime rate increased by 1.7 per cent from 2003. The increase is due primarily to increases in property crime offset by decreases in violent crimes and other Criminal Code offences.

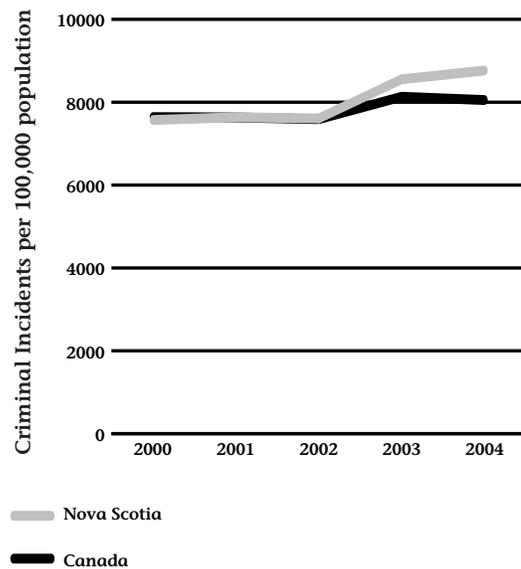
Nova Scotia's crime rate tends to follow national figures, although it may vary from year to year. Since 2000, the overall rate of crime has increased, mostly due to increases in "other Criminal Code" offences (e.g., bail violations, mischief).

### Where do we want to be?

Maintaining a crime rate below the national average continues to be our target for the future.

## Overall Crime Rate

2000–2004



Source: Statistics Canada.

**HIGHWAY INJURIES**

(Transportation and Public Works)

*Outcome:  
Safe Communities*

**What does the measure tell us?**

Government tracks casualty rates (fatalities and injuries) per 10,000 motor vehicles registered. Casualty rates are affected by a number of factors, including driver behaviour, vehicle safety, enforcement, education, and engineering programs. While a change in the casualty rate may be caused by one or more of these factors, the rate is an overall indicator of how well government programs contribute to highway safety.

**Where are we now?**

The recorded casualty rate has declined steadily every year since the base year of 2000, when it was 123.9. In 2004, the rate was 90.9.

**Where do we want to be?**

Our objective is to continue to decrease the casualty rate. Government is taking a number of steps to achieve this target. These include road-engineering changes that contribute to collision prevention, expanding the Road Weather Information System, leading the Road Safety Advisory Committee with partners from the Department of Justice, Office of Health Promotion, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, the Nova Scotia Safety Council, the Dalhousie Vehicle Research Team, and policing partners. We also participate in Road Safety Vision 2010, Canada’s National Road Safety Strategy, and we are working with the Office of Health Promotion and other provincial stakeholders on road safety and injury prevention.

<b>Casualty Rates 2000–2004</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Casualties/ 10K Motor Vehicles Registered</b>
2000	87	6,999	123.9
2001	80	6,327	109.4
2002	88	5,949	102.8
2003	70	5,291	94.4
2004	90	5,118	90.9

*Source: Nova Scotia Collision Record Database*



**Annual Accountability**

# The Environment

## Priorities for 2004–2005

The government took action to repair environmental damage in 2004–2005 and to prepare for future environmental remediation. We also took steps to safeguard against the need for remediation by acquiring environmentally sensitive areas. The year 2004–2005 saw the second-largest amount of land protected in a single year in the history of the province, as well as the designation of new wilderness areas and nature reserves.

Hurricane Juan cut a swath of destruction across the province in 2003 that damaged dozens of provincial parks and trails. In 2004–2005, government restored the infrastructure at most parks to pre-Juan conditions and reopened them to the public. The province also boosted fire-management programs to be better prepared for the increased fire hazards created by hurricane-damaged tree stands.

The province moved ahead in co-operation with municipalities to protect the province's air and water quality, treatment facilities, and pollution-control mechanisms.

At the same time, we launched a campaign to educate Nova Scotians on reducing energy use and finding and using new energy sources.

Nova Scotia continued to negotiate participation in a national implementation plan for the Kyoto Protocol and to work with industry on ways to meet greenhouse-gas reduction targets.

Progress continues to be made toward restoring environmental health at the Sydney Tar Ponds and increasing the number of farms that are completing environmental farm plans.

In the meantime, the province is consolidating the system of food-safety legislation under the new Health Protection Act, which boosts public safety and lowers the cost of doing business. It is also helping meat processors deal with hazards in the food chain and comply with changing food-safety requirements.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Dealing with the Aftermath  
of Hurricane Juan**

*The Department of Natural Resources will focus resources in 2004–2005 on repairing damage in the wake of Hurricane Juan. Departmental activities will address the increased risk of fire, pest, and disease from the hurricane-damaged forest stands, mainly in the central region of the province. Substantial redevelopment efforts will also take place in three of the most heavily damaged provincial parks: McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park, Porters Lake Provincial Park, and Cole Harbour Heritage Park.*

(Natural Resources)

DNR had to respond to the damage caused by Hurricane Juan in three main areas: the restoration of the provincial park system, supporting the salvage of blown-down timber, and being prepared for the increased risk of fire and pests in damaged forest stands. The presence of the brown spruce longhorn beetle in some of the same forest stands damaged by the hurricane complicated the task of repairing the damage to parks and the timber salvage.

Hurricane Juan damaged infrastructure and large areas of vegetation in more than 30 provincial parks and trails in central Nova Scotia. The department restored the infrastructure at most parks to pre-Juan condition during the year and reopened them to public use. Dollar Lake Provincial Park, Oakfield Provincial Park, Laurie Provincial Park, and Cole Harbour Heritage Park were examples of park properties where all cleanup and repair work was completed during 2004–2005.

Porters Lake Provincial Park was the hardest-hit provincial camping park, with about half its 90 hectares suffering tree damage. The extensive nature of the damage kept the park closed to public use for the entire 2004 camping season. Other properties with restoration work incomplete at the end of 2004–2005 were McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park, Lawrencetown Beach Park, and Rainbow Haven Beach Park.

The province continued to administer the woodlot salvage-assistance program throughout the year, to partially offset the costs incurred by landowners to salvage saleable timber blown down during the hurricane. In December 2004, the province also announced an enhanced wood-salvage program for the brown spruce longhorn beetle restricted area set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The program will make up to \$1 million available to facilitate salvaging wood inside the restricted zone.

In response to the increased fire hazard from hurricane-damaged tree stands in central Nova Scotia, the Department of Natural Resources boosted various aspects of its fire-management program, including a preparedness plan for initially attacking a fire. To have more flexibility to impose a ban or closure, the department lowered the criteria for open-burning bans, alerts, and wood closures and prepared more information for volunteer fire departments and the public on wilderness-area fire hazards and prevention.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Protecting Drinking Water Quality**

*In 2004–2005, Nova Scotia will proceed with year three of its drinking-water strategy to protect and manage provincial water resources.*

(Environment and Labour;  
Service Nova Scotia and  
Municipal Relations)

The Department of Environment and Labour completed all commitments in the strategy's action plan for the year. These commitments included working with municipalities to protect water-supply areas, improving treatment-plant operations, implementing a comprehensive program for compliance monitoring of public drinking-water systems, and developing information materials for the use of private well owners.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations also provided grants for water-treatment and distribution projects to support the new Provincial Municipal Drinking Water standards developed as part of the strategy. The funding was provided through the Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program and the Provincial Capital Assistance Program. SNSMR continued to make financial assistance available to municipalities to carry out land-use planning to protect drinking-water supply areas.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Protecting Nova Scotia's Air Quality**

*The government will develop a framework for managing air quality that focuses on airsheds, or regions where ambient air quality is influenced by common emission sources.*

(Environment and Labour)

The government repealed and replaced the Air Quality Regulations, putting in place new emission caps for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury as well as a 2 per cent limit on sulphur in heavy fuel oil. These changes provide the regulatory framework needed for implementation of an airshed-management approach to air-quality management.



The Department of Environment and Labour developed a strategic plan for air management. It focuses on airshed management, education and awareness, and review and updating of terms and conditions of industrial approvals.

The plan is being implemented. This includes work on airshed-management approaches to local air-quality issues with local governments and community organizations, including Halifax Regional Municipality and the Pictou Harbour Environmental Protection Project.

The province continues to upgrade its ambient air-monitoring network, which provides data essential for managing air quality in the province.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Climate-change Work**

*The government of Nova Scotia will participate in the development of a national implementation plan for the Kyoto Protocol. The goal is to reach emission-reduction objectives without placing an unreasonable burden on any one region.*

(Energy)

In 2004–2005, Nova Scotia participated in discussions to build a national climate-change approach. Department of Energy staff are members of a committee of federal, provincial, and territorial governments that is developing protocols for greenhouse-gas offsets. The province also sends representatives to a national committee working on international climate-change issues.

The Department of Energy provided input to the federal government on its draft Greenhouse Gas Protocol and participated in discussions with federal departments on targets for large final emitters in Nova Scotia, including Nova Scotia Power. The provincial government worked with Nova Scotia Power through a government/industry working group to look at options and costing for ways to meet anticipated greenhouse-reduction targets.

As part of its initiative to address climate change, the government worked to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and encourage energy conservation throughout the province.

In co-operation with the home-builders association, the Department of Energy sponsored builder training for student carpenters and attracted thousands of Nova Scotians to a showcase of R-2000 demonstration homes.

The department also worked with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and six municipalities to do LED traffic-light conversion. As a result, more than 2,500 lights at 60 intersections have been converted. The Energy department also partnered with Halifax Regional Municipality to help begin express bus service to downtown Halifax from outlying districts.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Promoting Food and Consumer Safety**

*We will work with federal partners and the agriculture industry in 2004–2005 to develop and implement standard food-safety and quality systems throughout the agri-food sector. This is part of the Canada/Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement for the Agriculture Policy Framework.*

(Agriculture and Fisheries)

Upgrading assistance from the province to meat-processing facilities allowed them to comply with hazard-analysis programming, a systematic approach to managing potential risks in the food chain. The province approved 12 applicants, for a total investment in food safety of \$213,000 under this particular program. The upgrades allow provincially registered meat-processing plants to better respond to food-safety and animal-health issues and to meet changing food-safety requirements.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries worked with commodity groups to begin using hazard-analysis practices in the production of livestock. When farmers follow these practices to comply with specific food-safety and animal-health standards, they become sought after as producers of high-quality products



and open up marketing opportunities for themselves.

The department provided training to prepare provincially registered meat-processing plants to meet requirements for the removal of specified risk materials (SRMs) from the food chain. As the BSE issue evolves in the beef-cattle sector, assistance is being targeted to the industry to help it adapt to the new business realities and to prepare for pending federal requirements for handling SRMs.

The department also finalized the consolidation of food-safety legislation under the Health Protection Act. The new regulatory package boosts food safety, makes it easier for industry to use technology and new management systems to comply with regulations, and lowers the cost of doing business.

**PRIORITY:  
Acquiring and  
Protecting Land**

*Government will expand the land base owned by the province in 2004–2005, by acquiring land with recreational or ecological value or land that supports government programs and initiatives such as coastal properties, private holdings surrounded by wilderness areas, and wetlands, protecting them from development. The government will also designate new wilderness areas and explore private land-stewardship partnerships.*

(Natural Resources; Environment and Labour)

After the expiry of the Crown's 2000 partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to protect ecologically significant land, the government negotiated another agreement, which came into effect in April 2005. The government reached a similar agreement with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT).

Acquisitions of note during the year included more than 1900 hectares at Cape Sable Island, Baccaro, and Port LaTour in Shelburne County, more than 470 hectares with 5.5 kilometres of coastline at Port Bickerton in

Guysborough County, and 40.5 hectares at Pyches Island in Halifax.

The year 2004–2005 also saw the second-largest amount of land protected in a single year in the history of the province. The province designated two new wilderness areas during the year, as well as five new nature-reserve properties, and made 11 additions to existing wilderness areas, totalling more than 10,000 hectares.

The government also passed amendments to the Special Places Protection Act that allow conservation restrictions to “run with the land” and bind subsequent owners.

This change encourages private land conservation by providing landowners with the assurance that their property, once designated for conservation, is protected for generations to come.

### **PRIORITY: Forest Strategy Implementation**

*In 2004–2005, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will implement regulatory changes to improve the sustainability of the forest resource. The changes will allow DNR to collect information on wood harvesting and to ensure that silviculture is carried out in proportion to the amount of wood harvested.*

(Natural Resources)

The department explained the new requirements of the revised sustainability regulations to registered buyers of primary forest products.

The Code of Forest Practice Principles document was also completed, approved, and released to the public as planned. The code outlines the principles for implementing sustainable forest management to conserve and maintain forest biodiversity, while at the same time enabling the sustainable use of forest resources on both Crown and private lands. Work also proceeded on a second stage of the Code of Forest Practice, which is the guidebook component that gives the detail required to meet the principles of the code.

Work began on the provincial wood-supply forecast, based on wood-harvest and forest-inventory data, as well as



information on silviculture. When complete, results of the forecast will give us information to assess opportunities to use forest resources, develop forest-management programs, and determine the amount of silviculture that is needed to support wood harvesting.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Educating Nova Scotians  
on Energy Choices**

*Nova Scotians need practical, reliable information about energy choices available to them and about the consequences of energy use. Government will implement a multi-year plan to provide that information.*

(Energy)

In 2004–2005, a public information campaign addressed two key areas, energy use and energy opportunities, in co-operation with industry, non-profit organizations, and other levels of government.

The department and Clean Nova Scotia expanded on the toll-free EnerInfo line that began in 2004. During the Keep the Heat program from December 2004 to March 2005, the line received 700 calls. The service will continue in 2005–2006.

The department revamped its website to make it easier to navigate and easier to add new consumer information.

The department launched a new scholarship program in 2005, in partnership with one of the owners of the Sable Offshore Energy Project, Pengrowth Corporation of Calgary. Promoting the scholarship provides opportunities to tell high school students about careers in the energy sector, which range from oil and gas to renewable energy.

The department distributed energy-savings kits to 6,000 Keep the Heat participants as part of a pilot program. Another 1,000 kits have been distributed through special events and seminars, while plans call for the program to expand further in 2005–2006 thanks to positive evaluations. The kits help Nova Scotians reduce energy use in the home through inexpensive products such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, low-flow showerheads, and weatherstripping.

**PRIORITY:**

**Environmental Farm Plans**

*Government will work with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to encourage farm owners to complete an environmental farm plan (EFP) under the Canada/Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement for the Agriculture Policy Framework. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries hopes to see about 20 per cent of the province's 2,400 registered farms enrolled in the program by 2004-2005. The EFP program builds on science, technology, and best practices to achieve environmental targets for farm soil, water, air, and bio-diversity. (Agriculture and Fisheries)*

Approximately 27 per cent of all farms in Nova Scotia are enrolled in the EFP program, surpassing the 20 per cent target for the year. About 270 farms enrolled during the year, for a total of 670 to date. The enrolment also means that 51 000 hectares of commercial farmland are covered by EFPs. They lead to improved environmental performance on farms and improve management of farm-related natural resources.

The department also helped farmers use the Farm Investment Fund (FIF) to assess risk and adopt corresponding actions

identified in their environmental farm plans. In 2004–2005, the fund provided farmers with more than \$3.6 million to invest in projects for the development or management of their land, water, and agricultural production.

**PRIORITY:**

**SYDNEY TAR PONDS CLEANUP**

*The Government of Nova Scotia will engage the Government of Canada in discussions regarding a new cost-sharing agreement for the actual cleanup phase of the Tar Ponds and Coke-Ovens site. The Sydney Tar Ponds Agency will also monitor current projects that are part of the existing cost-sharing agreements. (Sydney Tar Ponds Agency)*

On May 12, 2004, Canada and Nova Scotia signed a Memorandum of Agreement to carry out a \$400-million, 10-year cleanup of the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke-Ovens property. With the signing of this memorandum, the province agreed to assume the implementation role through a special operating agency, the Sydney Tar Ponds Agency.

The memorandum identified certain further agreements to be concluded between the two governments to ensure effective and judicious management of the project. Canada and Nova Scotia



negotiated an interim cost-shared agreement that will fund operational costs and four preventative projects. These projects will be undertaken in advance of, and independent of, the main cleanup.

The Government of Canada decided to proceed with an environmental assessment of the project, in the form of an independent review panel, and announced a specific schedule for the panel.

Steps are now being taken by the Sydney Tar Ponds Agency to provide the federal government and the panel with all necessary information to finalize environmental approvals.

The agency also has initiated preliminary engineering work and will monitor current activity to ensure implementation in a timely manner, in keeping with agreed-upon schedules and budgets.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Environmental Monitoring Plan for Aquaculture**

*Government will continue to stimulate growth in the aquaculture sector and implement the environmental monitoring plan it developed in conjunction with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia to track aquaculture's effects on the environment. The monitoring tool is expected to assess up to 30 aquaculture sites in 2004–2005.*

(Agriculture and Fisheries)

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries sampled 93 aquaculture sites in 2004–2005, bringing the total number of sites sampled to 112, or 60 per cent of aquaculture sites. Preliminary results from analysis of this baseline data set show limited environmental impact from aquaculture. The majority of sites showed no significant impact, and a handful of sites were found to be partly affected. Remediation action is currently under way for the most affected site.

The environmental monitoring plan will continue to sample new sites and return to previously sampled, active sites on a rotational basis. The program is a key factor in ensuring the environmental sustainability of the aquaculture industry in Nova Scotia.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is preparing a new aquaculture development strategy, following consultations with the industry and publication of the discussion document *Long-term Planning for Aquatic Farming in Nova Scotia*.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Road Salt Management Strategy**

*Government will implement a comprehensive Salt Management Plan to reduce the impact of road salt on the environment and achieve cost efficiencies without compromising roadway safety. The plan will ensure that Nova Scotia meets or exceeds the Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts, established by Environment Canada in 2003. (Transportation and Public Works)*

During 2004–2005, the Department of Transportation and Public Works conducted the final review of the salt-management plan and set operational targets throughout the year. Another component of the strategy consisted of building six new salt domes. These were in operation for the winter at Tatamagouche, Londonderry, Noel, Berwick, Middle Musquodoboit, and Spry Bay.

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## The Environment: Measuring Our Performance

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**DRINKING WATER QUALITY**  
(Environment and Labour)

*Outcome:*  
*Healthy environment*

What does the measure tell us?

This measure tracks the percentage of the population that is served by municipal water supplies that meet health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. Approximately 60 per cent of Nova Scotians get their drinking water from municipal water supplies. Health Canada, in co-operation with provincial health and environment ministries, has established the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality. The guidelines specify the health-based criteria for safe drinking water. This measure helps to provide an overall picture of access to quality drinking water and the effectiveness of water-monitoring programs.

Where are we now?

The province's boil-water advisory database provides a tracking system for municipal water quality based on the



health-based criteria for coliform bacteria. In 2004, 98.4 per cent of the population that is served by municipal water supplies received water that meets the criteria for bacteriological quality at all times during the calendar year. This is an improvement over the previous three years (95.7 per cent in 2003, and 96.5 per cent in 2002 and 2001).

#### Where do we want to be?

Our ongoing target is to maximize the percentage of the population served by municipal water supplies that meet the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. Government is contributing to this outcome by implementing Nova Scotia's drinking water strategy, supporting development of municipal water-supply protection plans, and enforcing the Water and Wastewater Facilities and Public Drinking Water Regulations, including Nova Scotia Environment and Labour's Guidelines for Monitoring Public Water Supplies.

## **SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS** (Environment and Labour)

### *Outcome:* *Healthy environment*

#### What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of the total annual sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) air emissions (tonnes) in the province. Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is a prevalent and potentially harmful air contaminant that affects air quality. It is a major contributor to acid rain and smog and can have significant effects on human health if concentrations are elevated. Improved air quality is therefore partly dependent upon reduction of SO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

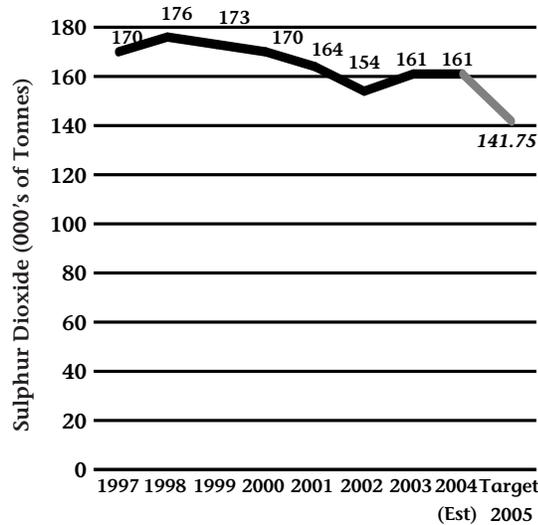
#### Where are we now?

Sulphur dioxide emissions have fluctuated over the past five years. In 2004, approximately 161,000 tonnes (estimate) of SO<sub>2</sub> were emitted in the province, primarily through electricity generation.

#### Where do we want to be?

Government amended the Air Quality Regulations in March 2005 including a reduction of the provincial SO<sub>2</sub> emission cap to 141,750 tonnes per year. Reductions will be accomplished by working with major industries to implement requirements to reduce SO<sub>2</sub> emissions through the use of lower-sulphur fuels and process upgrades.

**Nova Scotia  
Sulphur Dioxide Emissions**



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour, National Pollutant Release Inventory; Data for 2004 is estimated.

**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL**  
(Environment and Labour)

*Outcome:*  
*Healthy environment*

What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of annual, per capita (kg/person), municipal solid-waste disposal rates compared with the regional and national disposal rates. This is a new measure, compiled by Statistics Canada, which allows comparisons to other jurisdictions. The former measure published in the 2004–2005 Government Business Plan has been discontinued.

Statistics Canada reports this data every two years. The average amount of waste discarded by each person per year provides an indication of the level of participation in waste-diversion options. Low disposal rates suggest that more material is being diverted from the waste stream, either through reduction at source, recycling, or composting. By comparing disposal rates in Nova Scotia with those of the Atlantic region and Canada as a whole, we can assess Nova Scotia's performance, relative to the rest of Canada.

Where are we now?

The national per capita disposal rate in 2002 was 780 kg per person, rising by 27 kg from 2000 (753 kg/person). In Nova Scotia in 2002, we disposed of a little more than



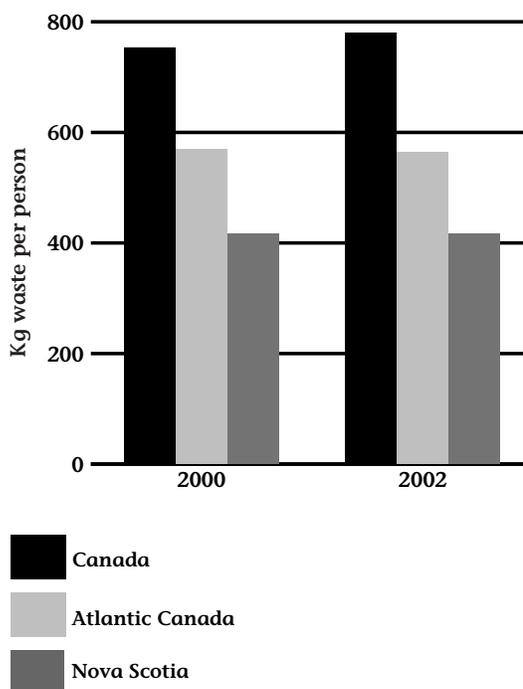
## Annual Accountability

half of this amount, at 417 kg per person. Nova Scotia's disposal rate has remained relatively stable over time, with a rate of 416 kg per person in 2000. The Atlantic region's average disposal rate in 2002 was 564 kg per person, dropping slightly from the 569 kg per person in 2000. (Data for 2004 will be reported in 2006.)

### Where do we want to be?

Our target for this new measure is to maintain the Nova Scotia disposal rate below the national disposal rate. Government will support this goal through continued public education, promotion of industry/product stewardship, and enforcement of the Solid Waste-Resource Management Regulations.

### Per Capita Solid Waste Disposal Rates 2000 and 2002



Source: Statistics Canada.

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
FARM PLANS**

(Agriculture and Fisheries)

*Outcome:  
Sustainable Environment*

What does the measure tell us?

This measure tells us the percentage of registered farmers participating in the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture's Environmental Farm Plan initiative.

Increasing the number of participants will increase conservation and the sustainable development of soil, water, air, and bio-diversity resources.

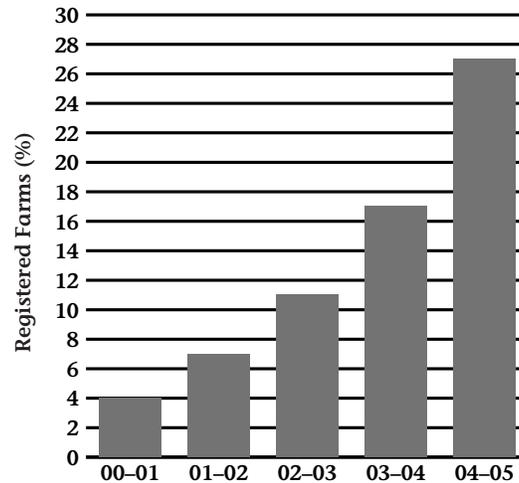
Where are we now?

As of March 2005, approximately 670 farms were participating in the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) initiative. This represents 27 per cent of approximately 2,400 registered farms in the province. There are now 51,000 hectares of commercial farmland covered by environmental farm plans.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2004–2005 was to enrol 20 per cent of registered farms in the Environmental Farm Plan initiative. This target has been surpassed. We will continue to assist producers to adopt environmentally beneficial actions identified in their environmental farm plans, through the Farm Investment Fund and other programs.

**Percentage of Registered Farms with Environmental Farm Plans  
2000–2001 to 2004–2005**



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.



**LONG-RANGE MANAGEMENT  
FRAMEWORKS—CROWN LAND**  
(Natural Resources)

*Outcome:*  
*Sustainable Environment*

What does the measure tell us?

Long-range management frameworks (LRMFs) support sound decision making for the use and management of Crown lands. The frameworks provide a database of information related to the land parcel and set out long-term goals and objectives for the land covered by the LRMF.

Where are we now?

The original target was to have up to 50 per cent of the province's 39 eco-districts covered by long-range management frameworks by the end of 2004–2005. One pilot project is now in progress but is not complete. Developing the frameworks is considerably more complicated and time consuming than originally anticipated.

Where do we want to be?

Lessons learned from the first pilot project will allow future LRMFs to be completed more quickly. A new target has been set for 100 per cent of Crown land to be covered by LRMFs by 2009–2010.

**ENDANGERED AND  
THREATENED SPECIES  
RECOVERY PLANS**  
(Natural Resources)

*Outcome:*  
*Sustainable environment*

What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of the percentage of endangered species with recovery plans in place on time. Under the Endangered Species Act, recovery plans are to be completed within a year of a species being listed as endangered and within two years of a species being listed as threatened.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2005, 19 species were listed as endangered or threatened. One of the threatened species has been listed for less than two years, so a recovery plan is not yet required. For the other 18 species, 14 have plans in place (78 per cent). Work is under way on the remaining recovery plans, and these are expected to be completed during the upcoming fiscal year.

Where do we want to be?

Our continuing target is to have recovery plans in place for within one year of a species being listed endangered and within two years for a species being listed as threatened.

**SILVICULTURE-PRIVATE AND INDUSTRIAL LANDS**  
(Natural Resources)

*Outcome:*  
*Sustainable environment*

What does the measure tell us?

The sustainability of the provincial wood supply can be managed through an effective silviculture program. This measure tells us the level of silviculture activity reported by wood buyers as a percentage of the amount of silviculture activity required under government's Forest Sustainability Regulations. A percentage of 100 means that the level of silviculture activity reported equals the amount of silviculture activity required.

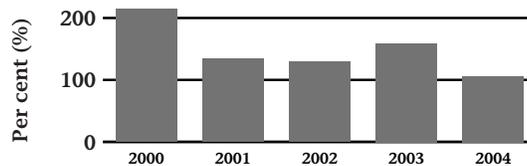
Where are we now?

During 2004, 16.6 million silviculture credits were required, and 17.5 million credits were reported. As a result, completed silviculture was 106 per cent of the required amount. The ratio of silviculture work reported as a percentage of the amount required was especially high in 2000 and 2003 due to a phase-in of requirements when regulations were first implemented and a one-time adjustment to reflect changes to regulations in 2003.

Where do we want to be?

Our overall goal is to ensure that the silviculture work taking place each year continues to meet the amount of silviculture work required under the regulations.

***Silviculture Activity Carried Out as a Percentage of Activity Required***  
2000 to 2004



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.



**Annual Accountability**

# Government Services

## Priorities for 2004–2005

Improving the quality of life for Nova Scotians includes improving the quality of the services they receive, including government services.

During 2004–2005, government moved to attract more and more highly skilled people to government to serve Nova Scotians.

The people we attract and retain are an economic development issue as well as a service issue. We must manage our human resources wisely to ensure the future prosperity of this province.

In 2004–2005, the province introduced our first-ever human resource strategy to build a diverse, supportive, learning organization and to be a preferred employer that will make a positive difference in the lives of Nova Scotians, through skill, commitment, and accountability.

During the year, government also introduced new rules governing the way third-party agencies manage and hold themselves accountable to the public they serve on behalf of government.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations improved convenience to individuals and businesses by expanding the licences and payment options available online. Government is also experimenting with organizing online information by topic rather than by department or program, to make it easier for people to handle significant events in their lives, such as starting a business or having a baby.

Government made improvements in 2004–2005 in the way we collect and manage government information and manage payroll and human resources. Concurrently, case-management practices were improved at the Department of Community Services to heighten quality of service to the 165,000 Nova Scotians who come to them as clients each year from all walks of life.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Corporate Human Resources Strategy**

*The government will complete a corporate human resources (HR) strategy in 2004–2005 to ensure that high-quality programs and services for Nova Scotians are delivered by skilled, dedicated, and responsive public servants now and in the future. The five-year plan will address such issues as retirements and recruitment pressures from other employers. Specific work will be done on recruitment, diversity, healthy-workplace initiatives, and opportunities for continuous learning.*

(Public Service Commission)

To prepare the HR strategy, the Public Service Commission (PSC) conducted consultations across the public sector throughout the province and also studied practices in other jurisdictions. In March 2005, deputy ministers approved the resulting corporate plan for the development of human resources within government.

**PRIORITY:**  
**2004 Employee Survey**

*The government will analyse and release the results of the first comprehensive survey of Nova Scotia government employees, conducted in February 2004. The Public Service Commission and departments will use the information to tailor policies and programs for employees.*

(Public Service Commission)

The government released the 2004 Employee Survey Report in August 2004. In winter 2004, the Public Service Commission began identifying top priorities from the survey that should be addressed in business planning. The PSC also assisted with an advisory group set up to monitor action plans across government that resulted from the survey.

An employee mini-survey took place in March 2005, as part of the government's commitment to regularly ask employees for input. The results of this survey were analysed and released to employees in July 2005.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Expanding e-Government Services**

*The government will continue to expand and promote electronic government services for Nova Scotians in 2004–2005, to make service to the consumer more convenient and consistent. Departments will evaluate opportunities for e-government services, such as electronic approval and payment systems. Government will also improve the Nova Scotia Business Registry and work with municipalities toward more efficient e-government.*

(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

The Nova Scotia Business Registry expanded during the year, with six new licences, permits, registrations, and/or certificates on offer online. These include fixed-roof accommodation licences, campground licences (Tourism, Culture and Heritage), and farm-registration licences (Agriculture and Fisheries).

The NSBR also brings business another convenience this year, through a new tender-notification system. Businesses can sign up through the business registry to be notified of tender opportunities by e-mail when the province posts a tender.

Service Nova Scotia (SNS) also expanded service-delivery channels and payment options in 2004–2005. For example, SNS partnered with the Department of Community Services to deliver the property-tax rebate program for seniors. As a result, seniors can now drop off program applications at Service Nova Scotia Access locations all across the province.

The department also implemented the GeoNova Portal and the lien-check service for those purchasing personal property such as automobiles.

In partnership with the Office of Economic Development and the Department of Education, the e-Service Group of Service Nova Scotia successfully delivered a new web-information service known as Government @ Your Service. The system is organized around events in the life of a person rather than around the offerings of a particular department or program.

For example, if you are having a baby or adopting a baby, starting a business, or have simply lost your wallet, this website is designed to give you the links you need to the provincial, federal, or municipal services that can help you manage that particular situation.

A similar partnership known as “the business room” created regionally based information sites for business that are available through various public library



websites. A provincial business room will be developed for common business information and service access during the 2005–2006 fiscal year.

The Municipal Services division of the department has been working on joint-venture opportunities with municipalities, to improve online access to government services. In 2004–2005, projects included a checklist on how to develop an e-council for any size of municipality (see SNSMR website, local government resource handbook). The development work for a template for municipal websites is complete, and an online parking-ticket program for the town of Wolfville and Cape Breton Regional Municipality will go live soon. All municipalities received a free online survey program and Google search engine in 2004–2005.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Client Service Delivery**

*In 2004–2005, the Department of Community Services will begin a coordinated effort to improve the delivery of services. The goal is to ensure that Nova Scotians have timely access to information and staff and that staff have the information, tools, and training they need to serve their clients.*

(Community Services)

In 2004–2005, the department focused on improving client access to staff by opening up rural offices previously closed at lunch time, simplifying telephone listings, and scheduling staff differently to cover off peak periods effectively. Projects nearing completion include new telephone and messaging practices and a new 1-800 toll-free service.

Public access to program information has also been improved, with updated client handbooks and brochures and a more user-friendly website about programs and services.

As well, a multi-year, integrated case-management (ICM) project provides better technology support and tools for staff. In 2004–2005, the department implemented the ICM solution in the employment support-services program area to provide

new tools for timely and informed decision making. The new system is currently being used by approximately 500 staff members across the province. In the meantime, work on the development of ICM tools for the Direct Family Support program is well under way.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Government Services to African Nova Scotians**

*The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA) will work with African Nova Scotian communities, government departments, agencies, and organizations in 2004–2005 to coordinate African Nova Scotian initiatives and develop strategies to improve government services to the African Nova Scotian community.*

(Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs)

By the very nature of its existence, the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs is improving government services to African Nova Scotians. Created in 2003, the office held the official opening of its new premises in October 2005.

New staff have been hired to review current policies for their effects on African Nova Scotians and for programs that could be developed with the community in mind.

Keeping the office in the forefront of the African Nova Scotian community and within government has been one of its key priorities during its initial start-up phase. Background information on the office and potential initiatives has been produced, along with a website presence and logo identity.

As part of ANSA's goal to form partnerships within government itself, the office partnered with the Voluntary Planning Board in November 2005 to further the work of the board's task force on heritage. This will allow the African Nova Scotian community to give the province a definitive declaration of what African Nova Scotians cherish most about their heritage. This, in turn, will help to provide decision makers with the information they need to make the important strategic decisions of the future. Efforts to partner with other departments, such as Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Justice, Health, Health Promotion, Education, and the Office of Immigration, are under way.

The office is also establishing primary reference groups to draw on specialized knowledge and experience within the African Nova Scotian community. These groups will strengthen the delivery of services to the community by helping government understand local concerns.



**PRIORITY:**  
**Information Management Framework**

*A corporate information management strategy will be developed for government-held information. This will ensure that information held by Nova Scotia is managed by all employees as a strategic resource, as integral to the conduct of government business as human or financial resources, with the appropriate protections and quality assurances in place.*

(Office of Economic Development)

To strengthen information management practices in all aspects of government's business, the Office of Economic Development is developing a comprehensive strategy to address issues such as governance, accountability, organization structure, information management handling practices, communications, and education.

As a result of jurisdictional consultations held across the country for this strategy, OED has been credited with helping to establish a pan-Canadian committee for information management, which was officially launched in May 2005.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Data Centre Services Project**

*The government will launch a project to examine all areas of government information technology (IT) operations. This is intended to identify areas in which to improve efficiency, reduce cost, and meet the changing demands for technology services in the public sector. This project will result in a long-term contract or contracts for data-centre services, slated for full implementation in early 2007.*

(Office of Economic Development; Transportation and Public Works)

The year ended March 31, 2005, was the first year of a three-year effort that will result in a new service-delivery model for information technology operational services across government. During the year, the Office of Economic Development got the project up and running, which included reviewing current operational practices and costs for IT services across all departments. Transportation and Public Works successfully negotiated an extension to the existing contract agreement with an outside party for managing the provincial data centre.

**PRIORITY:**

**Fair, Accessible Insurance**

*The government will examine and report on the use of gender as a factor in auto-insurance risk classification and on the rates and availability of other types of insurance.*

(Environment and Labour)

In November 2004, the government released reports prepared by the Nova Scotia Insurance Review Board on the use of gender as a risk-classification factor in determining automobile insurance rates and on the rates and availability of fire, other property, casualty, and liability insurance for homeowners, tenants, non-profit organizations, and small business.

The government is reviewing the industry task force report on property and casualty insurance as well as the study on gender. It is important that any changes be made in consultation with the industry to minimize cost in the market and reduce any negative impacts for businesses and consumers.

**PRIORITY:**

**SAP Program**

*Technology and information management systems across government and the public sector will improve in 2004–2005 with the ongoing implementation of SAP systems to give managers access to more HR and payroll information. Other SAP projects under development include a municipal-sector strategy including tax and water systems and a plan for the health sector and district health authorities.*

(Office of Economic Development; Finance; Health; Education; Public Service Commission)

In 2004–2005, SAP's tax and water billing functions were implemented within Cape Breton Regional Municipality, while the Halifax Regional Water Commission began to use SAP financials, and the Fisheries and Farm Loan Boards implemented SAP loan functionality. As well, the Department of Health reconfirmed its decision to use SAP as the enterprise application solution for financials, materials management, and human resources and payroll within the health system.



The SAP program-management office is working with government agencies and the municipal sector to determine if the SAP solution meets their business requirements as well.

**PRIORITY:**  
**Improving Third-party Entity Accountability**

*Government will further strengthen planning, budgeting, evaluation, and accountability processes in 2004–2005, focusing in particular on third-party entities.*

(Finance; Treasury and Policy Board)

Third-party entities, such as health authorities, school boards, housing authorities, and Crown corporations, collectively account for more than \$2.5 billion in taxpayer-funded yearly program spending.

The emphasis in 2004–2005, the first year of this multi-year initiative, was on strengthening financial reporting practices.

Consultation began with these organizations to determine their frequency of financial reporting, since legislated requirements vary from agency to agency. This work will continue in 2005–2006.

**PRIORITY:**  
**User Fee Policy**

*Government will continue developing a policy for departments to use to apply user fees consistently, fairly, and equitably.*

(Treasury and Policy Board)

A master list of user fees has been developed, with information updated to March 2005. Plans to transfer this information to a user-fee database will be developed in 2005–2006. A draft policy is under review, and a related costing methodology is being tested.

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## Government Services: Measuring Our Performance

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### **BUSINESS PLANS AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS**

(Treasury and Policy Board)

*Outcome:*

*Open and accountable government*

What does this measure tell us?

Business plans and accountability reports summarize the plans, accomplishments, and performance of departments and agencies. Departments, selected public service entities, and Crown corporations are required to submit annual business plans and accountability reports to Treasury and Policy Board and publish or post them on their websites. This measure indicates the percentage of government departments, public service votes, and Crown corporations submitting and publishing business plans and accountability reports each fiscal year.

Where are we now?

Business plans for 2004–2005 for all departments, Crown corporations, and required public service entities were

submitted to Treasury and Policy Board and published or posted to websites according to policy. Likewise, 2003–2004 accountability reports for all departments, required public service entities, and many Crown corporations were published or posted to websites.

Where do we want to be?

Our goal continues to be 100 per cent web access to the business plans and accountability reports of all departments, Crown corporations, and required public service entities.

### **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

*Outcome:*

*Accessible government*

What does the measure tell us?

Government continually strives to improve the accessibility and quality of programs and services in a cost-effective manner. Customer-satisfaction surveys measure several service-quality factors, including overall customer satisfaction. This measure includes customers who indicated they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall services they received at Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle locations. The exit surveys were performed in 2004–2005.



## Annual Accountability

### Where are we now?

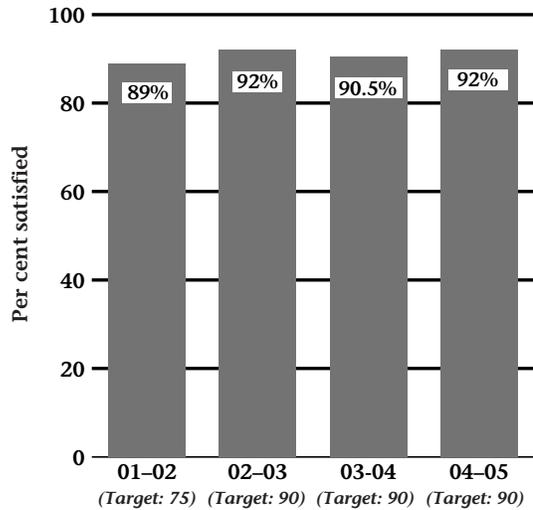
Government was able to achieve an overall level of customer satisfaction of 92 per cent for services offered through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, which exceeded our target of 90 per cent overall satisfaction.

### Where do we want to be?

Government will strive to maintain an overall satisfaction rate of 90 per cent.

### Customer Satisfaction

Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle Locations – 2001–2002 to 2004–2005



Source: Surveys conducted by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

## Appendix A: Website Locations for Departmental Accountability Reports, 2004–2005

The Provincial Finance Act requires the Government of Nova Scotia to publish an annual Government Accountability Report. By policy, government also requires departments, agencies, and Crown corporations in the consolidated financial statements to produce accountability reports of their own.

Both the Government Accountability Report and the Crown Corporation Accountability Reports are available to the public in hard copy or can be downloaded from the Government of Nova Scotia website: [www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca).

Complete accountability reports for departments and public service vote entities are published online. Department and public service entity accountability reports can be found through their specific websites at the addresses listed here.

### **URLs for Government of Nova Scotia Departmental Accountability Reports 2004–2005:**

Website addresses for each entity are listed below. Click on the Publications link to find the accountability report.

Agriculture and Fisheries  
[www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/)

Community Services  
[www.gov.ns.ca/coms/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/)

Education  
[www.ednet.ns.ca/](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/)

Energy  
[www.gov.ns.ca/energy/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/)

Environment and Labour  
[www.gov.ns.ca/enla/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/)

Finance  
[www.gov.ns.ca/fina/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/fina/)

Health  
[www.gov.ns.ca/health/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/)

Justice  
[www.gov.ns.ca/just/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/)

Natural Resources  
[www.gov.ns.ca/natr/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/)



## Annual Accountability

Service Nova Scotia and  
Municipal Relations

[www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/)

Tourism, Culture and Heritage

[www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/)

Transportation and Public Works

[www.gov.ns.ca/tran/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/tran/)

Aboriginal Affairs

[www.gov.ns.ca/abor/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/)

Communications Nova Scotia

[www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/)

Emergency Measures Organizations

[www.gov.ns.ca/emo](http://www.gov.ns.ca/emo)

Freedom of Information and  
Protection of Privacy Review Office

[www.gov.ns.ca/foiro/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/foiro/)

Human Rights Commission

[www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/)

Intergovernmental Affairs

[www.gov.ns.ca/iga/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/iga/)

Nova Scotia Utility and Review

[www.nsuarb.ca](http://www.nsuarb.ca)

Office of Economic Development

[www.gov.ns.ca/econ/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/)

Office of Health Promotion

[www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/)

Office of the Ombudsman

[www.gov.ns.ca/ombu/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/ombu/)

Public Prosecution Service

[www.gov.ns.ca/pps/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/pps/)

Public Service Commission

[www.gov.ns.ca/psc/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/)

Status of Women, Advisory Council

[www.gov.ns.ca/staw/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/staw/)

Sydney Tar Ponds Agency

[www.tarpondscleanup.ca/](http://www.tarpondscleanup.ca/)

Treasury and Policy Board

[www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/)

Voluntary Planning

[www.gov.ns.ca/vp/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/vp/)