

News release

For immediate release

Federal government, Nova Scotia and the West Hants Regional Municipality invest in community space

Windsor, Nova Scotia, May 17, 2024 — The Hants County Exhibition Arena is becoming more accessible after a combined investment of \$1.1 million from the federal and provincial governments and the West Hants Regional Municipality.

This was announced by MP Kody Blois, MLA Melissa Sheehy-Richard, Deputy Mayor Paul Morton, and Joel Rafuse, President of the Windsor Agricultural Society.

The arena, built in 1981, is the proud home of the Hants County Exhibition, the oldest agricultural fair in North America. With the construction of a new sports complex in the community, the arena no longer needs to also operate as a rink. Because of this, the Windsor Agricultural Society is transforming it into a vibrant community space that will continue to host the annual exhibition.

These upgrades are a part of the transformation and include new energy-efficient washrooms in the former hockey dressing rooms, a more accessible lobby, and more natural light with the addition of windows, resulting in reduced energy use during the day. The brighter and expanded main lobby will also provide a space to celebrate the rich heritage and history of the Hants County Exhibition with displays and memorabilia.

The space will be used for programs, such as skill development and recreational opportunities for youth.

Quotes

“The retrofit of the Hants County Exhibition Arena into an accessible space will be a wonderful project for the communities of West Hants. I want to congratulate the Windsor Agricultural Society for ensuring that the retrofitted arena will include an area to recognize and celebrate over 200 years of Hants County Exhibition history. This investment by the Government of Canada will help support the Hants County Exhibition Arena in continuing the tradition of hosting the oldest agricultural fair in North America for many more years to come.”

Kody Blois, Member of Parliament for Kings–Hants on behalf of the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

“Every community throughout our beautiful province has places that enrich their history. Since 1949, the Windsor Agricultural Society has operated the Hants County Exhibition, which is North America’s Oldest Agricultural Fair, along with many other events throughout the year. They also maintain the park grounds, which includes the arena building. The provincial government is committed to preserving and enhancing infrastructure that is important to communities. This

investment ensures the arena continues to support the annual agricultural exhibition and other events, while improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of this community space.”

Melissa Sheehy-Richard, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Hants West, on behalf of Allan MacMaster, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage

“The Council of the Region of West Hants is proud to support the INSPIRING work of the Windsor Agricultural Society. Investments into the Exhibition Arena will ensure a world-class space for all to enjoy that is accessible, vibrant, welcoming, and energy efficient. There is a reason why the oldest agricultural fair in North America takes place every year in Windsor, NS.”

His Worship Abraham Zebian, Mayor of the West Hants Regional Municipality

“The Windsor Agricultural Society is grateful for the support of our federal, provincial and municipal partners, recognizing the need for improvements to our well-used community facility. The upgrades will greatly improve the user experience at the Hants Exhibition Arena.”

Joel Rafuse, President of the Windsor Agricultural Society

Quick Facts

- The federal government is investing \$850,000 in this project through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program. The Government of Nova Scotia is contributing \$200,000 and the West Hants Regional Municipality is contributing \$50,000.
- The GICB program was created in support of Canada’s Strengthened Climate Plan: A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy. It is supporting the Plan’s first pillar by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and helping develop higher resilience to climate change.
- The program is providing \$1.5 billion over five years towards green and accessible retrofits, repairs or upgrades.
- At least 10% of funding is allocated to projects serving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, including Indigenous populations in urban centres.
- The application period for the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program is now closed.
- The funding announced today builds on the federal government’s work through the [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#) to create well-paying middle-class jobs, strengthen local economies, and build inclusive communities.

Associated Links

Green and Inclusive Community Buildings

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/gicb-bcvi/index-eng.html>

Strengthened Climate Plan

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/climate-plan-overview.html>

Federal infrastructure investments in Nova Scotia

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/prog-proj-ns-eng.html>

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