

## Letters TO THE EDITOR

# Community investment of time and money may be solution to gypsum controversy

### To the editor,

It is a fact that United States Gypsum will run out of gypsum by 2012. It's hardly surprising given the increased rate of extraction in recent years – a mine that would have been good for many decades is reduced to less than a decade.

Now the American company wants to mine the watershed across the Ferry Road. And if the company doesn't get what it wants, what then?

Perhaps it's time to accept that the mine will close in 2012 and begin to get ready now. The first thing is the security of the gypsum workers, whose numbers have been reduced from many hundreds to 160. The company has six years. It

can develop an early retirement plan for the workers who won't be quite ready to retire in 2012, and a retraining program for the younger workers who can then move on to a more sustainable and secure future in a vocation of their choice.

The timing couldn't be better as the Department of Economic Development tells us that Nova Scotia is suffering from a shortage of skilled labor, with CBC radio reporting recently that there are 400 vacancies in the automotive sector alone.

Open pit gypsum mining has historically played an important role in our area, but now the costs to our environment, our health, and our communities far exceeds the

benefits. It's time to move on.

We would like to know as there is no point in working toward a future for this area if this area is to only be an open sore which will not heal until long after we are gone. I do have one major concern other than the clear cutting and the loss of the water shed, since this area is a peninsula, how are the displaced animals going to get out of this area as they tear down the forest and dig up the land?

Without the United States Gypsum mine these problems will disappear, and we can go back to investing time and money in our own land.

**Sharon Naismith  
Ardoise**