

## Daniel Côté is reappointed prefect of Côte-de-Gaspé

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GASPÉ - The current prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, Daniel Côté, was reappointed by his peers on December 13. Mr. Côté, who is the mayor of Gaspé, is starting a fourth term in office which he hopes

will be one of continuity.

“I have been in the MRC prefecture for six years already. One of the objectives was to unite the council and fight the devitalization in the villages. It's starting to work. Sometimes, we take measurements at the MRC, other times because there is development

directly on this territory. Our territory is increasingly attractive and we will continue in this direction,” indicates Mr. Côté.

Being a full-time mayor in Gaspé, he also intends to continue representing the MRC.

“For me, it's natural to do it. I will continue to do this both at regional and national tables, defend the socio-economic priorities of our MRC, in short, do political work at the ministry level to ensure that our MRC is not forgotten and that the programs are adapted to our reality. This is the continuation of what has been done for six years,” mentions the prefect.

The prefect will once again be assisted by the mayor of Grande-Vallée, Noël Richard, reappointed as deputy prefect for a third term. He has held the position since 2019.

### Support for the return of Via Rail

The MRC took advantage of its monthly meeting to adopt a resolution in favour of the return of the passenger train to Gaspé.

The MRCs of Avignon,

Bonaventure, and Rocher-Percé and 16 Gaspesian municipalities have already adopted such a resolution.

“It's a question of formality. We have firmly supported the return of VIA Rail for months, even years. We had not formally adopted a resolution at this stage. It has passed. If there is anyone who has a doubt, let them come and tell me,” says the prefect.

“I was among the first activists for the return of VIA Rail after the closure of the railway. I made representations to the CEO of VIA Rail. There were no big discussions around the table. Everyone clearly agrees for the return of VIA Rail to Gaspé,” specifies Mr. Côté.

In the context where the carrier lacks human resources and rolling stock, the prefect maintains that VIA has obligations.

“It's part of VIA Rail's mission to serve the regions of Canada. They are subsidized by the federal government to achieve this. This is their mandate. They have already served the area. They never closed the door to return to the region. We worked on partner-

ships on intermodality until recently,” continues the prefect, who notes that the rail will be rehabilitated in 2026 as far as Gaspé.

VIA Rail has not come to Gaspé since December 10, 2011, when it completely ceased operations between Matapédia and New Carlisle on August 13, 2013, due to the poor condition of the rail.

As the holiday season approaches, the Coalition of Gaspésians for the return of the train deplores the end of the partnership between VIA and the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RÉGÎM), which provided a shuttle service serving stations between Campbellton and Gaspé.

A change in VIA's technological platform no longer made it possible to facilitate intermodality, according to RÉGÎM.

The coalition is still calling for the resumption of train service between Matapédia and New Carlisle, which would be possible in 2024, once the rehabilitation work between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons is completed.



Photo: MRC Côte-de-Gaspé

The prefect, Daniel Côté, and the deputy prefect, Noël Richard