



RéGÎM free summer service

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GASPÉ - The free service offered by the *Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine* (RéGÎM) between July 1 and August 31 attracted approximately 8,200 users this summer.

The president of the RéGÎM, Daniel Côté, emphasizes that, despite a drop of 2,000 passengers compared to the summer of 019, he is satisfied.

"We expected a drastic drop. If we had not offered free access, the drop would probably have been really huge," the president says.

The RéGÎM adopted its 2021 budget, up by \$100,000 to \$3.1 million. Inflation and an adjustment in the wage structure following an analysis explains this slight increase.

Fearing a sharp drop in gasoline tax revenues in the spring, a consequence of an uncertain tourist season during a pandemic, the surprise is considerable.

"We anticipated a loss. Honestly, we're lining up to numbers similar to last year, between \$1.3 million and \$1.5 million. We had budgeted \$1.1 million," says Mr. Côté with relief.

The authority plans to develop a real-time service application in the next year while completing the installation of bus shelters launched last year.

VIA Rail shuttle

If VIA Rail resumes its service to the Maritimes in November as planned, the RéGÎM will offer its holiday shuttle to the Campbellton station.

For the moment, nothing is available on the resumption of passenger train service, indicates Mr. Côté, who is ready to restart the shuttle service.

"There is undoubtedly a peculiarity with regard to the bubbles between New Brunswick and Quebec. This is surely problematic. We are ready to renew the agreement under the same conditions," says Mr. Côté

Last year, 169 passengers used the loss-making service to the tune of \$8,000.

In addition, the agreement between the Gaspé and Keolis for the services of Orléans Express is renewed as is, despite the pandemic.

The five MRCs pay \$37,500 and Quebec pays the difference for a total of \$150,000.

Mr. Côté says that even though, Orléans Express experienced a reduction in income since it had to reduce the number of passengers because of the pandemic, he's satisfied with the company's desire to continue serving the region.