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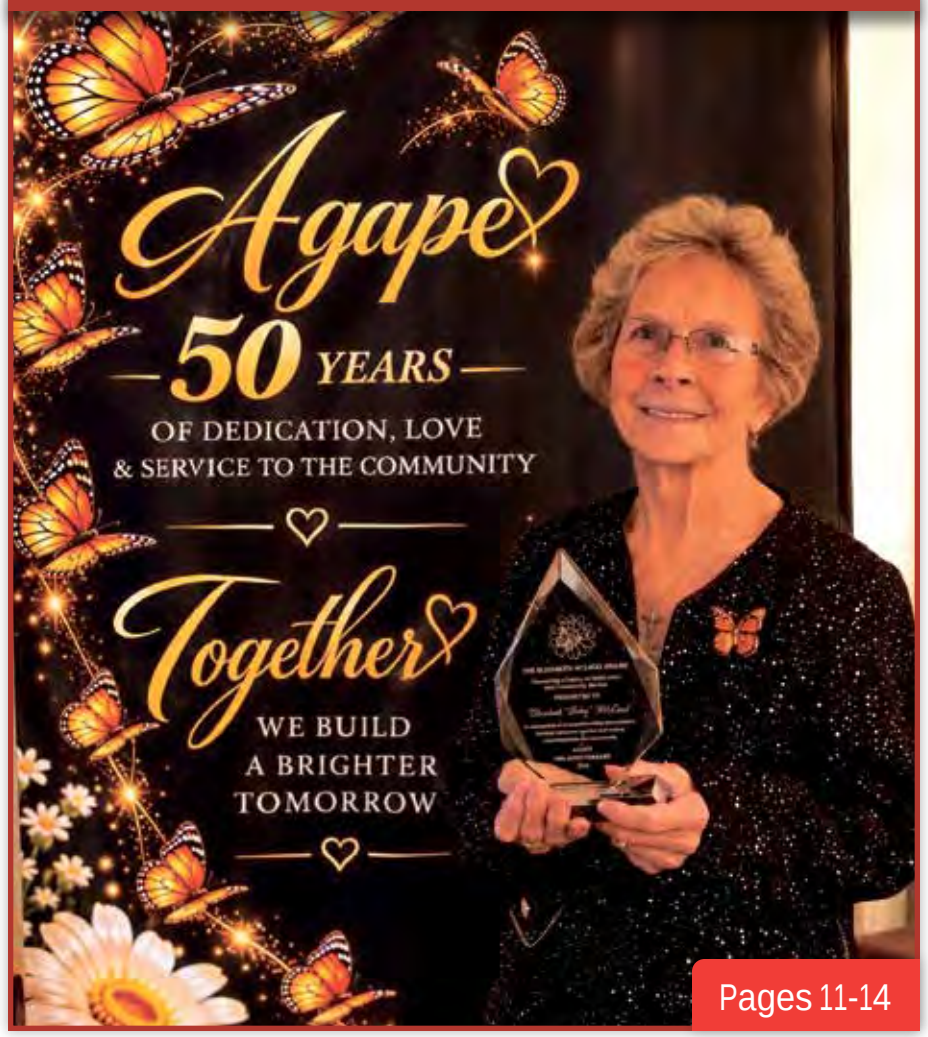
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## Laval pays respect to the nation's fallen soldiers at War Cenotaph for Remembrance Day



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# Heritage activists appeal for Laval to protect 200-year-old Maison Verdon

*City doing all that's legally possible to intervene, says deputy mayor Ray Khalil*

**MARTIN C. BARRY**
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*
marty@newsfirst.ca

During the public question period at the November 3 Laval city council meeting, Richard Verdon from the Société d'histoire et de généalogie de l'Île Jésus (SHGIJ) complained about the decaying state of a nearly 200-year-old heritage building located at 3753 Saint-Elzéar Blvd. West that the SHGIJ claims has fallen into neglect, endangering its existence.

According to Verdon (whose family ancestors built the current house in 1836 on foundations dating from as early as 1771), the building played a key historical role during the Lower Canada Rebellion in 1837-1838, which was brutally suppressed by the British colonial government.

## Saving Laval's heritage buildings

One of Richard Verdon's ancestors, Laurent Verdon, who was the first owner and occupant of the house, was also a local leader in the "patriotes" movement, along with André-Benjamin Papineau (whose name lives on through the Maison André-Benjamin Papineau, another heritage building on Saint-Martin Blvd., in FarmVille).

While noting that British soldiers threatened to destroy the house if the owner refused to furnish them with supplies, Verdon said it is now facing a new problem – "demolition through neglect" – as no one has been maintaining it properly.

"Water is seeping in through broken windows," said Verdon, adding that squatters have moved in and their presence could potentially result in the building burning down as the house has an old and hazardous fireplace and squatters are known to make fires to keep warm.

## Saving the Maison Verdon

Earlier in the meeting, Fabreville-Sud city councillor Martin Vaillancourt (one of two Parti Laval opposition members of the municipal council) tabled a 400-signature petition asking the City of Laval to intervene in the Maison Verdon issue as soon as possible.

According to Vaillancourt, an inspection crew from the city was scheduled to visit the house last month to see whether it was still hooked up to the electricity grid so that it could be heated during the coming winter, as well as to determine if the doors and windows were secure to minimize the possibility of intrusions.

Vaillancourt noted that Laval city council passed a by-law in 2023 to prevent heritage buildings from being permanently damaged when they are abandoned. "In spite of all this, in spite of this by-law, over the past three years the state of this building has continued to deteriorate," he said.

## Building vulnerable to intruders

"We are being told that the owner is cooperating and that the city wishes also to collaborate with this person," Vaillancourt added. "Still, people still seem to be able to get in, notably through the basement. This raises some legitimate questions about the real effectiveness of the security measures put into place.

"This property represents a part of the history and identity of our community," he continued. "So, over the course of many years its state deteriorated to the point where several residents fear today for its future."

According to Laval city councillor for Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Annick Senghor, who is responsible for dossiers regarding the preservation of Laval's heritage buildings, the city has intervened at least 30 times at the house and intends to keep doing so.

## Intervention limited, says Khalil

"There are infractions that were noted, there are inspections underway and more to come," she said, insisting that the state of the house and its preservation is currently a priority for the city.

Adding context to the issue, deputy mayor Khalil acknowledged that the city must still respect legal constraints when enforcing the heritage preservation by-law. "There is a certain escalation of stages before we can arrive at the ultimate measures," said Khalil.

He noted that the list of steps includes inspections, notices to the owner, followed by fines. Only then does the law allow the city to take direct action. "That which can be legally done within the city's regulations is now being done, I can assure you," he added.

## Laval a city 'in its own right'

In opening remarks during the council meeting, deputy mayor Ray Khalil noted that newly-elected Quebec Premier Paul St-Pierre Plamondon referred to the City of Laval as a "region in its own right and should be considered as such," when he appointed Parti Québécois MNA Dieudonné Ella Oyono Minister Responsible for the Laval Region.



**The City of Laval's deputy mayor Ray Khalil answers questions during the November 3 session of Laval city council. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)**

## Focusing on Laval

After congratulating the MNA for Les Plaines for his nomination to the cabinet posting, Khalil said everyone on Laval city council is available to "accompany you and help with the priority dossiers for Laval."

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# OPINION & Editorial



## Hackers turned up the heat on Europe's grocers. Is Canada ready?

A second wave of suspected cyberattacks on European supermarkets has exposed a vulnerability that Canada's food industry should take seriously. Grocery stores in at least nine countries reported refrigeration failures. One Swedish supermarket said its refrigeration systems had been remotely set to 50 C. Across the affected stores, tonnes of food had to be thrown out. An earlier wave had already hit stores in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The economics explain why refrigeration is such an attractive target. Fresh food has a limited shelf life, and grocers and processors depend on a steady flow of deliveries. A few hours of disruption can mean discarded inventory, missed shipments and lost sales. Even when the equipment comes back online, a grocer may still have to discard products if it cannot establish how warm they got or for how long.

The same vulnerability exists in Canada. A cyberattack can force a company to replace inventory, reroute shipments and pay for emergency repairs. Over time, repeated disruptions and higher spending on cybersecurity can put upward pressure on food prices. How much reaches the checkout depends on competition and on who has the bargaining power to pass those costs along.

Ransom is one possible motive. With perishables, attackers have leverage because the cost of waiting rises by the hour. Paying can encourage further extortion, while refusing can leave a company absorbing a substantial loss. The European incidents also raise the possibility of deliberate disruption for its own sake. Public frustration with grocery prices is real, but it tells us little about who was behind these attacks or what they wanted.

For years, cybersecurity barely registered at many food industry conferences. It deserves a place alongside food safety. Refrigeration is the obvious example, but a breach at a processing plant could also interfere with ingredient controls, allergen labelling or the records needed to trace a contaminated batch. Automation helps companies run more efficiently. It also makes it more important to know who can access production controls and how quickly staff can intervene when something goes wrong.

Major grocers and manufacturers are already investing in more resilient facilities and systems. The harder question is what happens when they ask their suppliers to meet the same cybersecurity standards. A national retailer can spread the cost of monitoring, audits and staff training across hundreds of stores. A family-owned processor with a single plant has far less room to absorb those costs. Losing a major retail account over a requirement it cannot afford could put an otherwise viable business at risk.

Canada's largest grocers have enough influence to set cybersecurity standards across much of the food supply chain. They can also help suppliers meet them. Common requirements, shared training and technical support would make it easier for smaller processors to protect their operations without paying for a separate compliance program for every major customer.

Perishability gives attackers a deadline they can use against any food company. A grocer can invest heavily in protecting its own warehouses and still lose a shipment when a supplier's plant goes down. Helping that supplier stay operational is part of protecting the grocer's own business.

*Dr. Sylvain Charlebois*

## Canada could lose out on the global oil boom

### *The world wants more oil, but higher prices and growing demand are no guarantee Canada will reap the full benefits*

Higher gasoline and diesel prices are squeezing consumers, but they are also giving Canada's economy a significant boost. According to TD Economics, Canadian energy exports have increased by an average of $4.5 billion per month over the past six months, strengthening producer revenues, incomes and government coffers.

Diesel has become an increasingly important export. Its share of Canada's energy exports has more than doubled since the outbreak of the U.S.-Israel conflict with Iran, reaching 13 per cent of total energy exports and generating more than $2 billion per month. While those gains benefit the broader economy, higher fuel costs continue to reduce household purchasing power and increase operating costs for businesses.

The conflict involving Iran and concerns over shipping disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz have highlighted the world's dependence on Middle Eastern energy supplies. Countries seeking secure alternatives are increasingly looking toward stable producers such as Canada.

The United States remains Canada's dominant customer, purchasing about 90 per cent of Canadian crude exports in 2025. However, the Trans Mountain expansion has begun diversifying markets. According to ATB Economics, Canadian oil exports to Asia averaged $515 million per month between June and October 2024, compared with negligible volumes before the pipeline expansion entered service.

Governments in Ottawa and Alberta are also advancing plans for Pacific Link, a proposed pipeline capable of moving one million barrels of oil per day from Bruderheim, Alta., to a deepwater terminal near Delta, B.C., creating another potential gateway to Asian markets.

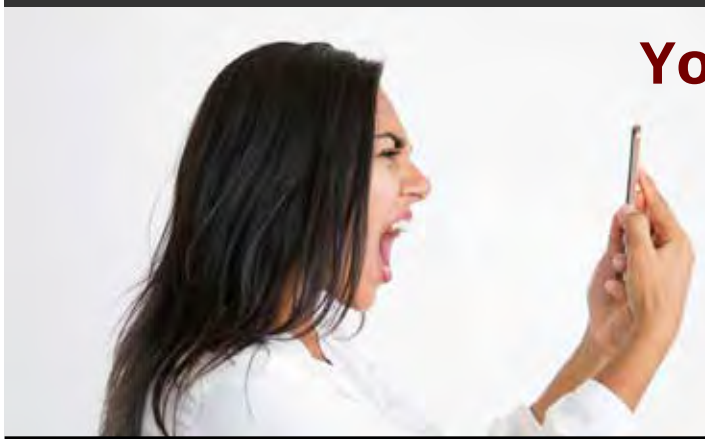
Canada's ability to respond to higher prices is also improving. In Alberta's Clearwater formation, producers can drill and bring new wells online much faster than traditional oilsands projects, allowing them to react more quickly to market opportunities.

Yet challenges persist. On Oct. 15, Western Canadian Select traded at a discount of US$26.40 per barrel to West Texas Intermediate. Transportation constraints, refinery disruptions, growing domestic production and increased competition from Venezuela's returning heavy crude exports continue to weigh on Canadian prices.

Canada has a rare opportunity to expand its role in global energy markets. But capitalizing on that opportunity will require more than higher oil prices. Expanding export infrastructure, reaching new customers and reducing dependence on the U.S. market will ultimately determine how much Canada benefits from shifting global energy dynamics.

*Rashid Husain Syed*

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# CITYWATCH

By Martin C. Barry

# Laval Mayor Stéphane Boyer recovering well after major surgery

Laval Mayor Stéphane Boyer says he is recovering well following a major surgical procedure and expects to return to work in the near future.

In a social media message shared with residents and supporters, Boyer said the first days after the operation were particularly challenging.

"The first week was difficult: I could neither walk nor see out of my right eye," he wrote. Despite those complications, the mayor said his condition has improved significantly and that he is now fully functional.

Boyer is currently recovering at home and expects to resume his professional duties soon.

The mayor used the opportunity to thank the medical team that cared for him, paying special tribute to his surgeon, Dr. Pascal Lavergne, whom he credited with performing exceptional work during the lengthy operation.

According to Boyer, the surgery lasted from 8 a.m. until 11:30 p.m., with the surgeon taking only a 15-minute break throughout the entire procedure.

"I am impressed," Boyer said in describing the dedication shown by the surgeon and the medical staff involved in his care.

He also expressed gratitude to family members and loved ones who supported him during what he described as a period of great vulnerability.

In addition, Boyer thanked the staff at Hôpital du Sacré-Cœur for their care and professionalism, highlighting the important work performed daily by healthcare workers and caregivers, often under demanding conditions.

The mayor concluded his message on a positive note, saying he looks forward to seeing colleagues, friends and residents again soon as he continues his recovery.

"I look forward to seeing everyone again soon," he said.

This marks a significant step forward in Boyer's recovery and signals his anticipated return to public duties in the coming weeks.



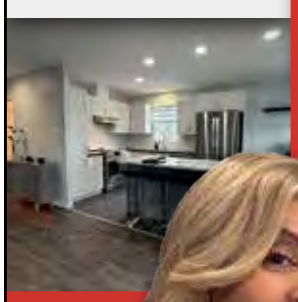
Mayor Boyer with his surgeon Dr. Pascal Lavergne.


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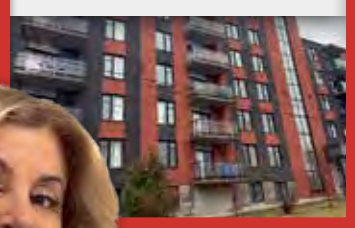
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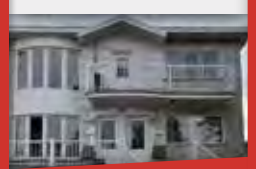
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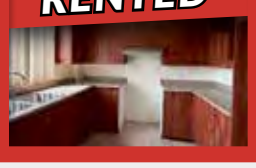
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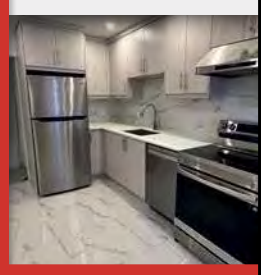
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# City of Laval's Ombudsman releases 2025 annual report

*Nathalie Blais regrets 'shortcomings' due to staff and IT shortages*

**MARTIN C. BARRY**
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*
marty@newsfirst.ca

In the Laval Ombudsman's 2025 annual report, which was tabled by Ombudsman Nathalie Blais at the November 3 city council meeting, Blais complains that staff shortages and outdated computer systems are making a negative impact on the processing of cases.

Established in 2013, the Laval Ombudsman's office bills itself as an impartial, confidential and free service offered to citizens who believe their municipal rights have been violated or may be violated.



**The City of Laval's Ombudsman Nathalie Blais says she regrets that staff shortages and outdated computer systems are having a negative impact on the processing of cases. (Photo: Courtesy of Laval Ombudsman's office)**

The Ombudsman may intervene on their own initiative, at the request of an individual or group of individuals, or at the request of the executive committee or the city council.

## Being heard and treated fairly

The 2025 Ombudsman's report highlights 597 cases handled and 23 new commitments made by the municipal administration following situations raised during her interventions.

The report also emphasizes the importance of the ongoing dialogue the office maintains with citizens and the municipal administration, "in a shared commitment to improving services for the public," the 2025 annual report states.

"Behind every case is a person who wants to be heard and treated fairly," Nathalie Blais said in a statement issued with the report.

"That is our priority. We regret the current inconveniences related to our staff shortages and the outdated IT system used to receive and process information requests and complaints," she added.

"We are continuing our efforts to replace it, although the decision and deployment timeline rest with the city. Despite the challenges, the ombudsman's office continues to focus on serving the people of Laval."

## Ombudsman's year in numbers

- They dealt with 597 cases;
- Did 21 investigations;
- Obtained 23 new commitments from the city;
- 24 existing commitments were monitored;
- There were 41 meetings with department heads, elected officials and the director general;
- 185 citizens were referred to 311;
- 33 per cent of complaints were deemed admissible;
- 21 per cent of citizens were referred to another body;
- 40 per cent of citizens contacted the office by telephone;
- 60 per cent submitted their form via the website or made initial contact by email.

## Listening and dialogue

In 2025, according to the Ombudsman's office, 33 per cent of complaints received were admissible and were either analyzed or were still under review at the end of the year.

In several other situations, the office's role was to direct citizens to the appropriate recourse. For example, 185 people were referred to 311, as administrative appeals with the city had not yet been exhausted.

Furthermore, 21 per cent of citizens were directed to another body, as their complaint was outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction or did not fall under the City of Laval's purview.

Communication practices with the office also continued to evolve, according to the Ombudsman. Approximately 40 per cent of citizens contacted the office by telephone, while 60 per cent submitted their complaint form via the website or made initial contact by email.

The most frequently affected services were: public works (22 per cent), engineering (16 per cent), environment and eco-citizenship (14 per cent), and urban planning (10 per cent). The issues raised included snow removal, trees, infrastructure and water, waste collection and nuisances, and the application of regulations and processing times.

## Commitments that are monitored

"A commitment is an important step, but monitoring its implementation is just as important," said Blais. "It ensures that the announced corrective measures are translated into concrete practices and services offered to citizens.

"Dialogue with the municipal administration and elected officials remains central to this approach," she added, noting that a total of 41 meetings were held during the year with department heads, elected officials and the director general.

"The cooperation of the administration and the support of elected officials are essential to the effective execution of our mission," she continued. "They allow us to maintain a constructive dialogue and to adapt certain practices when improvements are needed. This openness directly contributes to strengthening citizens' trust in their municipal administration."

The Ombudsman's 2025 Annual Report and all previous reports are available at http://ombudsmanlaval.com.



# Laval opposition parties unite for stronger voice at City Hall

**NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA**
info@newsfirst.ca

Parti Laval and Action Laval have joined forces to push for greater recognition of opposition parties at City Hall, arguing that elected officials outside the governing party should have better access to information and a stronger voice in municipal decision-making.

At a recent city council meeting, interim Parti Laval leader Louise Lortie and Action Laval councillor David De Cotis jointly introduced a motion asking council to formally recognize the role of opposition parties as an essential component of municipal democracy.

The proposal comes one year after the 2025 municipal election and follows concerns raised by both parties over what they describe as limited participation in commissions, committees and other municipal organizations. While the opposition holds five of the 22 seats on council, it says its representation on municipal bodies does not reflect that presence.

Lortie and De Cotis argue that all elected officials should have equitable access to information and opportunities to contribute to policy discussions. They maintain that stronger opposition involvement would enhance transparency, accountability and democratic representation for Laval residents.

The initiative is part of a broader conversation taking place in municipalities across Quebec regarding the role of opposition parties and the need to modernize local democratic practices as cities assume greater responsibilities.

The motion will be considered by Laval City Council during its December meeting, where elected officials will decide whether to formally acknowledge the concerns raised by the two opposition parties.

# Laval updates its snow removal policy, but opposition not convinced it'll work

*City says new approach reflects transparency, efficiency and predictability*

**MARTIN C. BARRY**
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*
marty@newsfirst.ca

As winter approaches, the City of Laval says it is adopting a new snow removal policy and modernizing its operations to improve service predictability, travel safety and public information.

To support this evolution, and as part of investments of nearly $25 million initiated last year, the modernization of municipal equipment is also ongoing.

At the same time, however, at least one of the opposition parties on Laval city council is denouncing planned snow removal service reductions as something that is likely to be felt by residents of Laval.

Still, Deputy Mayor Ray Khalil is optimistic that the city will be able to prove its new strategy is working over the coming winter months. "Laval is strengthening its winter capabilities," Deputy Khalil said in a statement issued by the city last week.

"With our new snow removal policy and significant investments in modernizing our equipment, we are giving ourselves the means to continuously improve our snow removal operations and offer Laval residents a service tailored to their needs," he added.

Efficient snow removal operations "are a top priority for the population and Laval will be ready for winter," said Khalil.

## City says efficiency improved with lit signs

It might be noted, according to the city, that last season, despite a 12 per cent increase in snowfall, Laval had a 16 per cent increase in snow removal efficiency in its most densely populated areas following the installation of 5,000 illuminated signs.

The new signs are connected to a centralized platform to provide real-time parking restriction information before snow removal operations begin and switch off once the work is completed.

According to the city, last winter also ended with a 47 per cent increase in snow compaction on sidewalks, a 14 per cent decrease in overtime hours and a reduction of 43,000 litres of gasoline consumed.

The City Laval says its current snow removal policy is based on principles of transparency, efficiency and predictability, establishing a renewed framework for action that allows for the maintenance of a high level of performance in municipal services.

## Timeframe cut from 8 to 7 days

Specifically, the city says an additional 166 kilometres of its streets benefit from priority snow removal, while the minimum snow removal timeframe has been reduced from 8 to 7 days. The policy is structured around five main objectives:

- To offer an inclusive and flexible service adapted to the realities of the territory, with particular attention to seniors and people with disabilities;
- To support active mobility and pedestrian safety, especially for students going to school;
- To improve citizen information;
- To pursue continuous improvement of operations;
- To reduce the environmental footprint of snow removal activities.

Laval claims to be able to distinguish itself from most other cities by including a sidewalk clearing objective in its snow removal policy. The city says the new policy will evolve in line with innovations, results achieved and citizen feedback "in order to continuously improve the level of service."

Residents are being encouraged to actively participate in an overview of the operations and can follow progress in real time using the City of Laval's Info-Parking app, which includes alerts and interactive maps.

According to the city, the total value of the municipal snow management fleet now exceeds $40 million. Investments made since last year aim to replace equipment that has reached the end of its useful life while increasing the fleet's reliability.

## $25 million worth of improvements

Among the acquisitions made in recent months (nearly $25 million worth) are 25 sidewalk snowplows, 10 loaders, 14 trucks with interchangeable bed systems and a spreader mode, and 19 spreader trucks.

According to the city, trucks with interchangeable bed systems can be adapted to different uses depending on seasonal needs, particularly for snow removal operations. The city says this versatility helps optimize equipment for use throughout the year, allowing the city to save on costs.

To ensure snow removal across its vast territory, Laval says it relies on a fleet of 740 vehicles and over 500 people working around the clock. The city also contracts out work with private companies under agreements totaling $20 million.

In total, municipal teams and their partners maintain operations on over 3,200 kilometers of streets and 1,300 kilometers of sidewalks – the distance between Laval and Vancouver – contributing to what the city maintains is safe and accessible travel along its roads and streets during the winter season.

## Parti Laval critical of new approach

Not long after the City of Laval's executive committee announced the new snow removal measures, members of the official opposition denounced what they said will be service reductions likely to be felt by Laval residents as early as this winter.

Among the difficulties the Parti Laval claims Laval residents could expect in the coming months are longer sidewalk clearing times, up to 50 per cent more time before the first snow removal on some residential streets, and reduced salt applications on roads and icy sidewalks.

"If Laval residents already felt things were tough last winter, this new policy shouldn't reassure them," says Louise Lortie, interim leader of the Laval Party. "More snow before they intervene, more time to do the job: this isn't an improvement in service – it's a lowering of municipal standards."

The party, which currently has the status of being the official opposition on city council, says the city's new policy fails to address another more fundamental problem – safety and traffic flow.

"We are learning that during severe storms, some residential sidewalks will only be plowed on one side and could even be temporarily closed," says Lortie. "Students will be forced to walk in the middle of the street to get to school, and we should expect bus stops to be inaccessible.

## 'Dynamic parking' system criticized

The opposition cites the city's dynamic parking project as an example of poor snow removal management. The Parti Laval maintains that residents are now forced to constantly monitor parking signs and move their vehicles according to restrictions in order to avoid being ticketed.

This year, in the sectors where this system has been implemented, according to the party, nearly 2,000 parking tickets were issued between April and August, long before winter operations began.

According to statistics from the Public Works Department, obtained by the Parti Laval and shared with The Laval News, the number of tickets issued increased by approximately 70 per cent in two years, rising from around 3,000 to over 5,000, with nearly two-thirds of these in sectors 2 and 3, where dynamic parking is now in place.



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# Laval's officials gather for Remembrance Day at War Cenotaph

*Local community pay its respects to the nation's fallen soldiers*



**Members of the Canadian military arrive at the City of Laval's War Cenotaph for the Remembrance Day ceremony on Sunday November 8. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)**

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Canadian Forces soldiers, including members of the Royal 22nd Regiment based in Laval, as well as Air, Sea and Army Cadets, joined dignitaries and citizens at the City of Laval's War Cenotaph on Sunday November 8 for a ceremony to mark Remembrance Day.

Among the dignitaries depositing wreaths at the base of the monument to the war dead on Chomedey Boulevard were Laval city councillor Pierre Brabant (representing the mayor), Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin MP Carlos Leitão, and the Laval region's six Liberal Members of the National Assembly.

## Wreaths of remembrance

Brabant deposited a commemorative wreath on behalf of the municipality. Wreaths were also left by officials at the base of the monument on behalf of the federal and provincial governments, active and retired military personnel and reserves, as well as veterans from the Laval region.

The Royal Canadian Legion's Branch 251 in Chomedey, which has been organizing the event annually, makes great efforts to organize the commemoration and starts working on it each year as early as May.

While there is often turmoil throughout the world at this time of year serving as a backdrop to the annual remembrance of the country's defenders, an incident in October impacting the military here at home was on the minds of some of those attending Laval's Remembrance Day ceremony.

## Dangers of the military life

"That was a very unfortunate accident in Wainwright," Marc-Aurèle-Fortin MP Leitão said in an interview with The Laval News. He was alluding to the flash fire last month at the Canadian Armed Forces base in Alberta that resulted in the death of four soldiers, while injuring many more. "But all the more reason for us to really pay homage our soldiers," said Leitão.

Vimy MP Koutrakis agreed. "I also think this is an especially important day this year with the tragedy in Wainwright," she said, while noting that those serving in the armed forces are always potentially in danger given the nature of the work.

"The danger comes anywhere," Koutraiks said. "You never know. Even when you're training, your life is still at risk. We also should never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We would not be enjoying the life that we have, had it not been for those who fought so valiantly for us. We should never forget."



**Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News**



**Laval-Les Îles MP Fayçal El-Khoury and parliamentary colleagues prepare to lay a wreath at the base of the Laval War Cenotaph at the city's Remembrance Day commemoration. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)**



**The Laval region's six Members of the National Assembly approach the City of Laval War Cenotaph to deposit a wreath paying homage to the city's soldiers. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)**



**Members of the Royal Canadian Legion's Branch 251 paraded along Chomedey Blvd. before arriving at the War Cenotaph for a Remembrance Day ceremony on November 8. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)**



# CELEBRATING AGAPE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

# Agape earns praise from Laval city councillors on 50th anniversary

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During the November Laval city council meeting, several members of council paid homage to the Youth and Parents Agape Association (known simply as Agape to most people) on the occasion of their first half-century of service to the Laval community.

"They're celebrating their 50th anniversary of being involved with youths and Laval families," Action Laval city councilor for Saint-Bruno David De Cotis said during the council meeting.

## An important local group

"This is an organization that is important for our citizens, which has been established here in Laval for 50 years," he continued.

After noting that Agape executive-director Kevin McLeod was presented with a certificate of appreciation by members of the Action Laval leadership team before the council meeting, De Cotis said, "Agape supports disadvantaged families and comes to the rescue of thousands of people each year while continuing to offer a variety of services."

## 'We need you,' said De Cotis

Addressing McLeod who was present in the council chamber for part of the November 3 meeting, De Cotis added, "To you and your family, your team and all your volunteers who help you – who help us – a big thank you for being present here in Laval. We need people and associations like yours."

At the same time, Chomedey city councillor Aglaia Revelakis also congratulated Agape and Kevin McLeod on their anniversary. "Wishing you all the best," she said. "Continue the great work that you do for the English-speaking seniors in Laval."

The certificate, bearing a City of Laval coat of arms and issued on behalf of De Cotis as well as Action Laval city councillor for Saint-François Isabelle Piché, congratulates Agape for all its work over the past half-century.

## A partner with City of Laval

"Over the last few years our partnership with the City of Laval and municipal councillors has grown substantially," McLeod said in an interview with The Laval News outside the city council chamber.

He said Agape has received substantial contributions from the City of Laval to provide services to youths in the region's high schools. "We have a good relationship with them and we're very happy with it," he said. "We're quite happy with where we are with the city."

De Cotis had nothing but praise for Agape, largely for its ability to survive five decades as a social services provider. "To exist for fifty years, that means you have the right people in place doing things for the right reasons," he told The Laval News.



**From the left, Action Laval city councillor for Saint-François Isabelle Piché, current party leader Achille Cifelli, Agape executive-director Kevin McLeod with the certificate of honor, and Action Laval city councillor for Saint-Bruno David De Cotis. (Photo: Courtesy of Action Laval)**

# Agape's journey through time: 1976–2026

*50 Years of Dedication, Love, and Service to the Community*

## 1976 – Where It All Began

Agape was founded in 1976 by Reverend Father Donald O'Rourke, then priest at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, with parishioners Cliffelene ("Cliff") and Leo Young.

For many years, Agape focused on supporting youth, parents, and families. People often turned to Cliff and Leo for guidance and prayer—at church, over coffee, or at their home on 91st Avenue.

A wooden sign hanging by their front door read "Elijah House." Their home became a peaceful place of prayer, where families could heal relationships and grow closer to God.

United by a vision to help the less fortunate, Father O'Rourke and the Youngs laid the foundation for 50 years of service, compassion, and commitment to Laval's English-speaking population.

Little did they know how far that vision would reach.

## 1980 – Making It Official

After years of welcoming families, Agape received its first Letters Patent in October 1980, officially incorporating the organization.

Its Board of Directors consisted of six members: Father Donald O'Rourke, Leo Young, Gregory Young, Ann Aucoin, Charles Rochefort, and Thelma Comire.

With its legal foundation in place, Agape was ready to keep building its future.

## 1980–1993 – Humble Beginnings, Big Hearts

Early on, Cliff and Leo Young met Elizabeth ("Betty") McLeod at church; she soon volunteered to help in any way.

For nearly 15 years, Agape brought together families in need of love and support. The organization operated out of multipurpose community spaces generously made available by the City of Laval, as well as local parks. The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 251, also helped make parties and events possible.

There were no permanent offices, no elaborate facilities, and certainly none of the resources Agape has today.

What Agape did have was a dedicated group of volunteers and a deep desire to make a difference.

From opening drop in soup kitchens and preparing food baskets to sorting donated clothing and distributing essential items, Agape became much more than a place to receive assistance.

It became a place of belonging, support, and hope for underprivileged English-speaking families in Laval.

Families ate together, prayed together, cried together, and laughed together. They weren't just receiving help; they were building a community.

## 1993 – "Madame Agape"

In 1993, after many years of service, Cliff and Leo were ready to take a step back. They envisioned Betty becoming the new face of Agape.

Betty graciously took on this labour of love, joined the Board of Directors, and continues to serve Agape today as a dedicated board member and volunteer. In fact, she can still be found at Agape's main office three to five days a week.

…And of course, we cannot speak about 1993, without mentioning one of Agape's strongest and longest lasting partners that established themselves that same year, - "The Chomedey News", better known today as "The Laval News."

## 1995 – Agape Finds a Home

In June 1995, Agape rented its first permanent location at 3950 boulevard Notre-Dame in Chomedey.

And what was this new home? An old fish market!

Betty still recalls looking at buildings with Cliff.

When Cliff pointed to the fish market building, Betty said, "Come on, Cliff, this place is a dive!" Cliff replied, "Didn't the Lord say, 'I will make you fishers of men'?"

From selling fish to feeding and clothing families, the building would become the heart of Agape's operations for years to come.

Still supported by its dedicated volunteer Board of Directors, Agape began to grow, creating six employment opportunities over the following two years.

For the first time, Agape had a permanent home of its own… Well… rented, at least!

-And it was also around that time that Betty and Agape got to know a wonderful man named Thomas Mulcair, MNA for Chomedey at the time, who helped build the organization and gave us the most financial support possible.

## 1997 – Supporting Young Families

In 1997, Agape began operating a drop-in daycare service for English-speaking parents.

With a municipal permit allowing up to six children at a time, this small but important

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# Agape celebrates its first 50 years

## as a lifeline for all those in distress

*'Mom had a vision, Betty made it come true,' president Greg Young tells gala guests*



From the left, Laval city councillor for Duvernay Anick Brunet, Deputy Mayor Ray Khalil, Renaud-Coursol councillor Seta Topouzian, Laval-Les-Îles councillor Nicholas Borne and Saint-Martin councillor Aline Dib at last week's gala celebrating Agape's 50th anniversary. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)




From the left, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board commissioner Barbara Barrasso, Agape executive-director Kevin McLeod, SWLSB chairman James De Sano, Laval city councillor for Duvernay Anick Brunet and SWLSB division 8 commissioner Noémia Onofre de Lima at Agape's 50th anniversary celebration. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)




**MARTIN C. BARRY**
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While Agape president Greg Young acknowledged during a 50th anniversary gala last week that his mother helped plant the seed that grew into one of Laval's important social services providers, it took a special kind of person to turn it into a reality.

Greg's parents, Leo and Cliffeline Young, helped lay the foundation for what 320 guests were celebrating last Friday evening at the Embassy Plaza congress centre.

"Their vision, generosity and belief in helping others created a legacy that has continued to grow over the past five decades," said Greg. "But they certainly knew what they were doing when passed the torch to Betty.

"I'll say one thing: mom had a vision, Betty made it come true," he added. In recognition, she was presented later in the evening with the first Elizabeth McLeod Award for dedicated service to Agape.

### Humble beginnings, same mission

Beginning with a base of operations first set up in 1976 in the church basement at Holy Name of Jesus Parish on Chomedey Blvd., Agape's next step was the acquisition of a home they could call their own. This turned out to be a former fish market on Notre Dame Blvd. near the corner of Curé-Labelle.

While that is still considered by many to be the home address, Agape has expanded many times and has service offices now in different districts of Laval. But it's always with the same primary goal of offering a range of social services to families, children, senior

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# CELEBRATING AGAPE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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citizens and others – often in desperate need of help.

For five decades, the Youth and Parents Agape Association has been more than just an organization in Laval. It's also been a place of support, compassion, connection and hope for individuals and families. And although it may seem a little hard to believe, over the past half-century many thousands of people have turned to Agape for assistance, guidance and support.

## The daisies and the butterflies

For a good number of years, the image of a monarch butterfly has served as a symbol at Agape, although not everyone may be aware of the reasons why. During the gala evening, butterfly and daisy brooches and icons were scattered in various places throughout the room.

As Agape executive-director Kevin McLeod explained, what makes the monarch so remarkable is its transformation from an egg into a caterpillar, then into a chrysalis, and finally a beautiful butterfly.

"It faces tremendous challenges, travels incredible distances and finds the strength to keep going," he said. "In many ways, this reflects the journeys of the individuals and families we serve. Life doesn't always go as planned. Sometimes people face challenges they never anticipated. Our role is to offer a helping hand, encourage them to take the opportunity to move forward."

As for the daisies, according to McLeod "they represent growth, new beginnings and life flourishing. That's actually what we hope to see in the people we help: families finding their footing, children discovering their potential and individuals regaining hope and confidence."



The One Love Project performing last Friday evening at Agape's 50th anniversary gala at the Embassy Plaza in Chomedey. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

## A wide base of community support

The number of high-profile guests at the celebration was in itself a testimony to the community support Agape has obtained from elected officials ranging from mayors and city councillors, to school board representatives, as well as Members of Canada's Parliament and of the Quebec National Assembly.

Any organization that helps Laval's residents is a step in the right direction, Sainte-Dorothée city councillor Ray Khalil, the City of Laval's deputy mayor, said in an interview with The Laval News. "But Agape always takes it a step further by how much they do with a very small team," he added.

"Agape is a major player here in Laval for the anglophone community," said Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board chairman James Di Sano, who attended the gala with division 6 commissioner Barbara Barrasso and division 8 commissioner Noémia Onofre de Lima.

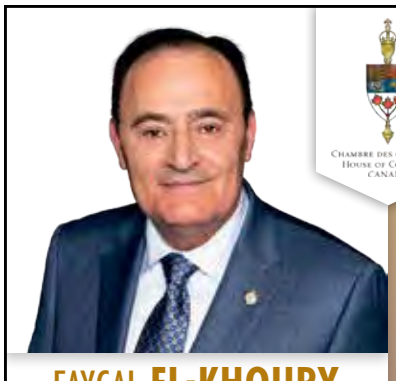
"We're building on a great partnership we have with Agape as to how we could do more for both of us – given that we share the same population," Di Sano added.



Elizabeth 'Betty' McLeod (centre), the longtime guiding influence behind Agape's 50 years of success, at last week's anniversary celebration. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)



From the left, Agape assistant-director Ian Williams, executive-director Kevin McLeod, Laval city councillor for Saint-François Isabelle Piché, Saint-Bruno councillor David De Cotis and gala evening MC Franco Taddeo. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

Chambre des communes
House of Commons
Canada

FAYÇAL **EL-KHOURY**
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*Congratulations to Agape on their 50th anniversary!*

# CELEBRATING AGAPE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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initiative provided much-needed support to parents and young families in the community.

What started with just six spaces would eventually grow into something much bigger.

## 2002 – From Renting to Owning

March 2002 marked a major turning point.

Thanks to a federal grant, Agape purchased the buildings at 3950 and 3952 boulevard Notre-Dame.

After years of renting, Agape finally owned its own property… And the renovations began!

The building at 3950 Notre-Dame continued to serve the community through its food, clothing, and furniture bank, while 3952 Notre-Dame provided affordable childcare services.

And just like that, Agape had two addresses!

## 2005 – A Roof Over Their Heads

In July 2005, with another federal grant and the support of Raymonde Folco, Member of Parliament for Laval—Les Îles at the time, and her dedicated team, Agape purchased a fourplex residential building.

This new property allowed the organization to provide temporary, affordable transitional housing for up to four families, offering newcomers and families facing difficult circumstances a safe and stable place to call home.

Agape was no longer simply helping families with food, clothing, and childcare. It was also helping put a roof over their heads.

And Agape now had three addresses!

## 2007 – A Major Milestone for Childcare

In 2007, with the guidance of Guy Ouellette, MNA for Chomedey at the time, Agape's daycare became subsidized, offering families childcare for just $7 a day.

With a provincial permit allowing up to 22 children between the ages of 18 months and five years, the daycare became an important resource for English-speaking families in Laval.

This milestone would not have been possible without Desjardins Caisse de Chomedey and its general director at the time, Laurent Caron, who generously donated more than $23,000 to help furnish the new facility.

From a small drop-in service for six children to a fully subsidized daycare for 22, Agape had come a long way.

## 2009 – Building a Stronger Community Voice

In 2009, Agape received a visit from Jennifer Johnson and Jim Carter from the Community Health and Social Services Network, better known as the CHSSN.

With much belief in our organization, they offered program funding to strengthen Agape's work in networking, partnership development, community representation, and leadership.

Agape was becoming not only a provider of direct services, but also an important voice advocating for the needs and priorities of Laval's English-speaking community.

## 2009–2018 – A Decade of Growth

Over the next decade, Agape continued to expand its reach.

With continued support from the CHSSN and various new federal and provincial funding programs, the organization developed new activities, resources, and services for children, youth, parents, families, and seniors.

What began as a small, volunteer-driven organization had grown into a multifaceted community resource serving people across generations.

By 2018, Agape was managing 15 different initiatives and had a total of 12 employees.

And Agape was just getting started!

## 2018 – A New Chapter for Seniors

In 2018, with major provincial government funding and the support of Francine Charbonneau, Minister for Seniors at the time, Agape opened its English-speaking Senior Wellness Centre in Chomedey.

The centre was originally designed to accommodate approximately 20 seniors at a time.

Although… rumour has it that more than 50 people somehow managed to squeeze into that little space for certain activities!

Clearly, the demand was there.

The centre quickly became a welcoming space where English-speaking seniors could take part in activities that promoted their physical and mental well-being. More importantly, it offered friendship, connection, and a sense of belonging.

And Agape now had four addresses!

## 2020 – Bigger Space, Bigger Possibilities

By 2020, the Senior Wellness Centre had become so popular that Agape needed more room.

With additional funding, the centre expanded into a much larger space within the same building, allowing it to welcome more than 100 seniors at a time. From 20 seniors to 100!

More space meant more activities, more opportunities, and more people connecting with one another.

## 2022 – Expanding Across Laval

In 2022, Agape took another important step by opening a satellite office in Duvernay.

For the first time, the organization established a permanent presence in eastern Laval, making its services more accessible to English-speaking residents beyond the Chomedey area.

The new location also became a second home for Senior Wellness Centre activities.

And Agape now had five addresses!

## 2023 – Making Room for More

As participation at the Senior Wellness Centre continued to grow, so did the need for additional space.

In 2023, Agape rented another office within the same Chomedey building.

And so, the Senior Wellness Centre Recreation Room was born!

More room for activities, more room for friendships, and more room for the growing number of seniors who had made Agape part of their lives.

And Agape now had six addresses!

## 2023 – Closing One Chapter, Opening Another

That same year, Agape made an important strategic decision.

After more than 25 years of providing childcare services, the organization sold its subsidized daycare.

Although this marked the end of a significant chapter in Agape's history, the decision allowed Agape to focus its resources and energy on expanding its community services and strengthening its long-term impact.

Sometimes, growth means knowing when to turn the page.

## 2025 – Agape Hits the Road!

In 2025, Agape reached another milestone with the purchase of its very first commercial vehicle.

The new van made it possible to collect and deliver food more efficiently, particularly to isolated seniors and underprivileged families who face challenges accessing essential services.

After nearly five decades of helping people throughout Laval, Agape was officially on the move!

By 2025, Agape had six addresses… and a van!

## 2026 – Fifty Years of Making a Difference

And that brings us to today. 2026!

Fifty years after Father Donald O'Rourke, Leo Young, and Cliff Young first came together with a vision of helping those in need, Agape continues to grow, evolve, and serve the community.

From borrowed multipurpose rooms to six permanent facilities…

From a handful of dedicated volunteers to nearly 40 contractual workers delivering programs and services across Laval…

Agape's journey has been one of determination, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to helping others.

In 2026, Agape manages more than 20 funded initiatives for Laval's English-speaking community, including:

- Mental health promotion activities reaching thousands of youth and adults.
- Guidance and support for more than 30 neurodiverse children and their families.
- Social-emotional learning for nearly 100 primary school students.
- Two full-time Senior Wellness Centres offering hundreds of health and wellness activities to approximately 500 seniors each year.
- Dedicated social media pages for youth, adults, seniors, and families, reaching thousands of followers.
- A fourplex building offering low-cost transitional housing for up to four families at a time.
- Annual Christmas food drives, emergency clothing, food relief, and food delivery reaching over 800 people each year.
- Intergenerational projects connecting youth and seniors'
- Student field trips and bursaries for more than a dozen graduates.
- Representation of Laval's English-speaking community on more than 30 boards, tables, and committees across Laval.
- Extracurricular, enrichment, and drop-out-prevention activities in local high schools, supporting nearly 2,000 students' social, emotional, physical, and academic well-being.
- One-on-one support and accompaniment for English speakers navigating the public healthcare system.

And so much more…

Together, these initiatives provide services, resources, presentations, referrals, emergency food assistance, and other essential support to more than 5,000 people each year!

And the story isn't finished.

Today, Agape is actively exploring the purchase of another building to expand its services and help secure the organization's future for generations to come. Because if there's one thing we've learned over the past 50 years, it's that Agape always seems to find room for one more!

As we celebrate this extraordinary milestone, we recognize that none of it would have been possible without the founders, Board members, employees, volunteers, partners, funders, donors, supporters, and community members who helped shape Agape into the organization it is today.

To everyone who has been part of this journey, whether for five decades or just five days—thank you.

And most importantly, we give thanks to GOD. For through Him, all things are possible.

Here's to 50 years of compassion, community, and making a difference

—and to the next 50 years of Agape.

Cheers!

Congratulations Agape
on your 50th anniversary
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# Budget 2026: Canadians support many of the measures, **but few expect personal benefits as concerns about affordability and deficits persist**

DAVID COLETTO, ABACUS DATA

A new Abacus Data survey conducted immediately following the release of the federal government's 2026 budget finds Canadians approaching the government's economic agenda with mixed feelings. While more Canadians approve than disapprove of the Carney government, relatively few believe the budget will make their own lives better, and many remain unconvinced that its fiscal commitments are achievable.

The survey of 1,500 Canadian adults, conducted November 6 to 7, finds that just 17% describe Budget 2026 as good news, while 20% consider it bad news. Another 32% see a mixture of good and bad news, and 30% have not formed an opinion.

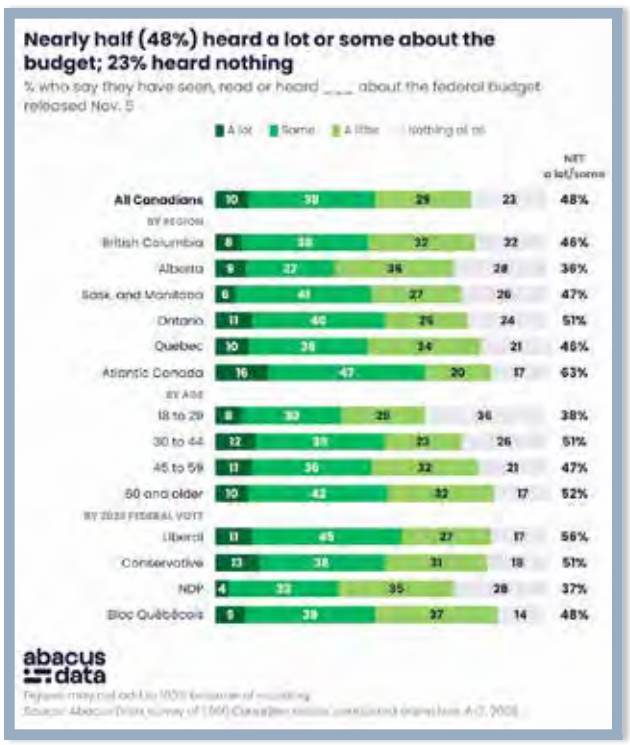
The findings reveal an important tension. Canadians are generally supportive of many of the government's specific proposals, particularly those involving caregivers, homelessness, housing, and grocery assistance. But that support has not translated into widespread confidence in the budget as a whole.

The government appears to have a stronger case when it comes to Canada's economic sovereignty than when it comes to improving household affordability. And while Canadians recognize the potential benefits of investment, many are concerned about the amount of money being borrowed to finance it.

## Most canadians have heard about the budget, but their initial reactions are mixed

Two days after the budget was tabled, 77% of Canadians report having seen, read, or heard at least something about it. Almost half (48%) say they have heard a lot or some, while 29% have heard a little.

Despite this relatively high level of awareness, Canadians have not reached a clear verdict.



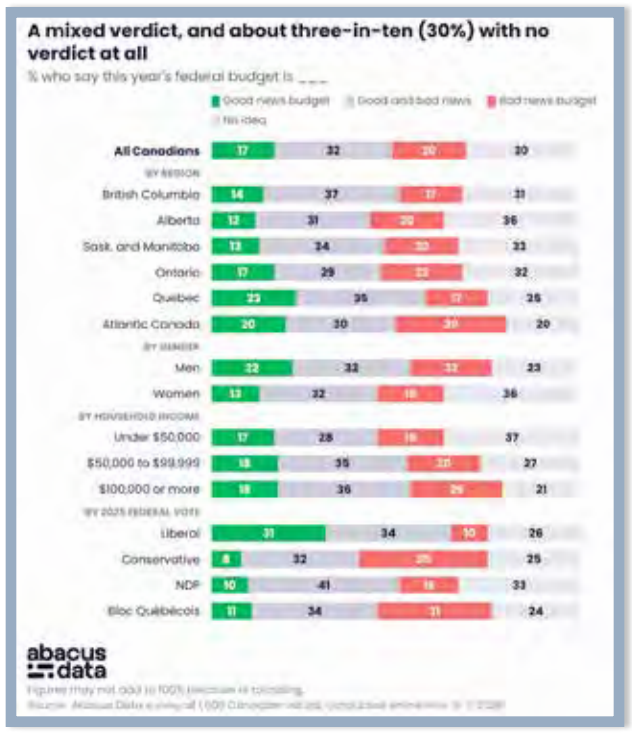

About one in three (32%) describe the budget as containing both good and bad news. Another 30% say they really have no idea whether the budget is good or bad.

Only 17% consider it good news, compared with 20% who describe it as bad news.




Political affiliation shapes these assessments considerably. Among those who voted Liberal in 2025, 31% see good news and 10% see bad news. Among Conservative voters, the pattern reverses, with 35% describing the budget as bad news and just 8% as good news.

But uncertainty is also significant.




Among women, 36% have not formed an opinion, rising to 41% among women under 45. Similarly, 37% of Canadians living in households earning less than $50,000 are unsure how to assess the budget.

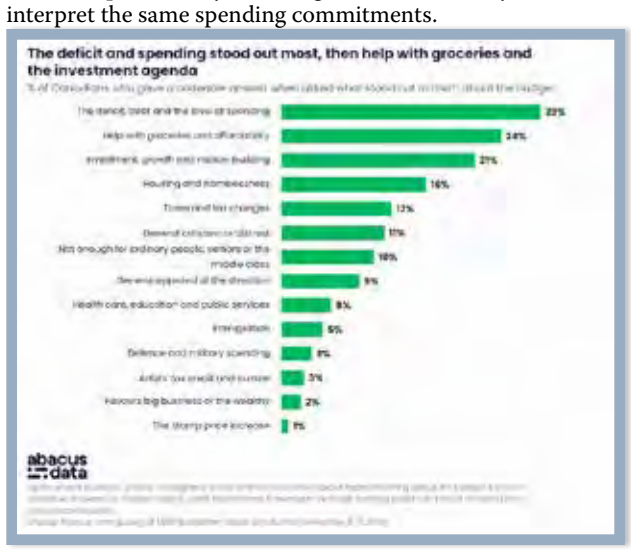
These findings suggest that while the budget has generated considerable attention, its political and public impact is far from settled and for many, may never become something that shapes their views.

## Canadians recognize a spending budget, but interpret that spending differently

When Canadians who had heard about the budget were asked what stood out to them, the deficit, government debt, and the amount of spending emerged as the most common themes.

Among those providing a substantive response, 29% mentioned spending or borrowing, followed by grocery assistance and affordability measures (24%), investments and economic growth (21%), and housing and homelessness (16%).

What is particularly revealing is how differently Canadians interpret the same spending commitments.







Among those describing the budget as bad news, 47% spontaneously mentioned spending or deficits. Among those who considered it good news, just 13% did.

Instead, those with positive assessments were more likely to mention investments, grocery assistance, and housing.

▶ Continued on page 16

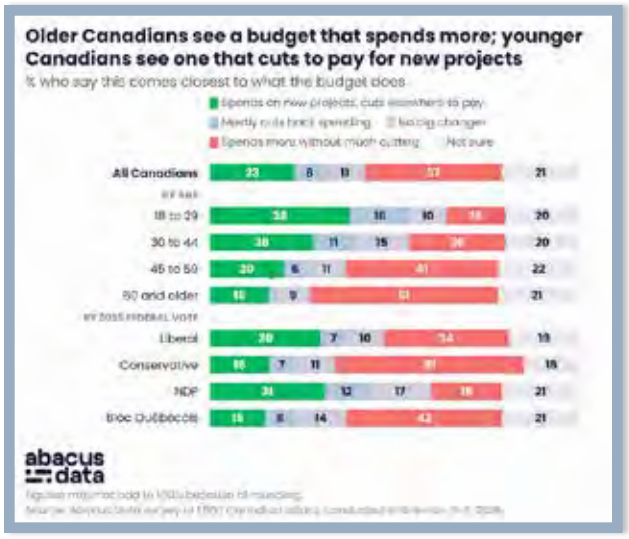
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◀ Continued from page 15

This difference reflects two competing interpretations of the government's economic strategy.

For some Canadians, the spending represents necessary investment in the country's future. For others, it reinforces concerns about government borrowing and fiscal sustainability.

When asked to characterize the budget's overall approach, 37% believe it increases spending without making significant cuts elsewhere. Another 23% see a combination of new investments and reductions in other areas.




The government is therefore facing a public that recognizes the scale of its ambitions but is divided over whether the spending is justified.

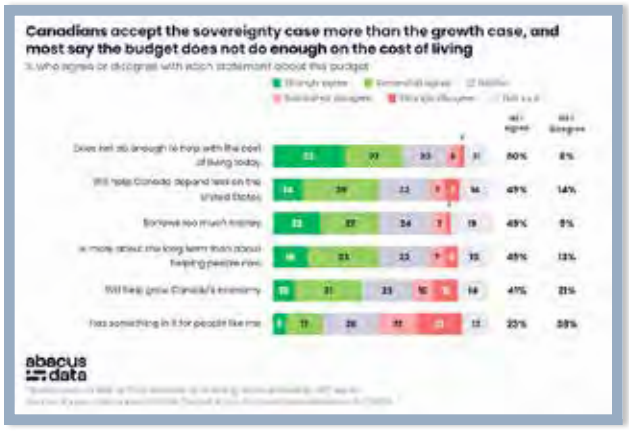
## Canadians see the national purpose, but not the personal benefit

Perhaps the clearest finding is the gap between Canadians' assessment of the budget's national objectives and what they expect it to mean for their own financial circumstances.

Almost half (49%) agree that the budget will help Canada become less dependent on the United States.

Another 42% agree it will help grow the Canadian economy.

But only 23% agree that the budget has something in it for people like them, while 37% disagree.




At the same time, 60% believe the budget does not do enough to help Canadians with the cost of living today.

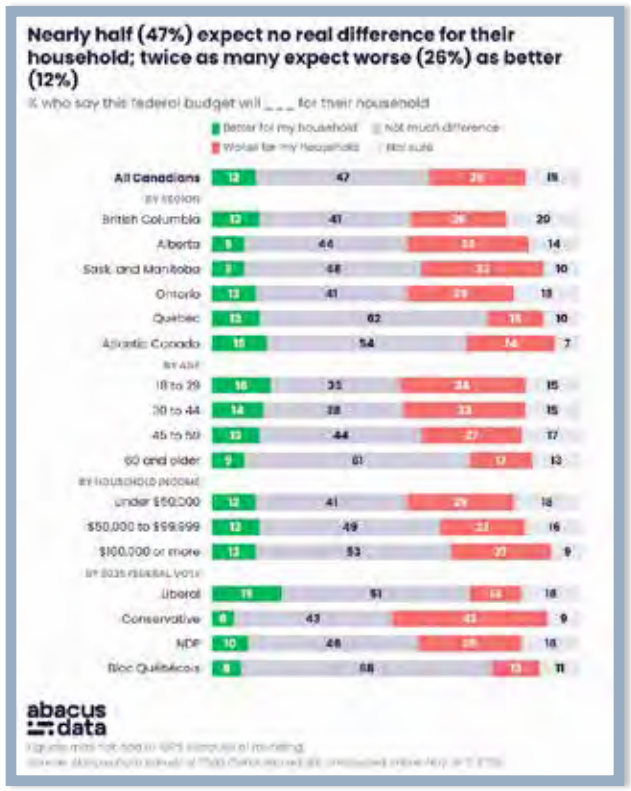
That includes 50% of those who voted Liberal in 2025, along with 74% of Conservative voters and 66% of NDP voters.

The household impact question reinforces this disconnect.

Almost half (47%) expect the budget to make little difference to their household finances. Another 26% expect to be worse off, while just 12% anticipate being better off.

Even among households earning less than $50,000, only 12% expect a positive impact.

The findings suggest that Canadians may accept the need for investments designed to strengthen Canada's long-term economic position without necessarily believing those investments will improve their immediate financial circumstances.



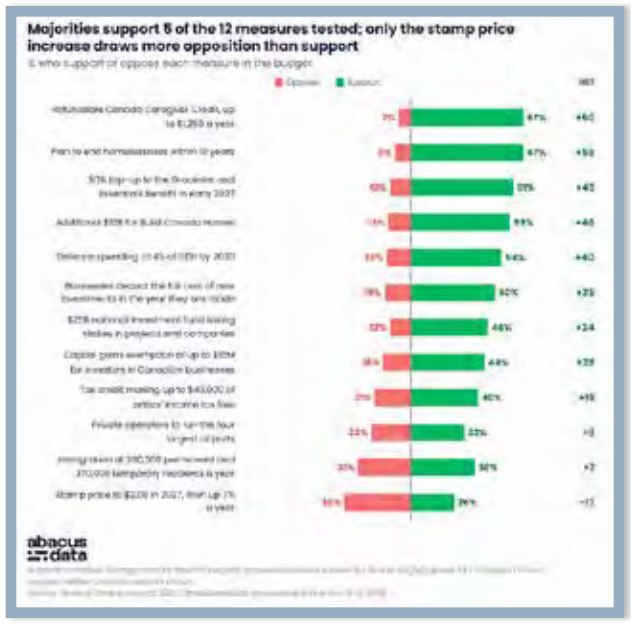

That distinction is central to understanding the budget's reception.

## Individual budget measures are more popular than the budget overall

One of the most notable findings is how much more positively Canadians respond to specific measures than to the overall budget.

Of the 12 measures tested, five attract majority support, and only one generates more opposition than support.

The most popular proposals are those connected directly to household needs and social challenges.




Two-thirds support making the Canada Caregiver Credit refundable (67%) and the government's plan to end homelessness within 10 years (67%).

Another 61% support the one-time increase to the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit, while 59% support an additional $13 billion for Build Canada Homes.

There is also majority support (54%) for increasing defence spending to 4% of GDP by 2030.

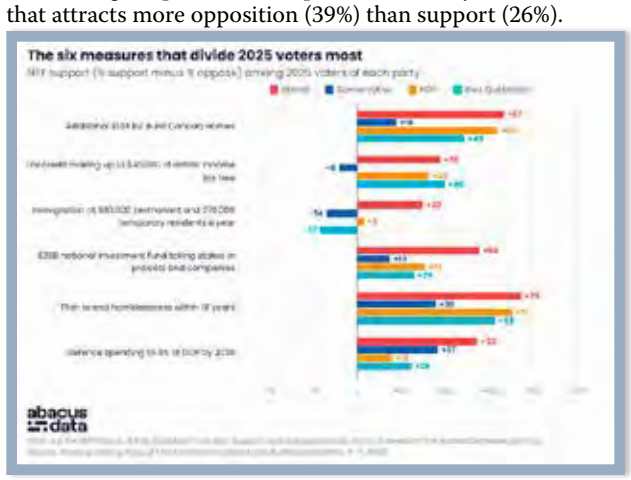
Importantly, several measures attract support across political affiliations.

Among Conservative voters, 62% support the refundable caregiver credit, 53% support the homelessness initiative, and 52% support the grocery benefit top-up.

Other measures generate more divided responses.

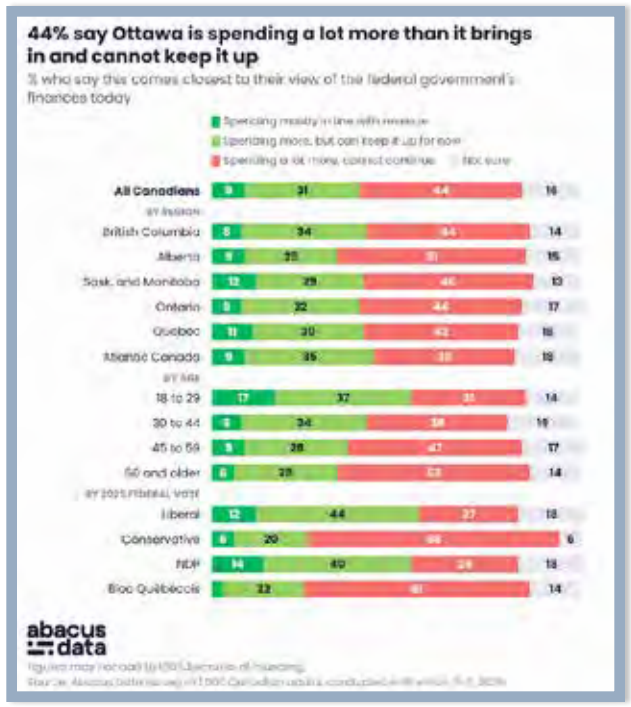
The government's proposed immigration levels are supported by 38% and opposed by 31%. Allowing private operators to run Canada's four largest airports attracts 32% support and 23% opposition.

Increasing the price of a stamp to $2 is the only measure tested that attracts more opposition (39%) than support (26%).




## The deficit and fiscal credibility remain significant challenges

Although Canadians support many of the proposed investments, concern about federal finances is widespread.




▶ Continued on page 17



◀ Continued from page 16

Almost half (49%) agree that the budget borrows too much money.

When asked more generally about the government's financial position, 44% believe Ottawa is spending considerably more than it brings in and cannot continue doing so for long.

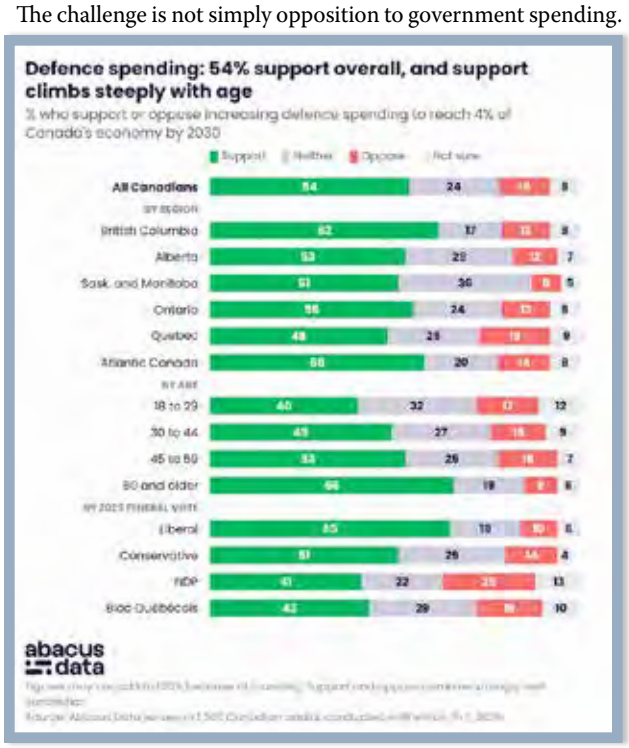
Another 31% recognize that spending exceeds revenue but believe the current approach can continue for now.

There is also considerable skepticism about the government's commitment to balance its day-to-day operating budget by 2027-28.

Just 30% believe that target is likely to be achieved, while 56% consider it unlikely.

That skepticism extends beyond government opponents. While 73% of Conservative voters doubt the target will be met, so do 41% of Liberal voters.

The challenge is not simply opposition to government spending.




Canadians are divided when asked to weigh greater affordability assistance accompanied by larger deficits against less assistance designed to contain borrowing.

The results suggest that fiscal credibility will be an important part of how Canadians evaluate the government's economic strategy.

## Generational differences reveal competing expectations

Age is one of the most interesting dividing lines in the survey.

Among Canadians aged 60 and older, 51% believe the budget increases spending without significant cuts elsewhere. Among those under 30, just 16% share that interpretation.

Instead, 38% of younger Canadians see a budget that combines investment with reductions in other spending.

Views on defence also differ considerably.

Two-thirds (66%) of Canadians aged 60 and older support increasing defence spending to 4% of GDP, compared with 40% of those under 30. Yet younger Canadians are more likely to report a positive political reaction.

Among those under 30, 33% say the budget has made them think more favourably of the federal government, compared with 23% who say less favourably. Among Canadians aged 60 and older, 20% report a more favourable impression and 27% a less favourable one.

These differences suggest that Canadians are assessing the budget through different generational priorities, particularly around public investment, fiscal restraint, and the allocation of government resources.

## The budget has reinforced opinions more than changed them

Despite the attention surrounding the announcement, the budget has not produced a substantial net shift in how Canadians say they view the government.

About 42% report that what they have heard about the budget has made no difference to their opinion.

Another 25% say they now think more favourably of the government, while 26% think less favourably.

The negative reactions are somewhat more intense, with 14% saying they feel much less favourably compared with 5% who feel much more favourably.

Looking ahead, Canadians are somewhat more optimistic about the budget's effect on the broader economy than their own finances.

Just over a third (35%) expect the budget to make Canada's economy better over the next few years, compared with 25% who expect it to make things worse.

This reinforces the central distinction running throughout the survey: Canadians are more willing to believe the budget could benefit Canada than to believe it will benefit their own households.

## The upshot

The first public reaction to Budget 2026 reveals a government with considerable support for its individual initiatives but a more difficult challenge convincing Canadians that the overall plan is the right one.

The budget's emphasis on economic sovereignty appears to have found an audience. Almost half of Canadians believe it will help reduce dependence on the United States, and more than four in ten believe it will contribute to economic growth.

But those assessments coexist with considerable doubts about affordability and fiscal sustainability.

Six in ten Canadians believe the budget does not do enough to address today's cost of living, and only about one in ten expect their household finances to improve.

This is the central tension facing the Carney government.

The public can recognize the importance of building a more resilient Canadian economy while remaining uncertain about when, or whether, those investments will improve their everyday lives.

There is also a striking difference between how Canadians assess individual proposals and the budget as a whole.

Measures involving caregivers, homelessness, grocery assistance, and housing attract broad support, including among many Conservative voters. Yet that support has not translated into a broadly positive overall verdict.

At the same time, the deficit remains a significant vulnerability. A majority doubt the government will meet its operating balance target, and many believe the current pace of borrowing cannot be sustained.

The first reaction, therefore, is neither a clear endorsement nor a decisive rejection.

The government has an opportunity to build support around measures Canadians already favour. But doing so will require convincing people that the investments form part of a credible economic plan and explaining how the benefits will reach their households.

For now, Canadians see a budget with substantial ambitions, several popular initiatives, and important unanswered questions.

The government has made its case for investing in Canada's future. The next challenge is convincing Canadians that this future will be better for them.



# Things to do UPCOMING

***Looking for something to do? Here are some upcoming events happening in the Laval area.***

## BRING YOUR PUPPET TO LIFE




**November 21**
**1 - 2 PM**

**Maison André-Benjamin Papineau**
5475 Saint-Martin Blvd. West, H7T 2X7

Join puppeteer Philippe Gobeille to make your own puppet. Discover the fashions of yesteryear, create a unique character, and learn how to bring it to life through play and puppetry. Activity for ages 6 and up. Children ages 6 to 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

*maisonabp.ca*

## CHRISTMAS MARKET



**Until November 22**

**Serres Cléroux**
1570 Principale Street, H7X 4A8

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*serrescleroux.com*

## POP-UP CINEMA: SPACE CADET




**November 22**
**3 PM**

**Salle André-Mathieu**
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# Transports Québec conducts 'safety corridor' awareness campaign in Laval

The Quebec Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, in collaboration with the Laval Police Service, conducted an awareness campaign recently on respecting road safety corridors.

The purpose, according to the ministry, was to remind drivers of their obligations when passing by idling or stopped vehicles, as well as promote safe driving practices overall.

The campaign, which took place during a lunch hour on Route 148 (Avenue des Bois) at the intersection with Rue Principale, allowed road safety officers to approach motorists, distribute an information sheet and reiterate the essential role of this safety measure in reducing risks associated with roadworks.

### What's a safety corridor?

According to the ministry, a safety corridor is a clear space between a vehicle stopped on a public roadway and moving vehicles to ensure the safety of workers who are performing roadwork. The driver must perform the following maneuvers when a stopped vehicle is:

- An emergency vehicle with its flashing lights or emergency beacons activated;
- A tow truck with its flashing lights activated;
- A surveillance vehicle or a road vehicle displaying a flashing yellow arrow.
- A reminder of the main rules to follow and best practices to adopt:
- Slow down when a vehicle is stopped on the shoulder and its flashing lights, emergency beacons, or flashing yellow arrow are activated;
- Change lanes only after ensuring it is safe to do so;
- If changing lanes cannot be done safely, move as far away from the stopped vehicle as possible while remaining in the original lane;
- Remain extremely vigilant until the area has been completely cleared.

### A legal obligation for motorists

The provincial transport ministry reminds drivers that respecting the safety corridor is not only a legal requirement under the Highway Safety Code since 2012, but also a responsible act towards those working on the road network. These workers rely on drivers' vigilance and cooperation to perform their duties safely.

Through this initiative, says the highway ministry, awareness efforts continue to reduce risky behaviors and promote a safer road environment for everyone.

The ministry acknowledged the Laval Police Service's participation in the awareness campaign and encouraged all drivers to exercise caution and respect for those who risk their lives to protect others.



**Some motorists rolling along Route 148 (avenue des Bois) in the Laval-Ouest sector of Laval were handed leaflets and other information regarding the importance of respecting safety corridors when passing by vehicles idled or stopped on the side of the road. (Photo: Courtesy of Quebec Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility)**

# Laval Police seek help finding teen missing two months

The Laval police are asking the public to help them find a teenager who has been missing for two months.

Eva Haji, 16, was reprted missing from her home on September 10 and has not been seen since then.

"This investigation remains a priority for the detectives assigned to the case," the Laval Police said in a statement last week. "The teenager has still not been found."

According to the police, Haji's family members fear for her safety as she does not have medications with her which are essential to her health.

"The lack of this medication could put the teenager in a highly vulnerable situation, particularly when faced with people with malicious intent," said the police. They believe she may be in the Greater Montreal area or may also have travelled to Toronto.



# Arrests made after shots fired on des Laurentides Blvd.

The Laval Police arrested two male suspects on Monday November 9 after receiving reports of gunshots being fired at a man seen fleeing along des Laurentides Blvd. in the city's Vimont district.

Around 3 pm, after allegedly firing the shots, the two suspects were seen getting into a BMW and leaving the area, according to several witness reports received by the 9-1-1 emergency phone service.

According to a statement issued by the Laval Police Service, officers in a patrol car decided to avoid engaging in a potentially dangerous chase with the suspects by striking their car with the police vehicle. The two suspects were arrested.

# Montée Masson recycling yard fire causes $50,000 damage

A fire on the afternoon of Wednesday November 11 sent up a thick column of dense black smoke from the work yard at Elikem Enviro Solutions, a recycling company located on Montée Masson in Saint-François.

According to news reports, a controlled fire that was started to burn piles of debris as well as surplus wooden pallets grew out of control and required the intervention of Laval's fire services.

The first firefighters arrived on scene at 3:40 p.m. when significant flames were visible coming from the backyard of the company.

Thanks to a recently-installed water supply network, the firefighters used high-volume water jets and an aerial ladder cannon to limit the damage and prevent the fire from spreading to surrounding buildings.

A little more than a quarter-hour before 7 pm, the blaze was declared to be under control. Damages were estimated at $25,000 to buildings, with an equal amount for loss of equipment and other property.

# Fire heavily damages home on Dussault Ave. in L-D-R

Two people became temporarily homeless on Tuesday November 10 after a fire heavily damaged their house during the early evening on Dussault Avenue in Laval-des-Rapides between Laurier Street and des Prairies Boulevard.

The 911 emergency phone service received a call around 5:20 p.m. Upon arrival, firefighters saw a large plume of black smoke coming from the kitchen.

It is assumed that the fire started while someone was preparing a meal and that flames spread from the lit stove into the range hood.

The fire was considered to be under control by 5:48 p.m. after a check was carried out by firefighters in the building's attic to confirm the absence of any flames that might have made their way there.

However, the damage caused by fire and smoke was estimated at approximately $50,000 for the building and $30,000 for its furnishings and other contents.

# Other recent fires in Laval

NOVEMBER 4 | 12:27 AM // Building fire on Lauzon Street in the Sainte-Dorothée sector. Residential building. Flames visible on the roof of the building as well as the roof of the adjacent building. The code was 10-12, meaning a second alarm.

NOVEMBER 2 | 2:00 AM // Building fire on Curie Street in Laval's Chomedey sector. Residential building. Flames visible on the roof. Code 10-09, meaning full response and potential for escalation.



# Kids' corner

## *Spiders: Test your knowledge of these eight-legged creatures!*

Some find them fascinating; others find them scary or disgusting. Whether you love them or hate them, get to know spiders better by answering these seven questions. You're sure to learn some interesting facts!

1. Which family do spiders belong to?
   - **A.** Arachnids
   - **B.** Woodlice
   - **C.** Insects
2. How many species of spiders are there in the world?
   - **A.** Nearly 16,000
   - **B.** About 32,000
   - **C.** More than 47,000
3. How many eyes do most spiders have?
   - **A.** Two
   - **B.** Five
   - **C.** Eight
4. What colour is spider blood when exposed to air?
   - **A.** Red
   - **B.** Blue
   - **C.** Yellow
5. How long does it usually take a spider to spin its web?
   - **A.** Twenty minutes
   - **B.** One hour
   - **C.** Four hours
6. What are the organs that allow spiders to produce silk called?
   - **A.** Spinnerets
   - **B.** Spools
   - **C.** Embroiderers
7. How do spiders feed?
   - **A.** They swallow live insects whole when they get caught in their webs.
   - **B.** They tear their prey apart before eating it.
   - **C.** They transform the insides of their prey into a liquid meal.

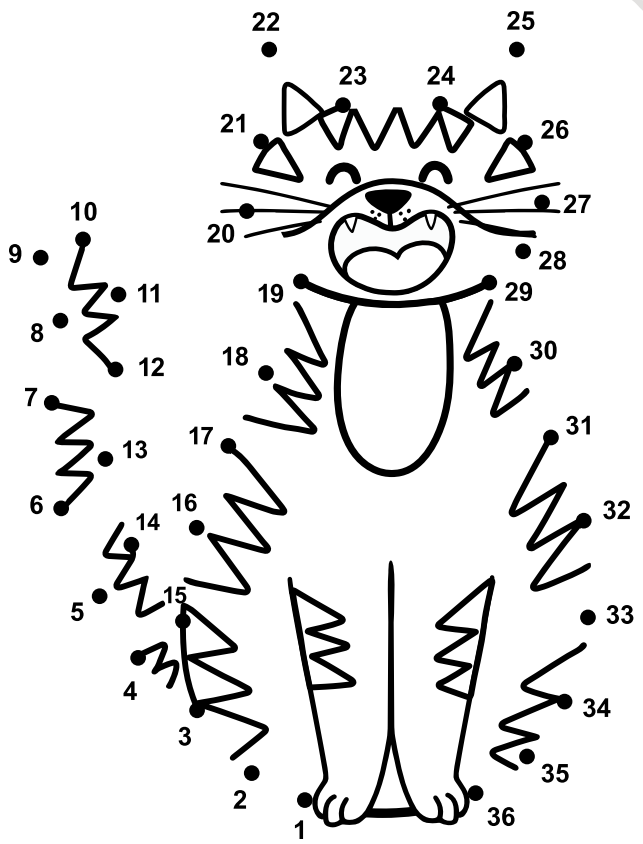


**ANSWERS**

1-A
2-C
3-C
4-B
5-B
6-A
7-C

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# Direct Answers

## From Wayne & Tamara

### Leg To Stand On

**Q** *My husband applied for a position through an employment agency. He was shortlisted and told by the agency he met all the client requirements. Later the agency informed him he wasn't picked for an interview, and my husband asked why. Their response was, "We would like to know, too."*

*Only then was it revealed it was a company where he had a personal issue with one of the employees. The company manager revealed my husband has a reputation for chatting up women. A few months back the woman, her husband, my husband and myself met and resolved all the issues and concerns we had.*

*My husband contacted the manager and told him it was uncalled for to put his integrity in a bad light with the agency. The manager replied my husband is the ideal candidate, but the decision came from his boss at the head office.*

*Yes, my husband made a mistake, but should his work professionalism be judged? This has ruined any further prospects with the employment agency. My husband believes the manager's conduct was unethical and this is not fair.*

*Valera*

**A** **Valera, you are concealing information. We don't know what happened with the woman, whether your husband is currently employed, or what profession we are talking about. We can only assume you're glossing over facts because they don't help your cause.**

**Whatever happened was serious enough to require a meeting with a woman, her husband, your husband and you. In addition, your husband's actions with other women have involved inappropriate behavior.**

**It's obvious your husband has no legal remedies against this woman, other women, the employment agency or the manager. The employment agency learned of your husband's conduct only because he asked them to find out. He brought this on himself. The remarkable thing is the manager of the hiring company told the truth instead of falling back on corporate doubletalk.**

**When you married your husband, you hitched your wagon to someone else's star. Some stars fade, some stars fall, and some stars die. Rather than defending him, consider the impact of his behavior on your life and your future.**

**In some countries television shows cannot be aired unless bad acts are shown to be punished. As far as we can tell, your husband is bearing the consequences of his own actions, which is the way the world is supposed to work yet often doesn't.**

**Wayne & Tamara**



### Irreconcilable Difference

**Q** *I have been in a relationship with my girlfriend two years. I love her dearly, who she is and the great times we have together. My problem is I have a healthy, active sex drive and she does not.*

*Making love is an important part of a relationship, and since we only physically communicate once every six or eight weeks, it gives me the feeling of eventual relationship doom. That thought scares me because I don't want to lose her.*

*When I try talking to her about it, she gets upset and won't discuss it. I always end up feeling like a creep and telling myself sex isn't everything. Then my frustration builds, along with sadness and longing for that connection. I am not one to cheat, but I can't imagine a life without intimacy.*

*Aaron*

**A** **Aaron, you went shopping for a dog and brought home a cat. Now you want the cat to bark like a dog. That can never happen.**

**In relationships many people focus on the prize part, not the negative part. But the shine wears off prizes quickly, leaving only the negatives. Each of you needs a person suited to your genuine self, not someone who must make incessant compromises to be with you.**

**Though your current relationship is not meant to be, you should respect this woman's honesty. Many people, both male and female, conceal their disinterest in sex until after a wedding.**

**Wayne & Tamara**


**Wayne & Tamara Mitchell are the authors of Your Other Half (*www.yourotherhalf.com*)**
**Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964**
**or email: *GetInTouch@WayneAndTamara.com***
**WayneAndTamara.com**

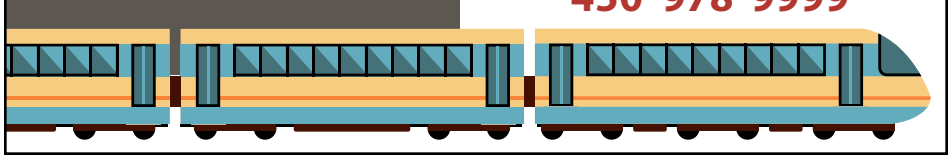


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# Laval MNAs welcome federal budget measures **but seek concrete benefits for region**

**NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA**
info@newsfirst.ca

Laval's six Liberal Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) say they see potential in several initiatives announced in the federal government's 2026 budget, but are calling for clear implementation plans and tangible benefits for residents of the region.

Following the presentation of the budget, the six elected officials reviewed the measures through the lens of Laval's priorities, including housing, health care, innovation, economic development and environmental resilience. While welcoming a number of federal investments, they stressed that funding commitments must translate into meaningful outcomes for communities on the ground.

Housing remains a major concern for Marie-Claude Fournier, MNA for Fabre and the Quebec Liberal Party's housing critic, who highlighted the more than $11 billion earmarked nationally to address homelessness.

"This is very good news, but these funds are being announced on a Canada-wide scale," Fournier said. "We will be monitoring closely to ensure that Quebec, and Laval in particular, receives its fair share at a time when needs continue to grow."

Madeleine Féquière, MNA for Chomedey and critic for Treasury Board and international Francophonie affairs, said the effectiveness of the budget will ultimately be measured by its results rather than the size of its spending commitments.

"Beyond the billions being announced, what matters is the government's ability to transform investments into concrete results for citizens," Féquière said.

She also welcomed funding linked to the 2028 Francophonie Summit, describing it as an opportunity to strengthen the role of the French language and reinforce Quebec's cultural and economic ties throughout the Francophone world.

For Cécile Tremblay, MNA for Sainte-Rose and critic for health prevention and seniors, one of the budget's most significant measures is the introduction of a fully refundable tax credit for caregivers.

"Caregivers play a vital role in our society, yet their contribution is often underappreciated," Tremblay said. "As the population ages, helping seniors remain in their homes and communities must be a priority, and caregivers are central to that approach."

The budget's innovation and productivity measures drew support from Caroline De Guire, MNA for Laval-des-Rapides and critic for science, research and innovation. She pointed to the expansion of research and development tax credits and new productivity-related incentives as positive steps for businesses.

"These measures are encouraging for research and innovation," De Guire said. "Laval's strong scientific and entrepreneurial ecosystem should be able to transform these investments into productivity gains, jobs and concrete benefits for residents."

Economic competitiveness was another area of focus. Louis Ialenti, MNA for Vimont-Auteuil and critic for small business and business succession, noted that Laval exporters continue to face significant challenges despite exporting more than $2.1 billion in goods in 2024.

"The new productivity incentives should encourage investment and modernization," Ialenti said. "However, we would have liked to see stronger measures to help businesses diversify their export markets, particularly given ongoing trade pressures from the United States."

Environmental concerns were raised by Virginie Dufour, MNA for Mille-Îles and critic for the environment, climate change and biodiversity protection. While the budget contains major investments in electrification, she said adaptation to climate-related disasters remains underfunded.

"The fight against climate change cannot be limited to the energy transition alone," Dufour said. "It must also include adaptation to its very real consequences."

She pointed to the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Debby in 2024, which affected thousands of Laval residents, as evidence that municipalities require greater support to improve resilience against extreme weather events.

The six Laval Liberal MNAs said they will continue working together to advance the region's priorities and ensure Laval benefits from federal investments. They also reiterated their commitment to collaborating with the Quebec government while remaining vigilant in monitoring the delivery of federal commitments and their impact on local communities.

# STL Launches food drive to support Laval families in need

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The Société de transport de Laval (STL) is calling on residents to show their generosity by helping fill an entire city bus with food donations for local families in need ahead of the holiday season.

The transit agency announced the fourth edition of its annual food drive in support of the Christmas basket program operated by the Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval (CBML). The event will take place on November 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Terminus Le Carrefour, where members of the public are invited to donate non-perishable food items.

Donations will be collected at STL's facilities located at 3000 Boulevard Le Carrefour. Monetary contributions and bank card donations will also be accepted on site, with all proceeds going directly to CBML.

Last year's campaign collected nearly 1.5 tonnes of food and raised more than $3,200. Thanks to initiatives like this, CBML was able to provide holiday food baskets to approximately 3,000 Laval families.

"Thanks to the generosity of our community and the involvement of our employees, STL is proud to continue supporting CBML and Laval residents facing difficult times," said Josée Roy, STL's General Manager. "As the holiday season approaches, we are confident that solidarity and mutual support will once again be on display. We would like to thank everyone in advance for their generosity."

The campaign also includes an internal fundraising effort among STL employees, who have already begun collecting donations.

According to Pierre Brabant, Chair of the STL Board of Directors, food assistance needs continue to grow across the region.

"The landscape of food aid is changing, and the needs are greater than ever," Brabant said. "We can collectively be proud of this initiative, which encourages sharing and compassion. Together, let's fill a bus with food donations on November 19 and continue making a difference in our Laval community."

STL has supported the Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval for more than 17 years, notably through its breakfast and snack program in Laval schools. The organization's longstanding partnership reflects a shared commitment to helping vulnerable families and ensuring that those struggling during the holiday season receive much-needed support.

Residents wishing to contribute are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items or make a financial donation at the event on November 19. Organizers hope this year's campaign will surpass previous fundraising totals and help ensure that local families can enjoy a brighter holiday season.



# HOROSCOPE

Week of **NOVEMBER 22 TO 28, 2026**

The luckiest signs this week:
**LEO, VIRGO AND LIBRA**

### ARIES
A significant sum of money is on the way, possibly linked to an insurance matter or inheritance. Rely on diplomacy in your interactions, as a hasty word could harm your interests. Master your impatience to protect your position.

### TAURUS
You're bursting with energy, and you'll need to channel it into something constructive. Sports, creativity or outdoor activities offer healthy outlets that preserve your morale. Ignoring this need could weaken your emotional and psychological well-being.

### GEMINI
Your mind is overflowing with ideas and a desire for renewal. A sudden inspiration may push you toward a surprising professional shift. Welcome these changes, as they'll open promising doors and fuel your thirst for discovery.

### CANCER
Your schedule is intensifying, especially in public or group activities. Many people may seek your expertise. Despite your fatigue, this lively period will bring gains, alliances and valuable experiences.

### LEO
Transformations are beginning in your professional environment. Even if some situations feel unstable, these changes are laying the groundwork for your advancement. Don't lose confidence; your natural leadership will help you reap benefits from this turning point.

### VIRGO
An impulse will push you toward an exciting adventure, whether it's a trip or a major personal project. It'll come with some expenses, but the results will bring satisfaction and a refreshing sense of renewal.

### LIBRA
Tensions or disagreements may disrupt your plans. Before making a decision, wait for emotions to settle down. Clear thinking and patience will help you choose the path most suitable to everyone.

### SCORPIO
You'll have to make adjustments to achieve balance in your personal and professional commitments. A review of your organization will prove beneficial. On the health front, make rest a priority. Restorative sleep will strengthen both physical and emotional resilience.

### SAGITTARIUS
Your desire to build your own success is growing stronger. A business idea or independent project will take shape this week. Stimulating collaborations will emerge, fueling your ambitions and paving the way for sustainable growth.

### CAPRICORN
You'll shine under the spotlight of recognition. A public victory, distinction or remarkable performance will enhance your prestige. Celebrate this moment, as it confirms the impact of your past efforts.

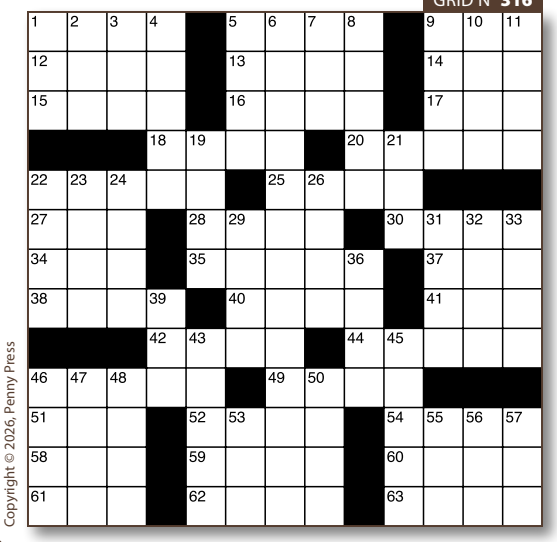
### AQUARIUS
A major sorting process is needed in your surroundings. By tidying up your space and reorganizing your priorities, you'll regain serenity and mental clarity. Don't hesitate to assert your authority if a situation requires it; your voice matters.

### PISCES
You'll have to deal with vague or critical communicators this week. Confusion may reign for a while, but your diplomacy will shift the dynamic. If you keep moving forward, mutual understanding will eventually take hold and strengthen your relationships.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORD

GRID N° **316**



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**ACROSS**
1. Cover with gold
5. "God's Little _____"
9. Soaking
12. Place
13. Stop, to Dobbin
14. Poison _____
15. _____ diving
16. Permits
17. Puppy's bite
18. Event
20. Bald bird
22. In short
25. Character
27. Operated
28. Served for a point
30. "_____ Girl"
34. Aardvark's snack
35. Spring bird
37. Glacier material
38. Put on cargo
40. Old stringed instrument
41. Fish "arm"
42. Perceive sound
44. Loses traction
46. Utensil
49. Entry
51. Not loud
52. Ancient
54. Stages of history
58. Prospector's quest
59. Rope
60. "_____ Rider"
61. Tie the knot
62. Flip, as a coin
63. Spout

**DOWN**
1. Oxygen or helium, e.g.
2. Provoke
3. Hawaiian handout
4. Do the electric slide
5. Hole punchers
6. Popular barbecue items
7. Spoil
8. Artist's tripod
9. Bird's flapper
10. "_____ Woman"
11. Classify
19. Long way off
21. Fore's partner
22. Bikini tops
23. Go on and on
24. Division preposition
26. Emend
29. Kind of soda
31. Sound gear: hyph.
32. Etching liquid
33. Decade numbers
36. Aerie
39. "____ Do You Love"
43. Pass, as a law
45. Holds on to
46. Not very busy
47. Leaf opening
48. Had bills
50. Does arithmetic
53. Sticky glop
55. Musical style
56. Beerlike beverage
57. Do needlework

## Sudoku

### HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line.
You already have a few numbers to get you started.

Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

GRID N° **1009**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 7 | | 2 |
| | | | | 7 | 4 | | 3 | |
| | 9 | | 6 | | 2 | 8 | | |
| 7 | 5 | | | | | 2 | | 4 |
| | 4 | | | | | | | |
| | | 9 | 7 | | 5 | | | |
| 3 | | 6 | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | | 5 | | | | |
| | 7 | 5 | 8 | | | 3 | 6 | |

## LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

**CROSSWORD**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | R | A | ■ | A | R | C | S | ■ | I | T | C | H |
| O | I | L | ■ | P | E | A | T | ■ | T | O | R | E |
| A | P | P | L | E | P | I | E | ■ | S | P | U | D |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | D | O | R | E | D | ■ | B | E | G |
| M | I | T | T | ■ | R | O | L | E | ■ | A | L | E |
| A | R | R | E | S | T | ■ | ■ | C | A | N | ■ | ■ |
| R | E | A | L | M | S | ■ | T | A | M | A | L | E |
| ■ | ■ | D | Y | E | ■ | ■ | H | Y | E | N | A | S |
| A | R | E | ■ | A | F | A | R | ■ | N | A | B | S |
| R | A | M | ■ | R | E | L | O | A | D | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| O | K | A | Y | ■ | L | O | N | G | S | H | O | T |
| M | E | R | E | ■ | T | H | E | E | ■ | E | R | A |
| A | S | K | S | ■ | S | A | S | S | ■ | R | E | D |

**Sudoku**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| 6 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 1 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 |
| 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 5 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 8 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 5 |




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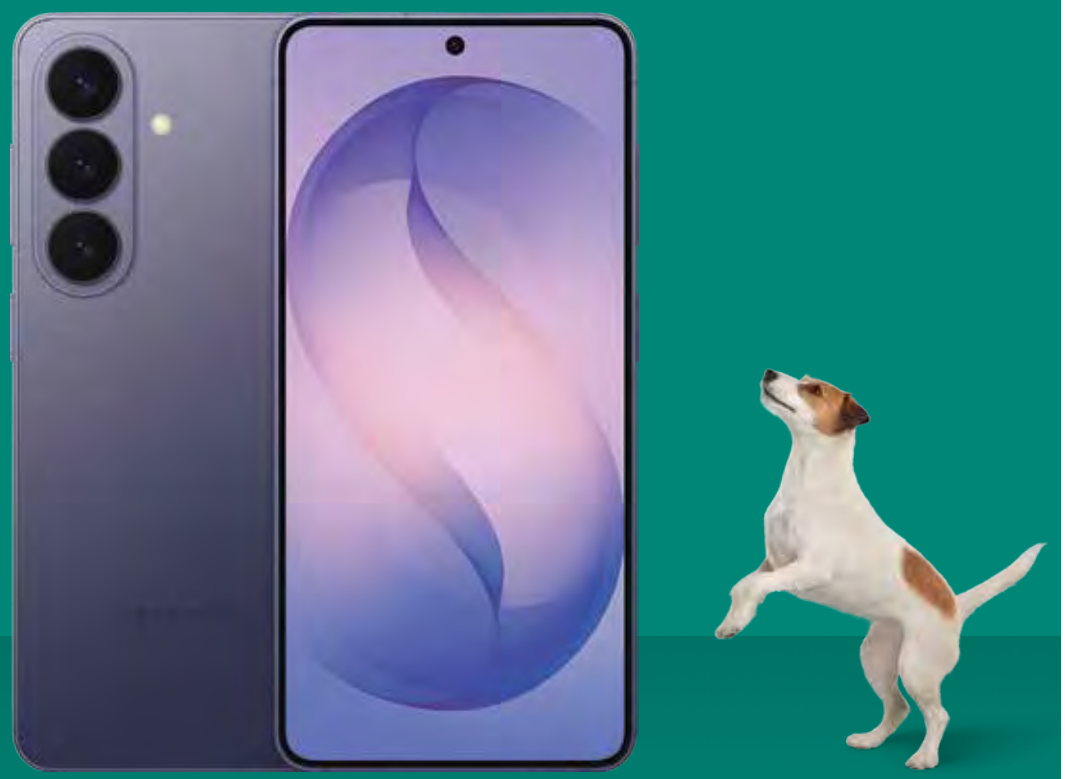
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