

Campaign Schools Aim To Increase the Number of Women in Municipal Politics

March 27, 2012, HALIFAX - UNSM and the Province would like to encourage more women to run for office in the Nova Scotia municipal elections this October. Statistics show that women are significantly under-represented in municipal councils across Nova Scotia and the entire country. As a result, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' (UNSM) Women in Local Government Committee is hosting five municipal campaign schools for women across the Province.

The importance of these schools cannot be understated. In 2008, 94 women attended the campaign schools whereby 38 ran for municipal office and 13 were elected including one mayor.

"Women account for over 50 per cent of Nova Scotia's population, yet only represent 21 per cent of municipal councillors and only 7 per cent of Mayors and Wardens. If these numbers are to increase, it is imperative that we encourage more women to run. These schools are a great way to create that enthusiasm," said County of Richmond Councillor Shirley McNamara, one of the school instructors.

"We want to encourage more women to participate at the local government level to ensure municipal governments truly reflect the communities they serve," said John MacDonell, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. "The Province is pleased to support the Women in Local Government Campaign Schools and encourages potential candidates to come out and learn more about local government."

"If we're to increase the number of women in leadership, we need to increase the number of women running for elected public office," said Marilyn More, Minister responsible for the Status of Women. "These campaign schools will provide women with the know-how and confidence to consider political engagement either as a candidate or campaigner in the upcoming municipal elections."

One of the attendees from the campaign schools offered in 2008 was Town of Mulgrave Mayor Marney Simmons who stated that "the campaign school was an experience that should not be missed by anyone thinking about becoming involved in municipal affairs. I learned more than I ever thought possible in one day. It provided an opportunity to make a real difference in my community."

HRM Councillor Jennifer Watts stated that "my participation in the school affirmed how important it was for women to be involved in this part of the political process - raising issues, engaging residents, and learning more about our communities. No matter what the outcome was to be, I felt I was better prepared for the election campaign."

The schools will be held on Saturdays from 9:00am to 4:00pm in the following locations:

April 21: Port Hawkesbury, NSCC Strait Area Campus

May 5: Berwick, Berwick & District Lions Club

May 26: Yarmouth, NSCC Burr ridge Campus

June 9: Dartmouth, NSCC Waterfront Campus

June 16: Amherst, NSCC Community Learning Centre

These sessions are free to attend and will provide a fun and educational experience for women interested in running for municipal elected office.

The campaign schools are sponsored by the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities in conjunction with Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

To register or for more information, visit wilg.ca, email lgoldberg@unsm.ca, or phone 902-423-8673.

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Mothers, Sisters, Daughters...Did you know that while women make up more than 50 percent of our population, they make up a mere 21 per cent of municipal councillors and 7 per cent of mayors and wardens in Nova Scotia? We need more women mayors, wardens, and councillors to better reflect the society we serve. To help you get ready to run, a series of one-day campaign schools are being held in Port Hawkesbury, Berwick, Yarmouth, Dartmouth, and Amherst. These free sessions will give you the tools necessary to run an effective campaign in October's municipal election. Subsidies are available to help offset costs required for childcare, eldercare or special needs for those who want to attend the program. To register, visit wilg.ca. You can also email lgoldberg@unsm.ca or phone 902-423-8673. Seating is limited so register early!

For more information, contact:

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