

Bringing home the hardware
Shawville & Pontiac Lions’
hockey teams win-
tournaments

On the Shawville sheets
Howard rink wins the Senior Draw, Coté
rink takes the Junior 8. more Shawville
curling news

The Voice of the Pontiac \incc INK?

Fire leaves 60 mill workers unemployed

Blaze origin found; cause still unknown
Poul McGee Equny Reporter Mansfield
The fire which destroyed the Produits
Forestiers Coulonge mill in Mansfield
Saturday started in the roof trusses of the
main building, says Const. (jilles Couture of
the Hull some du Quebec.
The investigation team - two chemists from
Montreal and two fire technicians working with
the crime investigations unit of the Hull SQ
has yet to find the cause, and has not ruled
out arson.
"The investigators determined the fire began
in the roof trusses of the main building, but
are unable to determine the cause." Couture
says. "At this time, we can't rule out criminal
activity."
(Ittawa media reported the fire may have
been caused by electrical sparks, or possiny
arson. As early as Saturday night, a member
of the Campbell's Bay SQ told the media the
intensity of the flames raises suspicion of
criminal actixity.
"The flames were absorbing the roof and
were quite intense." says Const. [uc
Beausoleil. "The intensity was curious and
should be considered suspicious. Usually,
such intensity is a good hint (of criminal
activity). Of course, initially, all fires are
considered suspicious."
Reports indicate smoke was seen coming
from the mill area as early as 2:30 pm. Within
a half hour, the main mill building was up in
flames.
"The fire went up fast. I turned around and all
I could see was black smoke." says Mansfield
volunteer firefighter Luc Migneault, who also
works as a loader operator at the sawmill. "I
heard they could see the smoke in Dasidson."
Migneault, who was working on snow removal
in the mill yard before the fire, says "two
workers came to check the mill for Monday"
(the mill was to open Monday morning) about
an hour before the fire started. The mill was
checked daily during the Christmas shut-
down.
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Firefighter treated for smoke inhalation
Poul McGee

Equity Reporter Mansfield When
workers began the annual Christmas
break from the PFC hardwood mill in
Mansfield, they knew they would be
back to work on Jan. 5.
Howex er, on Saturday, two days before
they were to return to work, they
watched their jobs at the 5l-year-old mill
go up in smoke as the main building
erupted into intense flames. The mill
employs about bl) men. At least as
many work for the mill in the bush.
"I saw smoke coming from the mill,"
says Mansfield \oltmteer firefighter
Roger Dyeile, who was with the first
team to arme at the scene. "I rushed to
the station and we \ ere here in about
live minutes. At lirst there was only
smoke, then the flames went through
the ceiling ...the building is finished."
Many of Manst'ield's firefighters work at
the saw mill, and several of the
exhausted men, faces blackened by
soot, were heard say ing "it's a trip to
the unemployment office Monday
morning."
Though mill wokers w ere prepared to
move to the new mill on Romain Road
in Litchfield in the spring, the transfer
may be delayed several months
because some of the equipment to be
transferred to the new location may be
damaged or destroyed.
About 60 firefighters from the Mansfield,
Fort Coulonge, Waltham, Campbell's
Bay-Litchfield, and Portage du Fort lire
departments fought the fire for nearly
four hours before it was extinguished.
The smoke was first noticed in
Mansfield about 2:30 pm.
Using pump trucks placed at the
corners of the building, firefighters were
able to douse the flames, but not until
the damage was done. After the fire
was extinguished, firefighters stood
and, while eating pizza delisered by
volunteers, watched the two-storey
building smttuldc.
One firefighter was treated for smoke
inhalation at the CLSC after he was
overcome by smoke inside the main
building about 4 pm.
"I was going inside but it was full of
smoke. It felt weird and I was short of
breath, so I ran out," says Mansfield
firefighter Philippe Vaillancourt. "Once
outside, the ambulance (attendants) ran
after me."
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BACKDRAFT: Mansfield firefighters are in motion around the smouldering remains of the Produits Forestiers Coulonge sawmill in Mansfield
Saturday. Firefighters from five local fire departments took nearly four hours to extinguish the intense blaze which destroyed the mill.

Quyon hosts United Church
administrator
Poul McGee Equity Reporter Quyon
A chief administrator of the United
Church of Canada will speak in Quyon
this Sunday, says Rev. Isabel Black of
the Quyon Pastoral Charge.
Black says K. Virginia Coleman, general-
secretary of the church's general council
was invited last fall to speak in Quyon.
Black says the invitation was extended to
Coleman before the controversy
surrounding moderator Rev. Bill Phipps
began. (Phipps asserted that Jesus is
not God). Black says the general council
meets every three years to decide policy.
It last met in August, 1997.
Coleman was first commissioned to
diaconal ministry in 1975. Since then,
she has held several positions with the
church including, since 1993, staff
resources and secretary for the general
council manual committee. Before being
appointed as general-secretary,
Coleman was executive-secretary of the
Hamilton conference.
The general council is the body
overseeing the church's policies,
including fiscal and project support, and
is comprised of laymen and clergy.
Coleman was appointed general-
secretary by the general councll.
Coleman will speak at the Quyon church
at ll am. A light lunch will
be served afterwards.

Storm knocks out power for hours

Sflvio Bokker
Equity News Editor Pontiac We may have
missed the "stonn of the century" the week
before, but Monday night's ice storm more
than made up for it. As of press time
Tuesday afternoon, some homes in Pontiac
had been without power for more than l8
hours.
The heavy ice storm, reportedly, didn't break
any records, but meteorologists were calling
it one of the worst in 10 years.
The storm knocked down branches, hydro
wires and caused many transformers
to blow. In Pontiac, power went out
sometime
after midnight, and stayed that way for hours
in most of the county.
With only eight Hydro Quebec employees
working in Pontiac, it could be at least 24
hours before power is restored to all homes.
Because the rest of West Quebec and
Eastern Ontario was hit just as hard, there
are no extra employees to call in.
Everywhere, people were learning to get
ready for work the old-fashioned way with
cold water and by candle light.
Batteries were hot sellers and restaurants
with propane stoves were busy.
Surprisingly, SOreté du Quebec officers of
the Campbell's Bay detachment did not

-photo Dave Moore BOWING TO NATURE: Fallon troo branch» down hydro lino: ot Harold Pttco's
homo on Contra
Strut In Shawvltlo. Homo: throughout Pontiac woro without powot Nosdoy, somo tor more than 18

l 998 BUDGETS
Taxes jump in Shawville
Shavuillc ratepayers lace u lenccnt
incrcmc in the mill rate for 1998. my
Mayn' Albert Armstrong
"We lricil ln keep the mill rule down :1»
lm d\ pussihlc, but we vicrc hit h} the
gm'crnmcnt's deficit dimnluuding."
Armstmng lays.
Shauxillc'x \hurc ml the gmcrcn—
meml's dimnluuding is 364.358. \ \ u'cll.
Shmnillc budget alluws lnr SIT/.045
towards police scr.iwx
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1998, ax nppnscd ln 849* in 1997, a ll)
per cent incredx
.A\ well, garbage sen icc\ rose 86 ln
Shh [X'l' uwr.
Water scrxcicx remain at SM) per uxcr
and \cvmgc remains at \$71).

Downloading causes 11 per cent tax hike in
Chapeau
Chapeau residents can blame the provincial
goverment for their ll, per cent hike in
property taxes.
The new mill rate is SLIZ, an llcent increase
from Sl.(l per \$100 of evaluation. The
increase represents Chapeau's Sl1.5lb share
of the ptm incial doc, aboatiing
Mayor Bernard Conroy) says council didn't
have any choice but to add the extra cost to
the mill rate.
"We don't haxe the resources to absorb
something like that," he sa}s.
The rest of Chapeau's SZl7,932 budget for
'98 remains the lame. Services for water
(S027), sexierage (SISSi and garbage (\$60)
haxe not changed. The onl} change ll a
direct result of the prmincial dtmnluding.
Conroy says.
In an attempt to reduce its deficit, the
Bouchard government has downloaded \$375
million in expenses onto municipal
governments.
While Conroy agrees the deficit should be
eliminated, he doesn't agree with how the
goverment is doing it. "They're doing it on
the backs of municipal politicians," the mayor
says.
It's not fair property on ners, alone, are
saddled with the provincial deficit, he adds.
"They're making as the scapegoat."
C hapeau residents with a 550,000 home will
pay \$55 more on their mill rate, for a total of
\$560 in '98.

Mill rate down in Allumettes West, but
evaluations up
The mill rate in Allumettes island West
will actually decrease for '98.
But because of higher property
assessments, residents will liker not see
a decrease in their tax bills.
The mill rate for the municipality is 59
cents, down six per cent from last year's
rate of 63 cents.
Fees for fire protection (\$12) and the
dump (\$36) remain the same in the
budget, which came in at \$481,380.
The municipality's share of the provincial
downloading is 525.806. Police protection
will cost residean \$59,278.
Mansfield escapes rate increases
Mansfield residents escaped rates
increases with the approval of the 1998
budget.
The mill rate remains at one dollar, and
there were no increases to water, sewage
or garbage services, says secretary-
treasurer Don Marion.
As well, there are no cutbacks to
these services with the approval of the
\$1.34l, 000 budget.