

Minutes
Veterans Memorial Highway Association
North Zone District 2 Meeting
Held Friday, September 29th, 2014
Royal Canadian Legion #165
9317 Huggard Street
Fort McMurray, Alberta

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Barry Morishita at 10:02 A.M.

In Attendance: Barry Morishita Arnold Hansen
Travis Ryan Elvira Smid
Ben Elfring Michael Simpson
Rick Olsen Sonny Rajoo
Elroy Yakemchuk Debbie Hammond
Michael Yakielashek Jane Stroud

Introductions: All persons in attendance introduced themselves and which organization they represented.

Highway 63/881
Coalition for Safety Chairman Morishita called upon Ms. Hammond to provide information on the work which the Highway 63/881 Coalition for Safety is doing. Ms. Hammond stated that the coalition was formed in 2010 membership which includes industries such as trucking companies, safety companies, oil patch industry, provincial organizations as well as municipal regional governments. Their concentrated work revolves around improving the safety use for travellers on Highways 63 and 881. The Coalition has set three priorities being infrastructure improvement, enforcement of existing highway rules and building an education and awareness program for drivers. The target audience are the young workers who use the highways after working long days and then start travelling home. The coalition towards making changes in attitude about driving is their main focus. They want to share the understanding of how drivers view their driving. There has been little to no research to understand how drivers think.

The coalition seeks partnerships with industry to try to leverage and build relationships with employers for public awareness. Strategic Partnerships mean training employees on the worksite about driving, taking the pledge to drive with safety, caution and respect and provide tools such as journey management and set up Traffic Safety Working Groups. In 2013 the Coalition partnered with the Alberta Motor Transportation Association, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Lac La Biche County to jointly sponsor education programs. The focus group targeted was the 20 to 40 year olds as well as including schools. The program identified many issues such as lack of respect and courtesy, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, impatience and older aged drivers who also share those attitudes mentioned. The Coalition will incorporate the findings into a document for information purposes. In 2014 two community events were sponsored which used website driving and roll over simulators to demonstrate how easily accidents happen. Involvement by EMS personnel helped show young people what can happen to vehicles in accidents. A campaign showing passing safety, safe speeds and EMS safety has been developed. Journey Management is the planning of your trip using technology to assist in the pre-planning of your trip which shows how to manage your travelling time such as when to stop and rest.

Ms. Hammond told everyone that Highway 881 is more of a safety issue than Highway 63. The Coalition is working on a public awareness campaign which outlines the fatalities on the highways to bring their point across about driving safely. Statistics show that from 2008 to 2012 677 vehicle accidents occurred with 25 fatalities. Highway 63 is 412 Kilometres long and Highway 881 is 236 kilometres. Both highways need more law enforcement boots on the ground to properly monitor the highway. On any turn around in the oil patch some 30,000 works are travelling the highways in addition to the regular freight and traffic volumes.

Ms. Hammond stated the Coalition has a lot of work to do over the coming years in education, improving infrastructure and better law enforcement and with the continued co-operation of the members Highway 63 and 881 can become safer in the future.

Chairman Morishita thanked Ms. Hammond for her presentation and the Veterans Memorial Highway Association will continue to work towards its goals of safety and highway improvement with Alberta Transportation.

Alberta

Transportation:

Chairman Morishita welcomed Mr. Ron Fraser and Al Neilson from the Alberta Transportation Regional Office looking after the Wood Buffalo area.

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Mr. Fraser provided information on projects in the region. Construction

the Amoco road from kilometre 32 to 49 has been completed. The Illumination project near Conklin is almost complete. A highway widening design from Gregoire Lake to Anzac is underway. Highway 881 has had a major crack filling and selective pavement overlay in 2013 and 2014.

Mr. Neilson reported that Carrilion is moving a shop into Conklin and will use bigger trucks which should provide quicker response on Highway 881.

The trucks will also have wings attached providing better snow removal capability. The department has changed the salt and sand used from previous materials to provide better penetration for icing conditions on 881. Some road problems exist near Anzac due to the soil cement used when the highway was built and was overlaid. Drainage problems are being repaired near Gregoire Lake as well as bridge deck replacement on the North Gregoire Bridge. Some culvert failures are being dug out and replaced. There is scheduled work on CN rail crossings due to changes made by the railway which created different elevation levels. Mr. Fraser stated that the department is re-organizing to central planning which will provide better planning of projects within the Province. Some design work has been done for rest areas and maybe future twinning on 881.

Ben Elfring asked if Trans 511 was connected to google mapping. He said that when you look up google maps it always takes you to Highway 63 and does not mention Highway 881. Mr. Fraser stated that Trans 511 has no connection to google and is a Provincial mapping system which stands alone.

Mr. Neilson stated that they are working very hard with Carrilion to Improve the level of service. Anticipation in advance of storms is a key element to the planning. Due to the length of Highway 881 you can a problem at one portion of the highway and the rest is fine. Carrilion is to try and deploy trucks for the various hills which historically have been a problem.

Mr. Fraser was asked what priorities are there for the future of 881. With increased use of the highway there is a need for passing and climbing lanes especially with the increase in the large wide loads. Highway widening will have to take place at the CHAD project where sulphur trains will be loaded. Chain up areas are also needed in a number of locations.

Chairman Morishita thanked Mr. Fraser and Mr. Neilson for being so upfront with their information about Highway 881. He mentioned that in the past this has not been the case in other areas of the Province. Chairman Morishita wanted to inform Mr. Fraser and Mr. Neilson the Association would like to see staging areas on Highway 881 which maybe could be incorporated with the chain up areas and assist with traffic movement.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

Secretary-Treasurer