



## **“IN THE CORRIDOR”**

**February, 2009**

**A monthly publication of the Northwest Corridor  
Development Corporation (NCDC)**

### **Saskatchewan Notes**

- Premier, Brad Wall announced this month the Province will accelerate up to \$500 million worth of infrastructure spending to the current fiscal year. It was to be part of the \$1.5 billion the Province intends for 2009-10 budget spending as part of its Ready for Growth infrastructure initiative. They hope getting projects underway sooner will give Saskatchewan an "economic booster shot" during the global economic slowdown. \$131.6 million in provincial funding will be provided for municipal infrastructure projects throughout the province. \$100 million in new funding will be delivered on a per capita basis to urban, rural and northern municipalities through a new Municipal Economic Enhancement Program. \$31.6 million in additional funding is being provided for new projects under the federal-provincial Building Canada Fund with further such project announcements expected shortly
- The Saskatchewan Government announced in February it has approved and will sign protocols to the national Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT); these to amend the labour mobility and dispute resolution chapters. The AIT protocols follow a directive made by the Council of the Federation, endorsed by all of Canada's First Ministers in mid-January
- The Province will provide the City of Saskatoon a \$98.5 million cash injection toward "kick-starting" the Circle Drive South Project. Funding is being provided under the provincial Urban Highway Connector Program. Total project costs will be \$297 million

- It was announced the Saskatchewan Centre of Excellence for Transportation and Infrastructure (SCETI) has entered into a strategic alliance to conduct joint research on advanced road building techniques. The partnership between SCETI and the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) will encompass all facets of transportation and infrastructure research including developing advanced road materials and systems that perform better in the extremes of the Saskatchewan climate. TTI is located at Texas A&M

### **Yukon Notes**

- The Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous three-day festival occurred this month in Whitehorse. The three day winter festival showcases Yukon's diverse culture. Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor congratulated organizers on 45 years of "successfully staging a much loved winter event." The Yukon Government provides \$50,000 in funding to the Rendezvous Society toward marketing and promoting the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous. As well as activities around the city the Rendezvous air show was staged at the Eric Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport
- Yukon Highways and Public Works Minister, Archie Lang, announced in February that, subject to legislative approval, \$2.9 million will be allocated for reconstruction on the Atlin Road. Funding will cover the costs of reconstructing kilometer 6 to 12 of the Atlin Road with bituminous surface treatment (BST). Clearing of the area will begin soon and is expected to be completed in April with reconstruction starting thereafter. The scheduled reconstruction completion date is fall, 2010
- Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources Minister, Brad Cathers, announced a one-year \$1.1-million increase to the Yukon Mining Incentive Program (YMIP). To take effect in the 2009/2010 fiscal year, YMIP is helping stimulate mineral discoveries and advancing existing discoveries to a mature exploration stage. Since 2003, projects receiving funding through YMIP were responsible for 20 significant new discoveries, including the Andrew lead-zinc deposit and the White Gold property

## Industry Notes

- The BCMEA and ILWU Local 514 reached a tentative agreement, subject to ratification by their respective memberships. Ratification of the tentative agreement by ILWU Local 514 members is ongoing as mail in votes can be received until March 5<sup>th</sup>. All votes cast will remain sealed for counting on March 6<sup>th</sup>
- At Prince Rupert, a new \$10 million, 40,000 square foot Container Examination Facility (CEF), constructed and operated by Quickload is now in operation on nearby industrial-zoned Ridley Island. Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) can now examine targeted containers faster and more efficiently. New Pallet VACIS x-ray machines for screening entire pallets, new ocean container venting technology as well as 24/7 container venting have significantly reduced the dwell time, from ship to rail. It's an industry leading four to five days on inspected containers. Dwell time on uninspected containers is one to two days. Offering 24/7 container venting is a first at Canadian ports. It minimizes dwell time on containers to inspect by reducing testing time



Source: Prince Rupert Port Authority

*New Quickload Container Examination Facility (CEF)*

- Plans are reportedly for around 35 ocean vessels capable of handling 12,000 or more TEUs to set sail this year. Orders for such ships placed years ago now see mega-vessels going into service in the face of declining global container volumes. Some industry estimates for first-half, 2009 have container traffic into the US declining almost 12%
  - The National Buyer/Seller Forum, Canada's premier oil sands supply chain development conference was held in February. The forum is a reliable source for industry information on long-term opportunities in Alberta and the oil sands. Forum organizers say annual shutdowns, scheduled overhauls, and facility optimization translate into at least \$15 billion per annum in opportunities for suppliers for the mid to long term. More information on major capital and construction projects, including MRO shutdowns, is available at [www.albertacanada.com/statpub](http://www.albertacanada.com/statpub) and [www.shutdownscanada.com](http://www.shutdownscanada.com)
  - Agrium announced that workers at their potash mine near Vanscoy, Saskatchewan will be laid off for four weeks in March. This because inventory is backed up at their facility. The mine's general manager, Tom Diment, was reported as saying the lay-off will allow the company to manage its inventory because, "at this point there's no place to put the potash." Agrium is trying to avoid cutting jobs, but Diment says this will depend largely on what the market brings in the spring
  - Poor forest industry markets continue to take their toll in the corridor. Include Tolko announcing closure of its High Level, Alberta sawmill, putting nearly 200 people out of work. The announcement followed on news earlier this month from Millar Western of production curtailments and 138 job terminations or lay-offs at their Alberta operations in Whitecourt, Boyle and Fox Creek. As well, Tembec's pulp mill closure in Chetwynd and 180 jobs lost
  - Access the Port of Kitimat Investment Summary, February, 2009 from their website: <http://www.portofkitimat.ca>. The six page summary provides a detailed update on proposed industrial investments for the private Port of Kitimat, now estimated at between \$11.1 and \$15.7 billion
- Congratulations this month were extended to all organizations involved. This as Prince Rupert's Fairview Container Terminal saw the 100th container vessel call at the facility, now sixteen months in operation. The ocean vessel was the 5,446 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) COSCO Hong Kong
  - The largest container ship built to date (by shipping capacity) sailed its maiden voyage from Asia to Europe in February. The new ship, built in South Korea, is capable of handling almost 14,000 TEUs

## British Columbia Notes

- The inaugural meeting of the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, the province's first Regional Municipality, occurred February 6<sup>th</sup> in Fort Nelson, BC. Many were on hand as Mayor, Bill Streeper, Regional Council and Officers took their oaths of office. Guests included: Federal Senator and former Fort Nelson Mayor, Richard Neufeld; BC Minister of Community & Development, Kevin Krueger; Fort Nelson First Nation Chief Kathie Dickie; former Fort Nelson Mayor Andrew Schuck; UBCM President Robert Hobson; former CAO & consultant Colin Griffith; and many former Councillors and Directors for Fort Nelson and Northern Rockies. The Honorable Kevin Krueger, BC Minister of Community Development, presented Mayor Streeper with the new Letters Patent for the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, along with his congratulations and gifts from the Province
- The B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA), although supporting the provincial budget of February 17<sup>th</sup>, said they would have preferred the carbon tax be frozen at 2008 levels

## Alberta Notes

- The Province released a comprehensive 20-year strategic plan for Alberta's oil sands. They aim to reduce the environmental footprint, optimize economic growth, and increase the quality of life in Alberta's oil sands regions. These regions contain the second largest petroleum reserves in the world. The oil sands play a key role in the long-term economic growth and energy security for Alberta and Canada. More information, including electronic copies of the strategic plan, is available at: [www.treasuryboard.alberta.ca](http://www.treasuryboard.alberta.ca)
- With support from the Alberta Government, the industry responsible for logistics, transportation and warehousing throughout the province has developed a workforce strategy to attract more workers to the industry through marketing campaigns, targeted recruitment programs and enhanced training and educational programs. A copy of, *A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Supply Chain Logistics Industry* is available on Alberta Employment and Immigration's website: [www.employment.alberta.ca/betw](http://www.employment.alberta.ca/betw)

## Manitoba Notes

- Northern Manitoba's 2,200 kilometers of winter roads opened to commercial trucks and other vehicles in February, a week earlier than last year. Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Ron Lemieux said the work done to prepare the winter road system was performed by 23 companies and created work for approximately 100 employees. Costs for opening and maintaining Manitoba's winter road network are shared between the Province and Government of Canada. The budget for winter roads increased to a total of \$9 million this year. For latest information on the winter road system, provincial road conditions and related safety, visit: [www.gov.mb.ca/mit/roadinfo](http://www.gov.mb.ca/mit/roadinfo), or, call toll-free: 1-877-MBRoads

## North West Territories Notes

- Northwest Territories (NWT) residents, Aboriginal governments and key stakeholders will be engaged in a territory-wide discussion on electricity regulation, rates and subsidy programs. This by three energy policy experts appointed in February. They will facilitate public meetings to be held as follows: Inuvik - March 4th, Norman Wells - April 1st, Fort Simpson - April 8th, Hay River - April 21st, Fort Smith - April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and, Yellowknife - April 23rd

## National/International Notes

- The Canadian Parliamentary Library posted an analysis (revised Feb. 12, 2009) on the Obama Administration and Canadian Foreign Policy: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E>
- Russian presidential envoy, Artur Chilingarov, said this month that Russia will modernize its icebreaker fleet. Russia will station more researchers in the Arctic as part of a push to stake claim to vast resources of the disputed polar region. Chilingarov, a famed polar scientist recently appointed envoy, said Russia's sizable icebreaker fleet gives them a strong edge in Arctic exploration. The presidential envoy said their government's policy guidelines on the Arctic envisage "expanding the Russian presence there, intensifying research and rebuilding a network of polar stations"

## NCDC Organizational Notes



*George Schmidt 1948 – 2009*

- The Board of Directors of the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation set next meeting for March 17, 2009 in Edmonton, AB
  - The 2009 NCDC Conference and Annual General Meeting will take place in Prince George, BC on October 5 – 7, 2009. Look for details as they develop in the months ahead
  - Thanks Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) for the opportunity of addressing your membership at your North West Region's meeting this month. More information on the AMTA, including the AMTA Conference being held April 17-18, 2009 at the Rimrock Hotel, Banff, AB, can be found at: <http://www.amta.ca>
  - Thanks Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) for the invitation to participate in upcoming transportation-related infrastructure roundtable discussions with Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and Members of the Alberta Legislative Assembly. See information on NADC, including the Challenge North 2009 Conference being held April 22-24, 2009 at the Cold Lake Energy Centre, Cold Lake, AB: <http://www.nadc.gov.ab.ca>
- We were saddened this month by the sudden passing of NCDC Director, George Schmidt. Mayor of the Town of High Level, AB. In 1998, George Schmidt was a founding Director of the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation. Married 39 years to wife, Sonja, George was dedicated to family as well as to community service. George maintained a keen interest in NCDC and its endeavours, always giving of himself and his time, so unselfishly; all for the common good of the Northwest Corridor. We all will miss George's presence on the NCDC Board of Directors. Our condolences go to Sonja and family as well as our thanks for sharing George with NCDC over the years. The memory of George Schmidt will always remain, "In the Corridor"
  - Anyone wishing to contribute in memory of George Schmidt may do so, as designated by the Schmidt family, to: The Northwest FASD Society, Main Floor, 10320 – 99 Street, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada T8V 5X9

### Northwest Corridor



Development Corporation

**Mark your calendars:**  
NCDC Conference and AGM  
October 5 – 7, 2009  
Prince George, BC

**[www.nwcorridor.com](http://www.nwcorridor.com)**

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