



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Gautreau retires after 44 years with Amherst's Operations Department

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Darrel Gautreau is looking forward to having more time to go fishing.

"Every day is going to be a Saturday," Gautreau said on Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 24 hours before his final shift with the Amherst Operations Department.

"I won't have to wait until the weekend to go fishing. I'll be able to pick any time during the week to go."

His final shift ended at noon on Friday, June 12, 2020, 44 years after his career with the department began. It was marked by his co-workers with a small celebration.

"Forty-four years is an incredible contribution and on behalf of the town, I want to thank Darrel for his many, many years of service," CAO Greg Herrett said. "I want to wish Darrell all the best in his well-deserved retirement."

Gautreau's first stint with the department came while he was a student.

"I worked here during the summer of 1973," he said. "I did miscellaneous stuff before going back



Darrel Gautreau retired after 44 years with the Town of Amherst's Operations Department. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)



to school at the Vocational School in Springhill, where I took the heavy-equipment repair course.”

That course helped him when he joined the department full time in April 1976, he said.

“I’m no mechanic, but it gave me a fair bit of understanding of heavy equipment.”

That was important because during those early years, he spent much of his time using heavy equipment to install storm sewers and build town streets.

“I remember building Regent and Rupert streets,” he said. “We prepared them, did all the manhole, valve and basin work. We brought gravel in and brought the roads up to grade before they were patched with asphalt. We also did a lot of asphalt curbing in those days.”

These days much of that type of work is contracted out to outside companies, which is one of the major changes Gautreau said he’s seen over the years.

Another is equipment.

“When I first joined, everything was standard. There wasn’t anything that was automatic. Today everything is automatic,” he said. “Back when I first started, we had an Allis-Chalmers front-end loader. It wasn’t a big one, but it did a lot of work. The loaders we have today are way better. The equipment in general got a lot better.”

As an example, he points out that in his early years, they used a front-end loader to remove snow from the downtown core. Today, they use a more efficient snowblower.

Over the years, Gautreau has worked in the street, water and sewer departments, and played a role in CUPE Local 1244, serving in almost all offices, including that of president for several years. He’s plowed roads during snowstorms, drove the streetsweeper during the summer and fixed broken water lines and sewers in the middle of the night.

“I won’t miss working those night shifts,” he said. “They can wear you down.”

While fixing a sewer can be nasty work, he said the worst part of his career was growing older.



One of the many jobs Darrel Gautreau had over his 44 years with the Town of Amherst's Operations Department was driving the street sweeper. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)



“You get a lot of aches and pains.”

It got so bad about five years ago, he thought he would have to quit, but he was introduced to glucosamine and “that helped me get through.”

The best part of the job, he said, was his co-workers. Pointing to a picture of the Operations staff from several years ago that hangs on the breakroom wall, Gautreau said, “I’ll miss the camaraderie. They’re a great bunch of guys.”

Looking back over the years, he said there were struggles at times, but “overall it’s been a good job. I have nothing to complain about.”

Besides fishing, he said he plans to spend more time with his family and doing some of the “personal chores I’ve put off for some time.”

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