



## MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2021049**

**DATE: 2 July 2021**

**RE: David Gautreau retires after 45 years with the Town of Amherst**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia – David Gautreau has fixed his last broken water main.**

That's because the 45-year veteran of the Town of Amherst's public works department is retiring. His last official day on the job is July 2, 2021.

"The first year I was here was in 1975, as a student," Gautreau said. "The boss told me to go back to school to get my Grade 12 and that he'd give me a call in the spring of the following year."

True to his words, the call came and Gautreau officially joined the town on June 8, 1976.

As a summer student, Gautreau did "just about everything and most of it was labour work," he recalled. It included a stint working at the old MacDonald Road landfill, where he picked up garbage that had blown into the woods around the dump.

"It was a bit of a test. They did this to see how new employees would react," Gautreau said.



DAVID GAUTREAU STANDS AMONG SOME OF THE MACHINES HE'S OPERATED OVER HIS 45-YEAR CAREER WITH THE TOWN OF AMHERST. HE OFFICIALLY RETIRED ON JULY 2, 2021. (TOM McCOAG/TOWN OF AMHERST)





He made a favourable impression because a few days into the job, his boss told him they had “other stuff for me to do.”

His first job when he was called back in the spring was cleaning up the many tree branches that had fallen throughout the winter.

“For the first few years, the first job back was always the tree cleanup,” Gautreau said. “You’d spend about two weeks doing that, then you’d do a couple of weeks of garbage cleanup and then it was sweeping streets for about two months.”

The street cleaning was done by hand.

“Four or five guys would go on street cleanup,” he recalled. “You’d sweep a section of the street, put the dirt in a pile, then repeat and do another section of the street. At the end of the day, a loader would come and you’d shovel the piles of dirt into the loader’s bucket.”

Today, street sweeping is carried out by a machine and a single driver.

Over the years, he did less street sweeping and more working with the various crews.

“I worked on every crew: streets, sewage, water,” Gautreau recalled. “Whatever we had on the go, I did. I helped make signs, fixed street lights and helped look after the old treatment plant that used to be behind the sod company.”

About 10 years into the job, he transferred to the water department, where he stayed for the rest of his career.

The biggest change he’s seen has been an improvement in the department’s equipment.

“When I first got here, we had an old loader that we couldn’t use on the roads. We just used it in the yard,” Gautreau remembered. “It hardly ever worked right. It had four-wheel steering and there was one set of the wheels that didn’t want to turn.”





As a result, it took some manoeuvring to load a dump truck “because the thing would go sideways on you. You’d have to give yourself about 10 feet in order to get the gravel in the back of the truck,” he added.

Today, he said the equipment is not only newer, they also have many safety features the old vehicles didn’t have.

Gautreau also spent about 35 years plowing town streets. He admits doing that is one of the things he will miss.

“That was the best part of the job,” he said. “The bigger the storm the more I liked it.”

His first snow plow was “as old as I was, but it worked good,” and like other pieces of equipment, the plows also improved over time.

“Because of the newer plows, it takes me about four or five hours to do my section instead of six or seven,” Gautreau said.

The storms in recent years have become less fierce.

“A few years back, when you got done your section, it would already be filled with about two feet of snow. Now, you’re lucky if you get two feet of snow over 12 hours.”

Gautreau said he’ll also miss his co-workers.

“Any job can be fun if you have the right group, and over the years, I’ve had the right group,” he said. “It’s like a big family.”

He figures he will keep in contact with many of his co-workers, because several of them live within easy walking distance of his home.

What he won’t miss is fixing broken water mains at -25 degrees.

“On those days, you either want to be in the machine, where it’s warm or down in the hole because it’s actually warmer there. You don’t want to be the guy on the bank,” he added, with a chuckle.





As for retirement, Gautreau expects to be busy. He has a parttime job with Campbell's Funeral Home. He also expects there will be many family projects at his home, cottage or children's homes that he'll be asked to tackle.

"I don't think I'll have to worry about looking for stuff to do because I think I will have enough people looking for me."

**-30-**

Direct enquiries to:  
Tom McCoag,  
Corporate Communications Officer  
902-694-6265  
[tmccoag@amherst.ca](mailto:tmccoag@amherst.ca)

