

CAPE BRETON MINERS' MUSEUM

Company store, house reopened

Over \$150,000 spent to renovate two buildings in Glace Bay's Miners' Village

ERIN POTTIE
CAPE BRETON BUREAU✉ epottie@herald.ca
🐦 @cbnewsreporter

Its vision for the future remains a work-in-progress, but for now the Cape Breton Miners' Museum is welcoming back two wood-framed buildings that tell the story of life in a coal mining town.

Staff have reopened the company house and company store, which are among four buildings located at the museum's Miners' Village.

Museum executive director Mary Pat Mombourquette said the two buildings were closed three years ago because there was little money to hire tour guides or complete repairs.

Since taking over at the Glace Bay tourism destination in August 2013, Mombourquette said she made it her mission to restore the buildings.

"There was a lot of work that needed to be done before we could sort of open them up to the public once again. It was really one of my top priorities to make sure that our visitors got the full experience of the Cape Breton coal mining culture, so I worked my tail off to find money so we could open those this summer."

Their location near the Atlantic Ocean didn't help matters, as high winds had blown shingles off roofs, while salt water contributed to the deterioration of door casings and window frames.

With the final bill yet to be tallied, it is believed the museum has spent upwards of \$150,000 to renovate the two buildings.

Commonly referred to as the "pluck me" store, Mombourquette said the company store illustrates to visitors the fundamental flaw in having underpaid miners purchase their supplies from the mining companies.

Part of the problem, she said, was that the company could charge miners top dollar for essentials.

"All their food items, their clothing items, their fuel and



Larissa Anthony of the Cape Breton Miners' Museum in Glace Bay welcomes visitors to the museum's newly reopened company store on Tuesday. STEVE WADDEN

A lot of people don't realize what the coal company built for them and how they lived. It's where you get a sense of our history and the living conditions and all that.

Wish Donovan retired miner

kerosene, everything that a miner needed — the necessities or the luxuries — they were all purchased through the company store and they had no other options to purchase them anywhere else."

According to the museum's website, there were eight coal companies operating in Cape Breton in 1873, with miners paid between 80 cents to \$1.50 per day, while wages for boys were much lower.

Two eras and two economies are depicted inside the museum's company house, including the life of a typical miner around the year 1850.

The building's other half depicts the home of a mine worker who is a little higher up on the mining hierarchy, such as the underground supervisor.

As part of their efforts to revamp the museum, Mombourquette said staff are now looking to the future, but she said they haven't really decided on what the future vision is for the museum.

"Whatever we do in the future (it's) going to be about celebrating our culture."

Part of the discussion will centre on a closed building which depicts a stable and paddock for pit ponies that were used in hauling coal from the mines.

Wish Donovan, who is one of five retired miners who act as tour guides, said he's thrilled with the return of the two museum offerings.

"That's very important to our heritage here in Cape Breton — to the mining communities. And a lot of people don't realize what

the coal company built for them and how they lived," said Donovan.

"It's where you get a sense of our history and the living conditions and all that."

Having worked underground for 32 years, Donovan has spent more than a decade teaching others about life as a miner.

"There's not too much that we can't answer; in fact, we're from Cape Breton, we can answer it," he said with a laugh.

"We get people from all over the world and we get a chance to meet people and hear their stories as well."

Popular summer offerings at the museum include its restaurant and Tuesday evening performances by Cape Breton's coal mining choir, The Men of the Deeps.

Concerts on the Dock unofficial kickoff to Action Week festival

TOM AYERS
CAPE BRETON BUREAU✉ tayers@herald.ca
🐦 @TomAyers2262

SYDNEY — Live music is returning to the dock at the Sydney marine terminal to unofficially kick off the Cape Breton Regional Municipality's annual Action Week festival.

Those who miss the former Rock the Dock concerts on the harbourfront will be able to experience an upgrade as Martin Entertainment launches Concerts on the Dock with several headline acts Aug. 1 and Aug. 2.

"It's two big nights with four big headliners," said promoter Donald Ferguson.

The first night, Blue Rodeo and Alan Doyle of Great Big Sea will take the stage, along with Cape Breton's Carleton Stone and the sketch-comedy troupe Four Men and a Tub.

Saturday night's lineup features hits by the Orchestra — former 1970s and '80s rockers Electric Light Orchestra, minus the original lead singer, Jeff Lynne — and the Bruce Guthro Band. Also performing will be Glace Bay up-and-comers Highway 125 and Dylan Guthro.

Like the former Rock the Dock event, which ceased in 2012, the concerts are not officially sanctioned by the municipality's Action Week organizing committee.

They run rain or shine on the Steve Kavanagh stage and the dock will be separated into a family zone and a beer garden.

However, the Concerts on the Dock will feature great sound as the headliners are currently on tour with all of their own gear, said Ferguson.



Alan Doyle will be among several artists performing at the Sydney marine terminal in August.

"These bands have specific requirements for sound boards and mixing boards," he said. "They bring in their own sound, sound guy; everything has to be to their specifications."

"We just need the weather. The summer's been turning out pretty good the last couple of weeks, so knock on wood that we'll have a good weekend."

Tickets are available at the Centre 200 box office and Cape Breton Rolling Phones locations, or from www.tickets.capebreton.ca.

Meanwhile, Action Week events have been finalized, but the website and brochures won't be ready until later this week, said Carolyn Markotich, the municipality's program co-ordinator.

Events and activities will be posted at www.actionweek.com and free brochures are usually available at the municipal office and are distributed to businesses around the region.

The Concerts on the Dock are not technically part of Action Week, which runs Aug. 2 to 10, but they fall at the beginning of the festival that runs for nine days

every summer.

Organizers often joke that Action Week is nine days long because seven days aren't enough to contain all of the activities.

The municipal committee that oversees Action Week organizes about 15 events that include busking and music on the boardwalk, dances, picnics, a princess tea and the main fireworks that finish the festival with a bang.

At the same time, numerous community organizations host sports tournaments, family and neighbourhood reunions, theatre and cultural events, meals and children's games.

The Cape Breton Bike Rally also falls on Action Week's opening weekend, with hundreds of motorcycle riders expected to take part in activities of their own.

Markotich said many former Cape Bretoners plan their summer vacations around Action Week.

"There's always a lot of people who come home for Action Week," she said. "It's a good week to come home because you're here, your family is here and there's tons of stuff for them to do."

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ROYALTIES

said in an interview Tuesday the royalty fees are so small it's almost meaningless for artists, especially new acts.

"At a certain point only the really huge musicians are going to profit from that," said Plaskett.

"You just don't get paid from the recorded material anymore; you have to make money from the live shows or maybe the licence from your song being used in a commercial."

Now the group representing musicians has filed for a judicial review of Tariff 8 in the Federal Court of Appeal.

Re:Sound, the not-for-profit that represents the rights of performers, says the copyright board set its tariffs "in complete isolation of international rate standards."

The society argues these rates will have "disruptive and devastating effects" on the industry. The other parties, a slew of Canadian broadcasters, have not yet responded to the court filing.

In its decision, the board found American rates are not a fair comparison. The American system is intended to replicate a competitive market outcome, but it also includes unique factors.

The American regime includes a "promotional value" of airplay and is designed to prevent reducing record sales. Neither of these views are in play in Canada.

Artists in Canada make much more money from radio royalties, largely because the radio industry is massive compared to the burgeoning online streaming industry. In 2011, radio stations paid \$56 million in music royalties.

But there is no straight comparison between radio and streaming fees. Radio stations pay royalties not per song, but as a percentage of gross revenue — up to 4.4 per cent — which are then paid out to artists through a formula that calculates several factors.

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Joel Plaskett

Tariff 8 applies to "non-interactive" or "semi-interactive" streaming sites. An online radio site or playlist site like Songza, where a person's musical tastes affect their playlists, fall under Tariff 8.

YouTube and sites like Rdio are exempt because listeners pick each song they listen to. Those sites negotiate their fees directly with record labels.

Tariff 8 would also apply to Pandora, one of the most popular music sites in the United States. Pandora has not yet entered Canada, saying it was waiting for the royalties issue to be resolved.

Last month, Pandora CFO Mike Herring told an investor conference that Tariff 8 set the groundwork for his company to do business in Canada.

"We have to solve the publishing side now. But we're a big step closer to being in Canada," said Herring.

The copyright board projects Pandora, with three billion plays per year, would pay \$306,000 in royalties in Canada. The CBC would pay about \$36,000.

The board expects Songza, with 70 million plays per year, would pay \$7,140 in fees. In total, it projects Tariff 8 will bring in \$500,000 in royalties annually if Pandora does enter the Canadian market. Because the case has been tied up for so long, Tariff 8 actually only applies retroactively to the years 2009 to 2012. But the rates for 2013 and beyond will be based off of this first decision.