



RéGIM and VIA Rail organize shuttle service

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE: – *The Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, the RéGIM, will offer a shuttle service between December 20 and January 4 from Gaspé to Campbellton's VIA Rail station, a way to facilitate train travel for Gaspesians and their visitors during the holiday season.

The bus service will stop in the towns that were served by VIA Rail until the suspension of the service between Matapedia and New Carlisle, at the end of September 2013. The service between New Carlisle and Gaspé had already been suspended in December 2011, due to the state of a bridge in Chandler. A bus linked New Carlisle and Gaspé until September 2013.

"The shuttle option could be repeated during other busy periods if the conclusions we draw from the Christmas break service indicate it's very, very good. We could repeat the experiment in the



Photo: G. Gagné

Since September 2013, Gaspesians have been forced to travel to Campbellton (photo) or Matapedia to take the train.

summer, for example," explains Daniel Côté, president of RéGIM.

The shuttle service is organized in collaboration with VIA Rail. Passengers will take the Ocean train which links Halifax and Montreal. "It matches our main objective, increasing Gaspesians' mobility while offering an or-

ganized and collective means of transportation," adds Mr. Côté.

It is clear that the shuttle service must be perceived as a first step towards the return of the passenger train between Matapedia and Gaspé, he also says.

"VIA Rail's management has informed us that they will

return once the line is upgraded. The shuttle initiative is driven by the will to recreate the habit of taking the train for the people living at the tip of the Peninsula. We want to make it clear that the shuttle solution is not what we want over the long term," points out Daniel Côté, who is also the mayor of Gaspé.

The president of VIA Rail, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, praises the RéGIM's initiative for the Christmas period and says through a press release that it represents an excellent travel option in order to reach the Gaspé Peninsula "before the train service resumes in that region."

Tickets can be bought on the VIA Rail website <http://www.viarail.ca/en>. Travelers can also contact VIA Rail by dialing 1-888 VIA RAIL, which is 1-888 842-7245.

"It is now possible to directly select a trip like Montreal-Bonaventure or Quebec City-Gaspé, for example," points out RéGIM's director general Antoine Audet.

Outside the designated Christmas period, users have to select Campbellton or Matapedia as their destination or departure point.

Meanwhile, a few mistakes have been noticed on the schedule issued by the RéGIM and VIA Rail. Corrections are expected to be released soon.