



## Federal and provincial funding announced for library and deCoste partnership

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PICTOU - A new Pictou library is one step closer to becoming a reality after a funding announcement at the deCoste Centre on Sunday.



Central Nova MP Peter MacKay speaks with deCoste Centre board of directors chair Bradley Jardine following Sunday's announcement of funding for a partnership that explore the possibility of expanding the entertainment venue to fit the Pictou library. AMANDA JESS – THE NEWS

Central Nova MP Peter MacKay announced that the federal government will be contributing \$55,000 for a partnership between the deCoste Centre and the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library as they begin to plan an expansion of the performing arts venue to allow space for the library branch.

"It's bringing together two very important community assets," MacKay said.

The federal funding comes from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Innovative Communities Fund while the province is contributing \$30,000 through Communities, Culture and Heritage. The Town of Pictou and the Municipality of Pictou County committed to \$7,500 last year.

With funding secured, the project will go ahead with the formation of a steering committee, a request for proposals for an architectural plan, and several consultations with the community.

The design will look at possibilities for expanding the entertainment venue in order to provide new space for the Pictou branch, while also developing a common area for both organizations to use to increase programming.

PARL began investigating its options last summer after closing the branch several times due to a lack of air conditioning.

“The library has been in the present building for some time and there are a number of issues with the building,” said Eric Stackhouse, chief librarian of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library at the time. “We’ve outgrown it. It’s not designed like a new library in the 21st century.”

Stackhouse hopes to see the first phase of the project completed by the end of the summer.

He was quick to say they’re not just exploring their options.

“It’s important to underline that it’s not a study,” Stackhouse said, reiterating that they will be coming up with a design and getting input from as many groups in the larger community as they can.

For the deCoste Centre, it offers a chance to broaden their appeal.

“The deCoste saw it as a way to attract a new audience,” board of directors chair Bradley Jardine said, adding that they’d like to see a few younger faces through their doors.

He said they’re both cultural institutions, and partnering offers a chance to foster the arts community.

“A library is not just a building of books anymore,” he said, naming the events they host and the interactive programs they provide as examples of their service in the community.

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