

NWLA WELCOMES NEW STAFF AND ADVOCATES FOR UPGRADING RURAL HIGHWAYS



As I sat down to try and pry this quarter's NWLA Message for *Truck LoggerBC* magazine out of my brain, snow began to fall outside. It brought to mind my winter log hauling days. Hoping for minus five degrees and enough snow to smooth out the bush roads but not so much as to make the highways a problem. There was a time in the northwest when you could count on frozen bush roads from early November to mid-April. Load restrictions on the highways never occurred before April. These conditions provided prime hauling opportunities and the most profitable time of year for trucking. Those days appear to be gone.

These days, the freezing level goes up and down like a yo-yo all winter, resulting in several mini breakups through the season that cause damage not only to the road and highway networks but the trucks themselves. Hauling patterns change over time as well, the result being previously lightly used roadways become heavily used whether they be highways or resource roads. The highway between Terrace and Prince Rupert is a good example of these changing trends. With the rapid expansion of the port facilities in Prince Rupert and the increased Asian demand for resources from North America, the commercial volumes travelling that corridor have multiplied substantially. The provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has been doing upgrades to the corridor to try and keep up with the increase in usage.

The transportation corridors in rural British Columbia are an important component of the economic health of rural communities. Many of the bulk commodities being transported originate from rural areas and the extraction of those commodities provides stable, well-paying jobs for people living there. Regular upgrading of the province's transportation infrastruc-

ture is necessary for new opportunities to develop. The bug infestation that has ravaged the provincial forest will result in more changes to the demands on our road networks. Hauling patterns will change to access areas not heavily impacted by bug kill in order to keep mills supplied with logs. Industry and the relevant ministries will need to stay abreast of the coming changes and be prepared for them. Getting products to market is a key component for bulk commodities as well as manufactured products such as lumber, pellets and a multitude of other products. Good roads and highways make the activity

safer, more cost effective and reliable. The membership of the NWLA would like to congratulate the TLA for its 75 years of service to its members and the forest industry in general. It is worth noting that the TLA, the ILA and the NWLA have been in existence for a very long time. That longevity demonstrates the importance of these organizations to industry and their success in attaining their respective members' support over many years of operation.

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A few years ago, I agreed to take on the general manager position for the NWLA on an interim basis. Interim turned out to be quite a spell. I have enjoyed becoming re-involved in the organization and renewing old acquaintances. It's been interesting to see how many of the people I have had contact with over the years are still active in the industry as well as with the organizations that represent them. Organizations like the TLA, ILA, and the NWLA are very important to this province's forest industry. They give government entities a forum through which to achieve effective communi-

cation without having to contact multiple individuals for feedback on important issues and they give members a powerful voice to achieve improvements in how the industry's business is conducted. I would like to express my gratitude to the membership for giving me the opportunity to fill the general manager position for the last few years and hope that I have achieved our goals to their satisfaction.

I am happy to report that we have found the right individual to be general manager on a permanent basis. Brian Lindenbach is a long-time Terrace resident. He has an extensive background in media and has been heavily involved in various clubs in the area. Although not intimately involved in the forest industry, he is keenly interested in expanding his knowledge of forest industry issues and reaching out to our membership to help facilitate the activities of the NWLA. With membership support, Brian has the opportunity and the ability to improve our organization by providing steady, reliable management and a consistent contact for others to communicate with. Brian's goal will not only be to communicate regularly with members and the Association, but to pursue membership opportunities locally and regionally to improve the NWLA presence in representing the northwest forest industry. He also looks forward to liaising with the other associations on joint initiatives affecting our members. Once up to speed, Brian looks forward to attending the TLA and ILA annual conventions as well as providing editorial to this magazine.▲

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