

## Canadian Tire launches loyalty card

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Roger Fox found a Canadian Tire bill worth \$1,000 at his local gas bar in Newmarket a few weeks back.

The face value was only \$1 but the avid Canadian Tire money collector recognized it as a rare “replacement note” because of its unusual numbering.



‘They didn’t make many and were very scarce. It had a different font in the numbering,’ says Fox, a past-president of the Canadian Tire Coupon Collectors Club. ‘I sold it for \$1,000 to one of our members.’

Printed by the same official printer on the same kind of paper as real Canadian currency, Canadian Tire “money” has long held a cherished spot in the nation’s psyche.

That’s one reason the retailer has decided to keep the paper in circulation while launching a new plastic loyalty card this month.

‘We know there are people who love the (paper) program and don’t want to carry plastic. So we’ll allow them to do that,’ said Canadian Tire chief marketing officer Rob Shields.

Canadian Tire may also be counting on consumers to make the smart choice. The new plastic cards will earn rewards at more than double the pace of the paper money.

Canadian Tire announced Wednesday it will begin testing the new Canadian Tire “Money” Advantage card in its Nova Scotia stores and gas bars on Friday, Feb. 24.

The loyalty card allows customers to collect a reward while using their preferred method of payment, whether it’s debit, cash or credit.

The card will earn rewards at the rate of 1 per cent of the value of the purchase, unlike the paper money, which has declined in value to 0.4 per cent.

If used in conjunction with the Canadian Tire Options MasterCard, members of the new loyalty card program can earn 3 per cent of the value of their purchases in Canadian Tire stores and gas bars.

The new program brings Canada’s oldest retail loyalty program into the modern era, enabling it to track customers’ purchases and tailor offerings to their needs.

For consumers, the value of loyalty cards is tough to assess, said Patrick Sojka, editor of the online magazine [rewardscanada.ca](http://rewardscanada.ca). They can range from as little as a tenth of a percent to 1 or 2 per cent, he says.

For retailers, however, the returns can be well worth the investment because they can learn so much about their customers, Sojka said. Retailers can also use bonus points to attract more customers more often or move specific merchandise.

The timing of a national rollout will depend on how well the test works in Nova Scotia, Shields said.