

TransCanada Highway Association President's Report

April 2019 to July 2020

Another consequence of Covid-19 is the late date of the TransCanada Yellowhead Association Annual General Meeting. This year is the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Yellowhead Highway. Again Covid-19 has frustrated the plans and efforts to celebrate this milestone. I am sure seventy-some years ago the people who gathered together to first form the association wondered if the highway would ever be completed.

On April 15, 1947 representatives from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba gathered in Saskatoon for the inaugural meeting of the Trans-Canada Highway System Association, YellowHead Route. Seventy-three years later the TransCanada Yellowhead Highway is a facility to be treasured and used by all. Are you planning a personal holiday along the YellowHead? Is your municipality or business dependant on the YellowHead for receiving supplies or shipping product? The world has changed significantly since 1947 and the Yellowhead is more essential to us than the inaugural group ever contemplated.

Last spring, I was able to attend the North Central Local Government Association's Annual General Meeting in Williams Lake B.C. The problems and needs this group of municipalities face are essentially the same as any group of municipalities in Saskatchewan, Manitoba or Alberta. Their priorities, Advocacy – Communications – Relationships – Resiliency, are transferable into any association's strategic plan including TCYHA.

Working with a local contractor, we produced two videos. The first is an explanation of what the TCYHA is and does plus ending with a call to action. The second video promotes tourism in member communities and is meant to be usable by any municipality along the YellowHead Highway. I do know attracting local tourism is considered a mainstay in all provinces as a major economic driver coming out of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Funding is a major problem for this association. The Highway is functionally operational but still is a work in progress. If you or your organization benefit from the existence of the highway, be it through business use or from personal use, TransCanada Yellowhead Association is the four-province wide advocate of infrastructure and use to the provincial governments and to the federal government. Covid-19 is changing the tourism industry and by working together we can capitalize on local opportunities along the Yellowhead to capture the tourist dollar.

Paul Smith
TCYHA President
(Councillor, Strathcona County AB)