

# Liberal Party Policy Platform

*September, 2011*

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**OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS**, the Government I have had the privilege to lead has achieved a great deal.

*In the midst of a global economic downturn, Prince Edward Island held its own - and moved forward. Economically, we have been exceptionally resilient. In difficult times, this is a source of great pride.*

*Socially, we have also moved forward.*

*Our Government introduced full-day kindergarten to the public school system and has successfully encouraged a growing number of Islanders to attend post-secondary institutions.*

*Also of note is the fact that we now have a record number of physicians serving on the Island and we've made major strides in enhancing our health care facilities across the province.*

*But there is more to be done. Our plans moving forward reflect Liberal confidence in the Island and our belief in a unified, constructive and deliberate approach to Government.*

*This document provides information on the complete Liberal Party Policy Platform for the upcoming election. In addition to details of the new investments, initiatives and programs we plan to implement, the document outlines the costs associated with these measures. As you will see, we are not only able to continue the work we have already started during our first term in office, we are able to accomplish this while continuing to hold the line on taxes.*

*I am proud of what our team has already accomplished. Moving forward, I believe we can do even more.*

*On October 3rd, I ask for your support.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RAL', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

## **MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

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## HEALTH CARE



***Providing high-quality health care services for Islanders has always been the top priority of the Liberal Government.***

*Important investments have been made across the health care spectrum. As a result, Island health care is increasingly responsive to the needs of Islanders.*

*The Liberal commitment to health care will deepen in the years ahead - so that the task of building a highly responsive system can continue.*

### **Moving Forward**

Over the past four years, a solid foundation for an increasingly modern, responsive and precise health care system has been built.

- The Island now has a record number of physicians - and the current complement is 218, up from 196 in 2007.
- Young doctors are now being trained on Prince Edward Island - as a result of the Family Medicine Residency Program. In 2012, a number of the doctors in our program have committed to practice on the Island.
- After years of neglect under the previous administration, our network of seniors' manors is being replaced and revitalized.
- Ambulance coverage has been dramatically improved with an increase of \$2.7 million in ambulance services since 2007 and expanded ambulance coverage throughout the Island.
- Investments in home care have accelerated rapidly - so that more Islanders can enjoy the company of family, friends and neighbors, while taking advantage of the services of highly-qualified health care professionals. Home care spending is up by 70 percent over the last 4 years.

- Our Island investment in medications has grown by 46 percent and 149 medications have been added to the public formulary in the last four years.

The task of rebuilding the fundamentals of health care took a great deal of work and effort. The goal now is to make sure Islanders get the right services at the right time.

In keeping with that goal, the following proposals are being made to Islanders for their consideration:

***Enhanced Doctor Recruitment:***

Over the past several years, the number of physicians practicing on Prince Edward Island has risen to 218 from 196. This increase was due to a concerted effort to recruit doctors to our province. One of the most significant initiatives supporting this task was securing medical training seats at both Dalhousie and Memorial Universities. Currently, Prince Edward Island has access to 4 training seats annually at Memorial, in Newfoundland. In the future, Island students who attend Memorial in provincially sponsored medical seats will be required to sign an agreement to practice in the province for 5 years. In addition, a number of doctors in the PEI Residency Program have committed to come to practice on the Island in 2012.

***New Investments in Primary Care Health Centres and Health Care Providers:***

As the health care field evolves, there are new opportunities for more precise and responsive care. A Liberal Government will continue to invest in community-based primary health centres across the Island. A key element of these centres is the expanded role that Nurse Practitioners and Nurses play in providing patient care. The proposed new investment of \$9 million over the next four years will result in expanded health services for Islanders. It will support the hiring of 25 new health care providers including Nurse Practitioners, Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses. In addition, Liberals will enhance the role that pharmacists play as part of the primary care team. Funds will also support the expansion of the network of primary health centres, including a new one in Morell.

***Increased Investments in Nurse Training:***

Access to highly trained nurses is a cornerstone of the health care system. In 2011 over 90 per cent of the nurses that graduated from Holland College and the UPEI School of Nursing chose to stay and work on the Island. Liberals are supporting the launch of a new Nurse Practitioner program at the UPEI School of Nursing this fall along with new programs for Registered Nurses to get advanced training in acute care and emergency

care settings. In addition, we will work with Holland College to expand enrollments in the Licensed Practical Nurses Program.

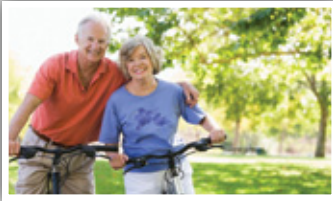
### ***Reduced Wait Times through Expanded Surgical Capacity and Ambulatory Care:***

While Islanders are seeing increasingly shorter health care wait times, more can be done to enhance access, particularly as it relates to surgeries. Liberals will fund the establishment of a 5th Operating Room at the QEH, providing access to an additional 1200 surgeries per year, further reducing wait times for Islanders.

### ***Moving Forward - On A Record of Success***

- Investments in the health care system have increased from less than \$380 million under the former Conservative administration - to more than \$530 million under the Liberal Government
- Long-term care has improved dramatically - with modern and responsive facilities for seniors being completed in Souris and Alberton. Work is scheduled to begin in Summerside, Montague and Charlottetown between 2012 and 2014
- Investments in medications have increased by 46 per cent since 2007. This investment has included the elimination of fees paid for diabetic strips by insulin-dependant Islanders. Further, an additional 149 medications have been added to the public formulary since 2007
- The introduction of the Family Medicine Residency Program has seen 10 young physicians complete their medical training on Prince Edward Island. Four of these young doctors have signed agreements to practice on the Island for 2012
- A Stroke Care Unit has been added to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and dialysis services have been significantly expanded at the Prince County Hospital
- A new Palliative Care Home Drug Program was introduced to enhance quality end of life services for Islanders and their families
- New investments have been made in Primary Care Clinics throughout the Island to improve patient access to health care and reduce pressure on emergency rooms
- Wait times have been reduced and Islanders enjoy the lowest wait times in Atlantic Canada in a number of areas. For example, the wait time for mammograms has been virtually eliminated

## SENIORS



***More than ever, today's Island seniors are enjoying healthy and productive lives in their communities.***

*However, the Liberal Team recognizes that an aging population means that government services have to evolve.*

*For the past several years, that evolution has focused on two realities: First, government can do more to ensure the independence of Island seniors. Second, supports must be dependable when seniors require services from government.*

*The Liberal commitment to Island seniors is to continue to improve and develop services and programs.*

### **Moving Forward**

The Liberals have outlined a two-pronged plan for seniors.

The first part of the plan focuses on the need to promote independence among seniors. This includes opportunities for employment and community involvement. The second part of the plan is a continuation of efforts to ensure the best possible services for seniors in our provincial facilities, and in programs that assure both comfort and health.

***The following specific proposals are being made:***

#### ***1) Enhancing Independence:***

##### ***Expand the Seniors Emergency Home Repair Program:***

Before the 2007 election, the former Conservative administration callously slashed this very important program - which assists seniors to stay comfortably in their own homes for as long as possible. The reinstatement of the program was one of the first priorities of the new Liberal Government in 2007. Since it was brought back, 1300 seniors' homes have been repaired. The Liberal goal is to make this program more beneficial to Island seniors. Liberals will contribute 50 per cent of the cost of eligible repairs to a maximum of \$2000, up from the previous limit of \$1500.

***Expand the Learning Elders Arts Program (LEAP):***

Since 2008, more than 1,500 seniors have participated in LEAP - which enriches the lives of Island seniors through the arts. Professional artists teach disciplines like visual arts, dance, music and theatre. Due to its value and popularity, program funding will increase 50 per cent in 2012.

***Enhanced Educational Opportunities for Seniors:***

The Seniors Federation has a training program called "Computing for Seniors" that teaches seniors how to use a computer and the Internet. The Liberals will provide additional funding to the Seniors Federation to expand this worthwhile program, allowing more seniors to learn how to stay connected to their families.

***Increased Access to Medications:***

Since 2007, investments in medications for Islanders have increased by 46 percent. Reductions to the Seniors Co-Pay have saved Island seniors almost \$1 million per year. Liberals will invest more in medications for Island seniors, including an addition \$1 million over the next 2 years to assist Islanders dealing with high cost drugs.

***Medication Review for Seniors in Long-Term Care:***

Many seniors require multiple medications to maintain health. A review of medications will be provided to seniors living in long term care. A Medication Review Program is proposed to begin in 2012.

***Expanded Home Care:***

Home care is a vitally important and growing part of Island health care. First and foremost, the program allows more Island seniors to stay in the company of family, friends, neighbors and community for longer periods of time. Increases to the program have been steady since 2007 - and the Liberals are now proposing to increase total investment in this area by \$4 million by 2015.

***Home Care Renovation Grants:***

Many families and couples would like the option to care for a family member at home, but lack suitable space or facilities and can't afford the cost of renovations. As part of the Liberals' home care funding commitment, qualifying homeowners can access up to \$5000 to undertake renovations required in order to enable a family member to stay in the home.



## ***2) Improved Supports for Seniors:***

### ***New Long-term Care Beds:***

Many Island seniors will require long-term care. Over the last five years, the number of beds available has grown to 1,052 from 975. Over the next 4 years, 75 new beds will be made available, giving our Island seniors among the lowest wait times for long-term care in Canada.

### ***Manor Replacement and Seniors Housing:***

Many seniors living in our public manors have benefitted significantly by the Liberals' commitment to replace old long-term care facilities. The new manors in Souris and Alberton will be completed this Fall and construction is underway in Summerside, Charlottetown and O'Leary. Moving forward, new construction will also take place in Montague to replace Riverview Manor. In addition, new investments will be made in seniors housing and seniors care, including a new facility in Murray Harbour.

### ***Dedicated Palliative Care Centre:***

A \$5.6 million dedicated palliative care centre will be built with expanded services for Islanders in need and their families. The facility will be completed by 2013 and will see an additional \$800,000 in yearly operating support to promote quality end of life care for Islanders. In addition, palliative care services will be expanded to other locations in the province.

### ***Moving Forward - On a Record of Success***

After years of neglect, the Liberal Government has done a great deal to repair and improve the facilities and services offered to Island seniors.

For example, approximately \$70 million is being invested in Island long term care facilities. Two will be completed this Fall: Colville Manor in Souris and Maplewood Manor in Alberton. Summerset Manor in Summerside will be complete in 2012; expansion to the Margaret Stewart Ellis Home at Community Hospital in O'Leary will be complete in 2012; Charlottetown's Prince Edward Home is slated for 2013 - and Riverview Manor will be replaced in 2015.

***Other specific examples of Liberal commitment to seniors include:***

- Elimination of emergency ambulance fees
- Reduction of the medications portion of the Seniors Drug Program by 25 per cent - saving seniors roughly \$1 million per year
- Total investments in drug programs have increased by 46 per cent
- The Palliative Home Care Program has provided medications to nearly 200 Islanders since 2008

## **EARLY LEARNING AND K-12**



***Offering young Islanders the best possible tools to excel in a changing world is the goal of the Liberal plan for the education system.***

*Our future as a province is fundamentally tied to our ability to educate ourselves - and this understanding has guided the Liberal Government at every step.*

*Over the past four years, the foundation of the educational system has been re-built and improved from the ground up. For example, the introduction of kindergarten as a full-day program in the public school system is the most significant initiative to take place in Island education in decades.*

*Similarly, the PreSchool Excellence Initiative revitalized the early childhood sector - by ensuring a system based on accessibility and quality.*

*Within the K-12 system, the Provincial Government has accentuated the role of educators - and Prince Edward Island now has one of the lowest student-teacher ratios in Canada.*

### **Moving Forward**

While proud of its record of success in rapidly building a modern new educational system for Island children, Liberals believe there is much more to be done.

The structure is now in place to ensure that the education system is now better capable of responding to new opportunities - and many of these are being proposed in the 2011 provincial election.

***The specifics of the Liberal Plan include:***

***Extend the Best Start Program:***

The Best Start Program offers important support to hundreds of young Island families. By offering assistance to young families, Best Start has helped thousands of young Island children. Prior to 2008, the program was offered only to families with children younger than 18 months. That was extended to 2-years - and the current Liberal proposal is to lengthen the eligibility period to 3-years.

***Expand Access to Early Learning:***

Currently, there are 46 Early Years Centres across Prince Edward Island. These centres offer a high-quality educational environment for young Islanders by focusing on a common curriculum and dedicated educators. Moving forward, investments in four new Early Years Centers will be made, with an emphasis on under-served areas. Spaces in the Early Years Centres will grow to 2,150, up from 1,775 in May of 2011. Liberals will also maintain the existing funding to the non Early Years Centres.

***Increased Spaces for Infant Care:***

Increasing the number of spaces in our early learning system for infant care is also a key priority for the Liberals. Since the launch of the Pre-School Excellence Initiative, infant care spaces have more than doubled, going from 102 to 230. New investments of \$850,000 over four years will be made to expand infant care.

***Improve Access to Educational Professionals:***

Many young Islanders require special supports to excel in the educational system. Over the past four years, investments in access to school psychologists, speech language pathologists, audiologists and occupational therapists has increased. While these investments have contributed to a more responsive educational environment, there will be a further emphasis on these areas. If this proposal is accepted, it is anticipated that investment in this sector will grow by \$500,000 over the next four years.

### ***New Investments in Resource Teachers to Improve Student Outcomes:***

While the new Pre-School Excellence Initiative and the inclusion of kindergarten in public schools will improve student performance in the years to come, there is a need to direct resources to older students. New resource teachers will be hired into the system to provide assessment and remedial supports to children requiring extra help. A priority will be placed on directing support to high school math and literacy. In addition, existing resource teachers will be provided with expanded professional development opportunities through the University of Prince Edward Island.

### ***Expanded Applied Technology Programming:***

The Liberals propose to expand applied technology training aimed at our high school students, which will better integrate young Islanders into existing skills- and technology-oriented employment - and post-secondary education. This expanded programming will form an opportunity for young Islanders - and will be available across the province - at every high school. The program will be developed in close consultation with Holland College, College Acadie I.P.E. and local industries to ensure that training matches opportunity. It will also build upon existing initiatives. The target date for implementation of the new and expanded program is September 2013.

### ***National Leadership in Student-Teacher Ratios:***

The current Island student-teacher ratio is in the top tier of Canadian provinces. In spite of declining enrolment, the Liberals plan to maintain or improve that ratio - and ensure that our leadership position remains intact.

### ***Moving Forward - On a Record of Success***

The Liberal plan for education over the last several years has focused on the needs of Island children and their families - while supporting dedicated educators.

### ***The investments have been significant:***

- Investment in early learning grew from \$5.4 million in 2009 to \$8.6 million in 2010
- Funding for kindergarten is now \$10.9 million
- Annual grants to school boards has increased from \$159 million in 2007 to \$193 million in 2010
- Budget for Education and Early Childhood Development now over \$227 million

- New school construction included the new Montague Regional High School, Stratford Elementary School and École St-Augustin in Rustico

### ***Supporting Island Children and Families:***

- The Best Start Program was expanded to include children up to 2-years - and will now increase to 3-years
- In 2011, roughly 1,400 Island children graduated from the first year of full-day, public kindergarten
- New school buses were purchased - after years of neglect by the previous administration

### ***Supporting Island Educators:***

- In spite of declining enrolment, the number of teachers has been maintained
- The number of Educational Assistants has risen to 340 - from only 264 in 2007
- Wages of certified early childhood educators has risen from \$12 to \$15 per hour
- Over 250 smart boards have been installed in high schools
- More than 2,500 new computers installed in intermediate and high schools

## **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**



***Ensuring access to high-quality educational programs is a bedrock commitment of the Liberal Government.***

*Over the past several years, a great deal has been accomplished - and a record number of young Islanders are now attending Holland College, Collège Acadie î.-P.-É and the University of Prince Edward Island.*

*The Liberal commitment to higher education is built on the fundamental understanding that a well-educated Island will thrive and prosper in a modern and changing world.*

### **Moving Forward**

During the 2011 election, the Liberal Party is eager to discuss its record of success in post-secondary education.

***Liberal***

The foundation for further success has been built - and Liberals believe their new proposals will significantly enhance access to the benefits of higher education for a new generation of Islanders.

***The following specific proposals are being made:***

***Moving Forward - Increasing the George Coles Bursary:***

Shortly after the 2007 provincial election, the Liberal Government introduced the George Coles Bursary - which offers \$2,000 per year to Island students attending a provincial post-secondary institution.

The bursary has been extremely successful and has contributed to increases in enrolment.

In essence, the first George Coles Bursary was designed to enhance access and attendance at post-secondary institutions by easing the financial burden of the first year on students and families.

The new George Coles University Graduate Scholarship will reward that commitment to education - by providing a further \$2,000 bursary to final year students in programs equal to or exceeding four years.

The target date for introduction of this enhancement to Island students is 2012 - so all Islanders currently enrolled in the final year of a four year degree program will be eligible for this scholarship award.

*In addition, the first year George Coles Bursary will be increased by \$200 to reflect cost of living increases.*

***Moving Forward - The Interest-Free Island Student Loan Program:***

Many Islanders require student loan assistance to pursue a higher education. While measures like the George Coles Bursary, Island Skills Awards and Island Student Awards significantly reduce financial burdens, loans can cause significant financial stress after graduation.

In keeping with its commitment to promote post-secondary programs, Liberals are proposing to eliminate provincial student loan interest - beginning in 2012.

***Moving Forward - Keeping Island Graduates on the Island:***

Of course, many graduates will choose to work elsewhere in Canada - or around the world. However, Liberals recognize the contribution many of these graduates could make to the Island.

In an effort to retain these Islanders, the Liberals are proposing to convert all existing provincial student loans to interest free status for Islanders who remain or return to Prince Edward Island. This program will begin in 2012.

***Moving Forward - "Get the Degree" Initiative:***

There are Islanders who started post-secondary education but for a variety of different reasons were unable to complete their studies. For those who have completed two or more years of post-secondary studies, the Liberals are proposing to allow mature Island students to complete post-secondary programs while remaining eligible for Employment Insurance benefits.

***Moving Forward - Enhanced Access to Post Secondary Programs for Rural Students:***

The Liberals are committed to expanding access to post-secondary education for all Islanders. The New Holland College Campus in Alberton is a clear expression of that commitment. Since 2007, we have seen the number of students attending post-secondary programs in rural communities increase by almost 80%.

To continue support for this positive trend, Liberals are committed to working with our post-secondary institutions to expand programs in rural communities and to ensure that students have access to funding support.

***Moving Forward - Pre-Apprenticeship Training and Employment in the Trades:***

Like many jurisdictions, the Island requires access to skilled workers in the trades. The Liberals want to create opportunities for young Islanders to explore the benefits and career options the trades offer.

In September of 2013, the Liberals will offer a Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway to Employment Program to assist 17-22 year olds with training, work placements, and GED upgrading to access entry level employment or future training in the trades.

### ***Moving Forward - Enhanced PSE Funding for Low-Income Island Families:***

In spite of many forms of provincial assistance, too many Islanders still view post-secondary education as too difficult to finance. Starting in 2013, the Liberals are proposing to assist children and families receiving the National Child Benefit Supplement to access Registered Education Saving Plan funding through a provincial contribution.

### ***Moving Forward - On a Record of Success:***

Elsewhere in Atlantic Canada, enrolment at post-secondary institutions has declined or stagnated. But not on the Island.

The plan initiated in 2007 by the Liberal Government was designed to encourage many more Islanders to attend post-secondary institutions - and it is working.

### ***The plan was built around three pillars:***

#### ***Individual Access for Islanders:***

For example, the George Coles Bursary provided more than \$4 million to 1,198 Island students in 2008-2009; Island Student Awards provided nearly \$1.5 million to 3,210 students and the Island Skills Award was provided to 1,385 Islanders representing an investment of nearly \$1.4 million.

#### ***Supporting Our Post-Secondary Institutions:***

An example of this has been the increases in operating grants to the University of Prince Edward Island.

In 2007/08, \$25.6 million was provided to the University as an operating grant. In the current year, that investment has grown to \$30.3 million.

Holland College has also benefitted from a high level of attention from the Liberal Government.

For example, the Holland College Centre for Applied Sciences is now complete. This \$17 million project will allow the College to double the number of students in programs like bioscience technology, environmental science technology and wildlife conservation technology. The new campus will also permit more students to enter programs like paramedicine and practical nursing.



### ***Supporting Access - Across the Island:***

An example of this is the new West Prince Campus of Holland College in Alberton. Now open, the new campus will allow young Islanders from West Prince to access Holland College's nationally renowned programs without long commutes or relocation.

Similarly, the province's commitment to the new Holland College campus in Summerside will increase access to programs - and help to beautify the City's waterfront.

In 2007, there were 113 students who accessed these and other programs from across the Island. Today that number has risen to 202.

## **AGRICULTURE**



***Economically and socially, agriculture is the most important industry on Prince Edward Island. Approximately 15 per cent of our province's Gross Domestic Product is derived from farming - and the sector is well-positioned for further sustainable growth in the years ahead.***

*Over the past four years, the economic role of agriculture has grown. This year the sector is expected to set a new record for total farm cash receipts at \$456 million. Further, total net income has risen by more than \$70 million since 2007.*

*While potato farming continues to dominate agriculture, new crops are beginning to play a much greater role. For example, the production of soybeans has increased fourfold since 2007, with an all-time record of 44,000 acres planted in 2007. This success has been complemented by increases in organic food, blueberries and other products.*

## **Moving Forward**

*Every Islander knows that our province grows some of the best food in the world. In turn, the world continues to demand the products we grow. In fact, agriculture and food products represent 60 per cent of the Island's total international exports.*

*Most of this success is due to the sector itself - which is increasingly innovative in its ability to move quality product from the field to the marketplace.*

*Over the past four years, the Liberal Government has done a great deal to support the sector in its efforts to modernize and thrive.*

***During the 2011 election, the Liberals are offering the following proposals to build on the agriculture sector's current success:***

### ***Moving Forward - Agri Insurance:***

*Crop insurance is a vital part of a farmer's risk management plan. Over the next 2 years, the Liberals are proposing to invest an additional \$2 million in crop insurance, bringing the level of industry coverage to an all time high of 85 percent, up from 56 per cent 2007.*

### ***Moving Forward - Land Development Corporation:***

*There comes a time when every farmer needs to look at transitioning his or her land to a new owner. The Liberals are proposing a Land Development Corporation that will purchase land from farmers and lease it back to other farmers under specific circumstances dealing with (1) transitioning from one family generation to the next, (2) assisting farmers to exit the sector, and (3) matching up farmers who want to sell with buyers. In turn, this will permit a new generation of farmers to enter the sector.*

### ***Moving Forward - Expanded Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Program:***

*Established in 2008, ALUS has rewarded those landowners for environmentally sustainable work on their land. For example, the program helps producers reduce soil erosion and stream siltation. Over the next four years, the Liberals are proposing to make \$4.75 million available to producers with innovative new initiatives designed to enhance environmental sustainability.*

### ***Moving Forward Together - Marketing Quality Agriculture:***

*Every Islander knows our agriculture sector produces the best food available. Over the past*

two years, the Department of Agriculture has invested \$800,000 into various marketing initiatives. Partnering with industry and other government agencies resulted in more than \$1.6 million of leveraged funds to showcase Island produce locally, nationally and internationally. Over the next four years, the Department of Agriculture will invest \$2 million, matched by industry, to further enhance marketing of Island agricultural products.

### **Moving Forward - Energy Cost Reductions:**

One of the highest costs associated with operating an agricultural operation is energy. While this year's Energy Accord has reduced electricity costs by an average of 14 per cent, many producers are exploring innovative new ways to further cut costs. Under the Agri-Flex Agreement, provincial spending on energy reduction initiatives will increase from \$500 thousand to \$900 thousand to support our farming community's efforts to reduce costs and promote agricultural stewardship for a total federal-provincial investment of \$2.25 million in 2013.

### **Moving Forward Together - New Agri-business Program:**

The Liberals are proposing to provide financial incentives to enable food processors and farmers in emerging sectors to gain access to appropriate technology or to enhance production capacity to increase the value of their products. In turn, this will assist the sector in product diversification. Over the next two years, \$1.5 million will be invested in new initiatives as part of the Federal Growing Forward initiative.

### **Moving Forward Together - Promoting the Organic Sector:**

Today, many consumers will pay a premium for organically grown food. This growth in demand has been mirrored by Island production: Over the past four years, the number of certified organic producers has more than doubled to 65 in 2010. Now, the Liberals are proposing to enhance support for the organic sector by facilitating the process for certification - and providing assistance to improve technology on organic farms.

### **Moving Forward - On a Record of Success:**

As worldwide demand for quality food products continues to rise, the prospects for the Island's agriculture sector are increasingly positive.

This year, it is expected that the sector will perform better than it ever has in history - with total farm cash receipts growing above \$450 million. There is also a great deal of interest in young Islanders entering the sector. For example, there are 115 Islanders enrolled in the Future Farmers Program - and expenditures in that area are now close to \$3 million.

### **Other indicators include:**

- *Blueberry production reached record production in 2010 - at 12.4 million pounds;*
- *The Canada - Prince Edward Island Stewardship Program was renegotiated in 2009 to provide assistance to conservation projects. Last year, 210 projects received nearly \$1 million;*
- *The Beef Industry Initiative has made payments of \$3.3 million to 458 producers since 2008;*
- *The Growing Forward Agreement with the federal government has seen \$24.6 million committed to projects that support innovation, research, food safety and environmental sustainability.*

## **JOBS AND THE ECONOMY**



***Over the past four years, the Prince Edward Island economy has grown increasingly diverse.***

*Building from strength, our province now has four significant economic pillars: agriculture, fisheries, tourism and non-traditional sectors, including biosciences, aerospace, financial services, and IT.*

- *This year, farm cash receipts will hit a new record - at more than \$450 million.*
- *Our seafood sector is the backbone of many of our rural communities and our products are the best in the world. We stand firmly behind this important sector as it deals with fluctuating prices and catches.*
- *The tourism sector now accounts for more than 7,400 full-time jobs - and innovative projects and events are magnifying the Island's reputation around the world.*
- *Non-traditional sectors, including bio-sciences, aerospace, financial services, and IT have truly emerged as the Island's fourth economic pillar - and now employ nearly 4650 Islanders in high-paying positions. This is an increase of 30 per cent since 2007.*

*As Islanders take advantage of new training and educational opportunities made available over the last four years, our economic growth is expected to continue. In fact, it is anticipated that our provincial Gross Domestic Product will pass the \$5 billion mark next year - a historic landmark in the growing confidence of our Island economy.*

## **Moving Forward**

By investing in our communities and the sectors that sustain them, the Liberal Government has offered individuals across our province the capacity to succeed in a changing world. At the same time, we have helped traditional sectors embrace innovation and enhance the value of their products. Similarly, the province has supported innovative new ideas in the four key sectors of our economy, which in turn has been partly driven by our increasingly well-educated workforce.

***In keeping with the need to continually grow our economy, the following specific proposals are being made:***

### ***Moving Forward Together - A New Graduate On-the-Job Training Program:***

This new program will be established in cooperation with the private sector - and offer 6-month on-the job training placements to graduates of Holland College, the University of Prince Edward Island and College Acadie.

### ***Moving Forward Together - A New Seafood Marketing and Development Agency:***

As global demand increases again for our world-class seafood products, the Liberals believe that a new effort must be made to enhance our presence in the marketplace. Therefore, a Provincial Seafood Marketing Agency with fisher, processor and government representatives take on the vital task of working with industry on new product development and showcasing our products to the world.

### ***Moving Forward Together - New Agri-business Program:***

The Liberals are proposing to provide financial incentives to enable food processors and farmers in emerging sectors to gain access to appropriate technology and enhanced production capacity to add value to their products through innovation. In turn, this will assist the sector in product diversification. Over the next two years, \$1.5 million will be invested in new initiatives in partnership with the federal Growing Forward Program.

### ***Moving Forward Together - Support for Marketing and Infrastructure for Tourism and Culture Events:***

The wealth of cultural activities across the Island is a growing source of provincial pride and a valuable component of our tourism product. While the Island's reputation in

these areas has grown, Liberals believe we can do more to showcase the best we have to offer. Therefore, \$1 million per year will be allocated over 4 years to support the infrastructure and marketing needs of our Regional Festival and Events.

***Moving Forward Together - Increase Access to Working Capital Loans and Innovation for Small Business:***

A new Entrepreneur Loan Program will expand access to working capital to 100 per cent of a maximum \$75,000 loan.

***Moving Forward Together - Rural Business Development Initiative:***

Liberals recognize that more must be done to diversify the economic base of our rural communities. Liberals will offer a combination of enhanced tax rebates, loans, labour incentives, rental/lease subsidies, and work force training to aggressively encourage new businesses to establish in rural communities that have undergone economic hardship because of a major business shutdown.

***Moving Forward Together - On A Record of Success***

The recent global recession tested virtually every economy in the world - and Prince Edward Island was no exception.

However, a significant amount of effort by the Liberal Government shielded the Island from the worst effects of the downturn.

In 2008, the Liberal Government of Prince Edward Island was the first in North America to respond to the growing threat of recession - and the historic Five Year Capital Plan was introduced.

This massive stimulus package achieved two important goals: First, the investments helped to revive much of our province's aging infrastructure after years of neglect under the previous administration. Second, the Capital Plan kept Islanders and Island businesses working.

In fact, the investments under the plan kept approximately 2,000 Islanders working since 2008.

Additionally, there was a great deal of work done between 2007 and late 2008 to prepare the provincial economy for a changing global landscape.

The Island Prosperity Strategy is based on a recognition that technology is becoming an important driver of the provincial economy. Therefore, new emphasis was placed on information/communications technology, biosciences, renewable energy and aerospace.

By accelerating investment in these areas, Prince Edward Island was uniquely positioned to take advantage of a rebound in the world economy. And each of these areas are expected to continue to play a larger and more prominent role in the Island economy in the years ahead.

Of course, the Liberal Plan for the economy also includes a continued commitment to educational programs. By encouraging economic diversification - while simultaneously providing new supports for training and education - the Liberal plan has always been built on this understanding: "Our best investments are in Islanders."

## FISHERIES



***The Island is fortunate to have the best seafood in the world available off its shores.***

*Whether it is our lobster, oysters or mussels, the products harvested by our fishing sector are recognized globally.*

*However, the Liberal team knows that more can be done to promote our products - and more will be done to make sure that Island fishers can prosper at their work.*

### **Moving Forward**

*During the 2011 election, the Liberal team is making a series of specific proposals designed to build on the strengths of our fishing sector. In general terms, the Liberal plan focuses on two main areas: assistance to fishers and improved marketing.*

***The following specific proposals are being made:***

***Moving Forward Together - Industry Adjustment Measures:***

Liberals are proposing to continue work with fishers on industry adjustment initiatives such as fleet rationalization to promote the sustainability and viability of the lobster fishery. The Liberals will re-open the low-interest loan program and will consider new payment terms based on fluctuations in price/volume.

***Moving Forward Together - Focused Seafood Development and Marketing:***

Liberals are proposing to establish a Provincial Seafood Development and Marketing Agency with fisher, processor, and government marketing representatives to work with the sector to undertake development and promotion of Island seafood products. This effort will build on successful initiatives to develop product offerings in new markets in Asia and other parts of the world.

***Moving Forward Together - Expanded Lobster Holding Capacity:***

It has been shown that building holding capacity provides greater flexibility in the sale of lobsters. By working with the industry to secure additional lobster holding capacity, the Liberals believe there will be better management of catches and improved returns for the sector.

***Moving Forward Together - Cost-Effective Bait Program:***

Liberals are proposing options to allow fishers to reduce costs by implementing more cost-effective measures for fishing and freezing bait.

***Moving Forward Together - Enhanced Supports for Young Fishers:***

Liberals are proposing to increase supports for young fishers as part of the Future Fisher Program. Funding of the program will increase to \$1 million over 4 years. In addition, young fishers will be eligible to apply for inclusion in the low interest loan program after they have finished the Future Fishers Program.

***Moving Forward Together - Oyster Protection & Aquaculture Support:***

Liberals are proposing a plan to work with the fishery, federal officials, and fishery scientists to put in place measures to protect the Oyster industry while a longer-term, cost shared sewage treatment initiative is implemented. Liberals will also expand funding for technology, dealing



with invasive species and provide marketing assistance for oysters and other aquaculture products. Spending will increase over 4 years.

### ***Moving Forward Together - On a Record of Success***

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Liberals in 2007 was to create a separate department for fisheries and aquaculture. In keeping with the nature of the industry, Rural Development was added as a departmental responsibility in 2009.

#### ***Over the past four years, the Liberal government has focused on:***

- Conservation through an industry-led initiative to develop sustainability plans for the three fishing areas in the province. For example, 34 licences were retired in Lobster Fishing Area 25.
- The Low-Interest Loan Program has assisted hundreds of fishers to remain economically viable. Current estimates suggest the program has saved fishers approximately \$10 million in interest payments since its inception.
- The Future Fisher Program was established in 2009 to support new entrants to the fishery. Currently, there are 75 young fishers benefitting from the program.

## **TOURISM AND CULTURE**



**In 2014, Prince Edward Island will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Fathers of Confederation meeting. This will be a national celebration that will showcase Prince Edward Island to all of Canada.**

Over the past several years, despite the high Canadian dollar and the effects of the global recession, we have seen huge success in our tourism sector. Our strong tourism industry will continue to benefit every community as we develop new models for regional tourism and we keep expanding local events such as Fall Flavours.

***Moving Forward Together - Building on the strength of our tourism product:***

- ***Website and On-line technology:*** We will expand support for tourism operators and NGO's who lack funds to develop content for websites with high quality HD footage and new wireless enabled technologies to allow them to better showcase their products in a changing world.
- ***Venue Enhancement Program:*** A Liberal government will implement a venue enhancement program to improve infrastructure in order to expand and build upon our key regional festivals and events.
- ***Regional Festivals and Events Marketing Enhancements:*** Liberals are proposing to increase support to regional cultural festivals and events with enhanced marketing and management support in order for them to expand their reach.
- ***150th Celebration:*** We will launch a three year event and marketing program to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the meeting of the Fathers of Confederation. These celebrations will serve as a core element of our tourism promotion for 2012-2014 as we celebrate and recognize the historic importance of the 1864 meetings which led to the building of our great nation.
- ***A New "Export PEI" Program:*** We will continue to enhance the brand of PEI by building on synergies among tourism operators, food suppliers, and related businesses through joint marketing, sales, web technology and an Island loyalty program.
- ***Preserving the historic West Point lighthouse:*** Liberals will also fund the coastal erosion project required to preserve the historic West Point lighthouse. We will contribute 50 percent of the total cost of this project ... as we partner with the Federal Government.

## **ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND FORESTRY**



***As every Islander knows, protecting our environment is essential to our province's long-term future and well-being.***

*Part of that responsibility is founded on the need for clean, affordable and sustainable power sources - and a great deal has been accomplished over the past several years.*

*While a strong foundation for environmental sustainability and energy efficiency is being built, a continued focus on environmental concerns must be maintained - and improved.*

## **Moving Forward**

During the 2011 provincial election, the Liberal Team is laying out an environmental program designed to:

- Address our Island's collective environmental concerns
- Help individual Islanders to effectively promote a more sustainable environment

**The following specific proposals are being made:**

### ***Moving Forward Together - Ensure the Environmental Sustainability of our Harbours - and our Fishery through cost-shared Storm Sewer Investments:***

The Liberals are proposing to invest a one third share in our sewage treatment infrastructure. Modernizing these systems is essential - and the work will also help to protect our shellfish industry.

### ***Moving Forward Together - Invest in Water Quality and Watershed Enhancement:***

Watershed groups are among the most committed to environmental sustainability. The work they have done over the past several years represents a true devotion to improving our Island. To support this work, the Liberal Team is proposing to invest \$4 million in watershed management over the next four years - and further protect our water supply for the future.

### ***Moving Forward Together - Promote Renewable Energy:***

Under the Liberal plan, wind production will increase to 32 per cent of the Island's electricity requirement. This will be achieved through a 40 megawatt expansion of wind production through the Wind Energy Institute of Canada and the Prince Edward Island Energy Corporation. This will make Prince Edward Island among the world leaders when it comes to use of wind power.

***Moving Forward Together - Ensure the PEI Energy Accord is Maintained:***

The 2010 Energy Accord represents a landmark achievement - through its two year reduction of electricity costs of 14 per cent. The Liberals are committing to maintenance of the Accord - which includes predictable rates until 2016.

***Moving Forward Together - New Approaches to Environmental Regulation:***

Liberals are proposing to direct the proceeds from environmental fines to mitigate the specific environment harm for which they were levied.

***Moving Forward Together - Expanded Energy Efficiency Initiatives:***

Liberals are proposing to invest \$6 million on expanded energy efficiencies over the next four years, covering new areas such as rebates for energy efficient LED lights, and enhanced electricity reduction programs for seniors and those living in apartments.

***Moving Forward Together - On a Record of Success***

Since 2007, a number of initiatives have moved our Island forward towards the goal of environmental sustainability.

For example, support for watershed groups has grown dramatically - from \$120,000 in 2006 to more than \$800,000 in 2010.

***Other initiatives have included:***

- Revenue gathered through the Beverage Container Act has been returned to environmental programs, like the Alternative Land Use Service and watershed groups
- New legislation has restricted the sale and use of a number of cosmetic pesticides
- Free nitrate testing clinics have been held across the Island
- Mandatory buffer zones have been expanded
- The Office of Energy Efficiency has invested \$4.3 million to help roughly 5,000 Islanders to reduce energy consumption and costs

## OTHER INITIATIVES

### **We believe it is important to recognize the critical role of firefighters in keeping our Island communities safe.**

Every Islander understands the important role that firefighters play in keeping all of us safe from harm.

The Liberal plan will recognize that contribution - and help volunteer firefighters to defray the costs associated with their commitment to community.

#### ***Moving Forward Together - Financial recognition for firefighters:***

Specifically, the Liberals are proposing to:

- ***Provide all Island volunteer firefighters with a \$500 refundable provincial tax benefit.***

There are approximately 1,000 volunteer firefighters across Prince Edward Island. There are 36 fire departments across the province.

### **We plan to construct a modern roundabout at the intersection at Poole's corner.**

Poole's corner is a strategically significant piece of our highway infrastructure that serves as the gateway to Georgetown, Montague, and Souris. Traffic engineers and safety experts tell us that roundabouts:

- Lower speeds
- Result in improved safety and comfort
- Are better for the environment
- Are a proven design solution for effective management of 4 way traffic
- Reduce traffic delays

#### ***Moving Forward Together - New roundabout by 2012***

# 2012-13 Operating Expense Increases Over 2011-2012 Approved Budget

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## 1. HEALTH

Doctor Recruitment	600,000
Primary Care	2,300,000
Educating Health Professionals	500,000
Reduced Surgical Wait Times and Ambulatory Care	5,300,000

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$8,700,000**

## 2. SENIORS

Seniors Home Repair Program	200,000
Learning Elders Arts Program	50,000
Computer Training for Seniors	50,000
Increased Medications	500,000
Medication Review for Seniors	150,000
Expanded Homecare	750,000
Homecare Renovation Grants	1,000,000
New Long-Term Care Beds	750,000
Additional Operating Costs for Palliative Care Centre	800,000
Seniors Housing - Murray Harbour	500,000 (In Budget)

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$4,250,000**

**3. EARLY LEARNING AND K-12**

Expansion of the Best Start Program	\$215,000
New EYC Centres	\$390,000
Renewal of Non-EYC Maintenance and Salary Grants	\$472,000 (In Budget)
Expanded Infant Care	\$355,000
Improved Access to Educational Professionals	\$250,000
New Resource Teachers	\$300,000
Expanded High School Technology Programming	Startup 2013
Expanded Advanced Academic Programming	\$100,000

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-13*****\$1,610,000****4. POST SECONDARY EDUCATION**

George Coles University Graduate Bursary	650,000
Increase to the 1st year George Coles Bursary	172,000
Interest Free Student Loans	52,146
Advanced Funding and Programs for Rural Students	250,000 (In Budget)
Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program	250,000 (In Budget)
PSE Support for Low Income families	450,000

***New Operating expenses for 2012-2013*****\$1,324,146****5. AGRICULTURE**

Crop Insurance	1,000,000 (In Budget)
Land Development Corporation	100,000
ALUS Expansion	Increase in 2013
Agriculture Marketing	100,000
Energy Cost Reductions	400,000 (In Budget)
New Agribusiness program	300,000

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*****\$500,000**

## 6. JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

On the-Job-Training Program	1,000,000	(In Budget)
New Agri-Business Program	300,000	(In Budget)
Marketing & Infrastructure Support for Tourism & Culture	1,000,000	(In Budget)
Increased Access to Working Capital Loans & Innovation Funding ...		
	No operating costs until 2013	
Rural Business Development Initiative	3,000,000	

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$3,000,000**

## 7. FISHERIES

Industry Adjustment Fund	250,000	
Seafood Marketing Agency	1,000,000	
Expanded Lobster Holding Capacity	TBD	(In Budget)
Bait Freezing	200,000	(In Budget)
Future Fishers	50,000	
Invasive Species	50,000	

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$1,350,000**

## 8. TOURISM AND CULTURE

Expanded Support for Web Technology	100,000	
Venue Enhancement Program	750,000	(In Budget)
Marketing and Management Support for Events	250,000	(In Budget)
150th Celebration	1,000,000	
Brand PEI	250,000	(In Budget)

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$1,100,000**



## 9. ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND FORESTRY

Charlottetown Harbour Storm Sewer Project	2,000,000
New Watershed Investments	185,000
Wind Energy Leadership/Accord	No impact on operating expenses
New Approaches to Environmental Regulation ...	No impact on operating expenses
Expansion to the Office of Energy Efficiency	315,000

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$2,500,000**

## 10. OTHER INITIATIVES

Firefighter Refundable Tax Benefit	500,000
Poole's Corner Roundabout	1,200,000
(Poole's Corner Roundabout already in 2012 Capital Budget)	

***New Operating Expenses for 2012-2013*** **\$500,000**

**TOTAL NEW OPERATING EXPENSES FOR 2012-2013** **\$24,834,146**

NOTE TO FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS: In all cases only the incremental operating costs of platform commitments beyond the 2011-2012 base budget are included in the 2012-2013 projections. In addition, when the words "In Budget" are listed next to an expense item it is assumed that the specific platform commitment can be funded out of existing program funds that are already included in the base budget.

# NOTES

***Liberal***

