From the Deputy Minister

I am very pleased to announce that the Excel program for the development of potential managers and supervisors has been launched. Nominations of participants are now invited.

The goal of the Excel program is to assist the development of future and current managers from within the Ministry. Any employee who has demonstrated a sustained level of successful performance, whose next logical career move would be to a supervisory position and/or a present manager considering a position change, is eligible for nomination.

Selection of participants in the Excel program each year will be based on a number of factors: these include forecasted human resource needs, results of career discussions and self-assessment instruments, and management team recommendations. The senior management teams of each Region and Branch will make final recommendations to the Management Development Steering Committee.

Excel is a program, not a course. Participants will follow a developmental plan which may take up to 20 months to complete. The individualized plan could include management courses, projects and assignments designed to prepare for a specific preferred career choice. However, certain core skills will apply to all Excel development plans. These are:

- Setting and reviewing expectations
- Planning and setting direction
- Building commitment
- Influencing others and resolving conflicts
- Coaching and team development
- Managing change and transition

These core skills have been identified as essential to any Ministry management position, and all Excel participants will receive training and/or coaching in these areas.

Excel is a unique program in our Ministry because it relies on the team approach between employees, supervisors and managers and is supported by the Ministry executive. The sole aim of the Excel team is to prepare the participant to be competitive for a future supervisory or management vacancy within the Ministry.

The success of an Excel participant reflects equally on all members of the development team.

Information booklets about the Excel program and nomination forms are now available through your Personnel office. Nominations should be accompanied by documentation of performance, such as recent Performance Plans and Appraisal, letters of commendation, summaries of achievements, etc. Your Personnel Manager will assist you in preparing a nomination package.

At this time, I would like to urge supervisors and managers to become acquainted with the Excel program, and to actively encourage qualified nominees to consider participating. I also hope that every employee will review his or her own career aspirations with the Ministry.

I regard Excel as a model program for the BC Public Service, the first of its kind to blend individual career plans with organization needs, and to deliberately focus on development as the primary goal. This is its debut year; let’s all make it work!
NEW ROUND OF R&B CONTRACTS UNDERWAY

Contracts for road and bridge maintenance are up for negotiation in all 28 service areas throughout B.C.

Choosing a contractor broadly consists of six steps, a process that requires the full attention of Ministry staff directly involved. “It is nearly a full-time job in itself from June through October,” says Joe Jensen, Regional Director, Central/North East, and director of one of the three Ministry negotiating teams (Earl Lund, Chief Highway Engineer, and Gordon Sutherland, Regional Director, Kootenays, direct others).

The three teams split evaluations and negotiation duties for the 28 areas. Each team also includes a legal counsel representative from the Ministry of Attorney General, a representative from Peat Marwick Stevenson and Kellogg consultants, the regional manager of operations and the district highways manager for the specific service area.

What you are seeing now actually began in the winter of 1990/91 when the Ministry, including regional and district operations staff, reviewed the standards in place and fine-tuned them for the coming round of negotiations. Once Cabinet approved the procedure, the scene was set for the largest undertaking in the history of the Ministry.

The Ministry held a nationally advertised information session in Vancouver in February to alert potential proponents and the industry to opportunities. This also helped to maintain a highly-competitive environment for contracted maintenance.

The first area to go through the step-by-step process was North Cariboo, where the inaugural three-year contract expired July 31:

**Step 1. Advertising for initial proposals.**

Advertisements were placed in February, about four weeks before the closing of bids, in newspapers throughout B.C.

“The initial proposal basically says to the proponent ‘prove to us that you are a stable company and that you have the management experience and resources to do the job’,” says Gary Tronrud, Manager, Maintenance Programs.

**Step 2. Initial proposal evaluation.**

Four initial proposals were received. These were evaluated by Earl Lund’s negotiating team, which found three of the proponents had the necessary requirements to be invited to the next stage, which involves preparing a more detailed proposal.

**Step 3. Inviting detailed proposals.**

The detailed proposal asks each company to provide their specific business and operations plan to carry out road and bridge maintenance. “Each proponent has the option of accepting this invitation,” says Gary. “If they choose to proceed, their detailed proposal as submitted must include an irrevocable letter of credit for $50,000. It is similar to providing a bid deposit, because if they back out of negotiations they lose the money.”

**Step 4. Evaluation and rankings.**

Two of the three companies invited met the submission deadline of May 1. Each provided a written proposal and was interviewed by the negotiating team, which then rated the submissions based on a point system. Management plans, proposed bid prices and financial and operational structures were all evaluated. The points were tallied and the two bids were ranked for negotiation. Earl Lund took the ranking to an executive committee of Vince Collins, Dan Doyle, and Gordon Hogg for approval. Once the committee had given their blessing to the rankings, the top-ranked company was contacted to begin negotiations.

**Step 5. Continued negotiations.**

Negotiations began May 16 and 17 in Quesnel. A second session followed in Vancouver, leading to a successful conclusion between the Ministry and the proponent, Argo Industries.

**Step 6. Finalizing a contract.**

A contract was drafted and one week later, June 19, an interim agreement was signed, obligating Argo to satisfy many of the conditions agreed to. A final “closing” document was signed one day prior to the August 1 turnover date.

“Finalizing contracts in all 28 areas will involve over 200 Ministry staff, most of them directly involved in a number of the essential functions such as collecting information in the field by district and regional staff,” says Gary. “They’ve really gone that extra mile, including sometimes adapting to changing deadlines and putting in enormous effort.”
Effective rehabilitation begins with good planning. To achieve a uniform method of identifying projects, scheduling and priorities, a Ministry committee has been struck to define the policies and procedures required for each region to prepare its own five-year rehabilitation program.

The 10-member committee is a cross-section of Ministry staff chaired by Bill Bedford, Director of Highway Maintenance. Other members are the Regional Managers, Operations for: South Coast, Geoff Stock; Kootenays, Errol Hicks; Thompson-Okanagan, Rick Meidinger; and Vancouver Island, Darcy Byers; as well as Errol Redman, District Highways Manager, Fort George; Dr. Dave Haughton, Research and Pavement Design Engineer, Geotechnical and Materials Engineering Branch; Dirk Nyland, Regional Manager, Planning, North West; Doug Burton, Manager, Program Planning, headquarters; and Gary Farnen, Bridge Inspection Engineer, headquarters.

"A five-year rehabilitation program should identify the Ministry's immediate and long term rehabilitation requirements," says Bill. "The program should be designed to be updated on an annual basis."

The committee has identified several objectives of a five-year program.

They include:
- protecting the transportation system infrastructure
- establishing annual and long-term programs and budget requirements
- coordinating rehabilitation requirements with annual capital and major project programs
- ranking the relative priority and importance of each project
- providing management with consistent information on rehabilitation requirements for decision making
- communicating the Ministry's intention and direction concerning rehabilitation projects

A final draft of the committee's guide should be ready this fall.

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**PROFILE**

**Bruce Hayden: Travelling the World**

When Bruce Hayden chooses his vacation destination this fall you can be sure it won't be part of a tour package. He will probably land at an airport in China or Nepal at 2am with no hotel room to go to and nobody to speak to in English. A frightening experience for most, but for Bruce it's simply the challenge and adventure of travelling.

A seven-year veteran of the Ministry, Bruce is a Geotechnical Engineer with South Coast Geotechnical and Materials Engineering. Bruce has travelled to 18 countries around the world, many of which are not your standard tourist stops. He prefers visiting countries that haven't fallen under Western influence so that he can taste a totally different culture.

Bruce visited Burma in 1986 and says it was his most enjoyable travelling experience. "It had been a socialist state for about 50 years from the time it was under British rule. But there hadn't been any development since the British left - all the buildings and vehicles were 50 years old. Everyone knew English and they were genuinely friendly. They weren't interested in your tourist dollar."

Bruce visits up to four countries over a six-week period every year. He can afford to travel the world by going as a budget traveller. He has stayed in guest houses that provide a clean bed for as little as two dollars a night in South East Asia and six dollars a night in India. He also avoids hotels by travelling at night on a train or a bus and catching some sleep at the same time.

Bruce says there is an important distinction between being a traveller and a tourist. "You don't experience things as a tourist that you do as a traveller. Half the fun is spending time with the locals, trying to learn some of the language and buying my own train ticket rather than having everything arranged for me."

Part of the fun is also hooking up with other travellers like himself. He often meets interesting people that he can join or rely on for recommendations on where to go and what to see.

While most of Bruce's trips have been enriching, not all have been pleasant. In Peru, his bus crashed, nearly going over a cliff, and the rickety plane he was on had to make an emergency landing. He found South America very dangerous - "you never knew when you were going to be robbed."

Bruce hasn't finalized plans for this fall but says a trip to Asia is a strong possibility (he went to Greece and Turkey last year and found them a bit too Westernized for his liking).

As a seasoned world traveller, what piece of advice does he have for other would-be venturers? "Always bring ear plugs and a blow-up pillow."
OPPORTUNITY KNOCKING

Cindy Wells...
traded her dress clothes and secretarial job in Region One for steel-toed boots, a hard hat and a secondment with a survey crew. It may be one of the best moves she has ever made.

Cindy is one of the success stories of Opportunities 90s, a Ministry program, established through the Women’s Programs Committee, that allows administrative staff to apply for work in an entry-level technical position for up to six months, a job they otherwise might not have been able to fill.

Selected staff are seconded into entry-level positions with either engineering, traffic, property services, planning, geotechnical and materials, development approvals, or bridge, construction, paving, district survey and design survey crews. These opportunities are ideal for administrative staff who want to experience a new field without committing permanently to a new position. Opportunities 90s will provide one of these secondments every year in each region and at headquarters.

“The terminology was the greatest challenge my first month in the survey field,” says Cindy. “The crew was excellent about answering my questions no matter how often I asked. The terminology began sinking in, the work place started to come together and I felt quite capable of any guided task.”

The experience Cindy acquired during the program helped her land a full time entry-level position with the survey crew. “Options were given to me left and right regarding career goals. Some of the choices I had were to go back to my original job or stay out in the surveying field.”

Of the four candidates who took part in the program last year, the initial year of Opportunities 90s, two returned to their clerical positions. All four candidates had good things to say about the program.

Supervisors were pleased as well. They say a person who is happier in a new work situation is a more productive employee. And there is a better relationship between the office worker and the technical crew because each has a new insight into the other job.

Now that Cindy has settled into a new position her next career goal is to achieve her survey diploma. “The Opportunities 90s program was perhaps destiny for me.”

Paul Harrison...
is surveying new territory - for the Ministry and for Opportunities 90s.

In June, Paul became the first male to take advantage of the Opportunities 90s program, moving from his Office Assistant 1 position at headquarters to a secondment with a surveying crew at the South Island District Office. The change from working in the office to working in the field has opened his eyes to a potential new career.

“I love it - it’s great working outside and there’s always something new to the job every day,” says Paul. A recent trip to Lake Cowichan typified the variety he finds in surveying. On this particular job, Paul’s duties ranged from measuring the placement of the centreline on a new road going in, to helping determine what size culverts are needed where the road will cross streams.

Paul’s secondment is scheduled to end in September but the experience has been enough to appreciate that a technical career is what he wants. To pursue this goal, Paul plans to take a surveying course at Camosun College, thereby improving his credentials for when a permanent surveying job becomes available.

He recommends Opportunities 90s to other Ministry employees interested in advancing to a technical position. “I like how it worked out,” says Paul. “It’s a really good program.”

More information about Opportunities 90s is available from members of the Women’s Programs Committee.
MAJOR PROJECT UPDATE
OKANAGAN HIGHWAY 97

As the number of people flocking to the Okanagan Valley every year continues to increase, so does the need for a highway to handle more traffic. The Okanagan Highway 97 Major Project, a combined effort of Region Two and headquarters, will help relieve existing bottlenecks.

“Our long-term plan will see Highway 97 widened to four lanes from Kaleden Junction to Vernon, plus selective improvements both north and south of this high-volume core section,” says Rodney Chapman, Project Director. “We expect to have three new sections of the Highway completed by the end of the summer and will begin work on two other sections in the fall.”

At or nearing completion are Trout Creek to Bentley Road, Beaver Lake Road to Wood Lake, and the Vernon 32nd Street extension.

Project group members from Region Two include: Fred Menu, Property Agent; Hans Zimmerman, Construction Manager; Dave Kneeshaw, Regional Planning Engineer; and Bert Lennartz, Design and Survey Manager.

Working with Rodney at headquarters are: Dave Ferguson, Project Manager; Tom Waring, Project Technician; Sven Haugen, Manager of Finance and Administration; Don Johnson, Design Manager; Jon Conquist, Senior Planning Engineer; Ralph English, Engineer/Consultant Liaison; Ivan Grof, Geotechnical Engineer; and Al Planiden, Landscape Manager.

“The overall project has been going extremely well, largely because of the cooperative attitude between Region Two and headquarters,” says Dave Ferguson. “It’s a unique major project because many team members are based in Region Two.”

One of the biggest challenges for the project group has been the completion of the 32nd Street extension in Vernon. This involves the construction of approximately six kilometres of four-lane highway from 43rd Avenue in Vernon, by-passing the north side of Vernon and linking up with Highway 97 at the south end of Swan Lake.

“We’ve had some problems with the fill but hope to have this section finished this summer,” said Hans Zimmerman. In late-June, readings taken near the west approach to the new Swan Lake Overhead revealed the final fill material was initially not strong enough to support the road base material and asphalt layer. Work had to be slowed until roadbed stability returned.

Supervising the 32nd Street extension have been Willie Carlson and, most recently, Doug Gentles, who joined the project a few months ago after working on the Okanagan Connector.

“Our crew handles the engineering, quality control and cost control,” says Doug. “We ensure the work of the contractor conforms to general specifications and special provisions of the contract.”

Meanwhile, the other two sections that were under construction are now completed. The Winfield project - five kilometres of four-lane and five-lane highway from Beaver Lake Road to Wood Lake - was completed by the end of July.

And a nine-kilometre stretch of Highway 97 from Trout Creek Road to Bentley Road has also been four-and-five-laned. Project Supervisor Peter Dasniere says work included construction of a new bridge at Trout Creek and an overpass at Peach Orchard Road. All design and survey work for this section was performed by Region Two.

Bert Lennartz, Design and Survey Manager, says his staff - three design teams, two 12-person survey crews and a nine-person crew - is working well ahead on other sections. “We’ve just completed surveying from Monte Creek to Barhartervale Road and from Barhartervale Road to Monte Lake,” says Bert. Those sections are scheduled for completion in 1994/95 and 1995/96 respectively.

In the meantime, preparations have been underway for the next construction - four-laning Highway 97 from Ellison Lake to Beaver Lake Road in Winfield, and reconstructing the intersection of Highways 3 and 97 in Osoyoos, an intersection with an accident rate seven times normal. Both sections are slated to begin this fall.

The estimated cost of the 1991/92 work program is $17.2 million.
PREPARING FOR EARTHQUAKE
A TEAM EFFORT

Experts say a major earthquake could strike the south coast one day - but are we prepared should it actually happen?

The Ministry is developing an Earthquake Response and Preparedness Plan, aimed at restoring our transportation infrastructure in the event of a catastrophic earthquake. Spearheading the Ministry's efforts is a committee consisting of Neville Hope, from Region Six, Dave Cunliffe, Region One, and Susan O'Connor, Peter Brett and Barry Wilton, headquarters.

Parts of the plan will be used by the Ministry to help fulfill its role as transportation coordinator for the Provincial Emergency Program, the umbrella body for coordinating emergency response. Should a major earthquake occur, the PEP would set up an emergency operations centre and draw on various ministries to coordinate their area of expertise (e.g: the Health Ministry for medical, ours for transportation, etc.). Geoff Stock and Darcy Byers, Regional Operations Managers for Regions One and Six respectively, are preparing a full operations manual for Ministry staff assigned to the operations centre.

The Ministry's action plan details 14 key areas where preparations must be finalized and proposes timelines for each. Employee preparedness/awareness training is one of the priorities. "For our Ministry to be able to do its job in the event of an earthquake we need to have our staff available," says Darcy.

Staff in his Region have undergone training on how to minimize damage to their homes and offices should an earthquake strike and are encouraged to ensure family members are okay before reporting to work. All Ministry staff in coastal regions will receive the training. Maintenance contractors are also invited to participate.

Another important task of the action plan is to organize various modes and agencies in the transportation sector into a united response group. This involves contacting private-sector transportation companies, the federal government (which can access inter-provincial carriers), as well as BC Rail, BC Transit and BC Ferries.

In addition, the Bridge Engineering Branch is evaluating 590 bridges on highways in the coastal regions to determine which are most in need of seismic rehabilitation. The bridges will be ranked based on criteria developed in California. The Bridge Branch is finalizing a short-term plan for retro-fitting bridges where necessary and Region One is arranging for consultants to assess structural damage of specific bridges in the event of an earthquake.

The buildings manager has been requested to ask BC Buildings Corporation to assess all Ministry-occupied buildings to ensure they can remain functional after an earthquake. And emergency arrangements are being made with B.C. Hydro and B.C. Tel for priority power and phone service.

Other delegated responsibilities will have Regional Geotechnical and Materials Branches identifying natural hazards that could be triggered by an earthquake; and each coastal region establishing agreements with local helicopter firms to assist the Ministry's response effort.

"The Ministry's plan is really an ongoing process since we can't predict when a major earthquake will happen," says Darcy. "Therefore, we will constantly review and revise our procedures to ensure we are ready."

MINISTRY WELCOMES ENQUIRY B.C.

In a continuing commitment to service excellence, our Ministry recently made a presentation to Enquiry B.C., the new phone referral service designed to improve public access to government. Information about our Ministry's programs and services was presented by David Baker, Director of Public Affairs, and Barb Harrison, Executive Administrative Coordinator and Enquiry B.C. steering committee member. Updated information will be provided regularly.

Enquiry B.C. is now operating seven days a week. Its main objective is to efficiently direct enquiries from the public to the exact government office that can help them, thereby minimizing run around. If a member of the public calls you with questions your office doesn't deal with, refer the caller to Enquiry B.C.

Victoria: 387-6121
Vancouver: 660-2421
Toll free: 1-800-663-7867
SETTING STANDARDS
BEHIND-THE-SCENES

They play a key role in determining what goes into and onto our highways. Meet the staff at the Geotechnical and Materials Branch Laboratory in Victoria, an innovative and inquisitive group of 17 people dedicated to a goal of keeping our systems safe.

The duties of the Laboratory are wide ranging, says Bob Dick, Manager of Materials Engineering and Technical Services. “Our lab sets standards for the Highways regional labs in B.C. We do research, including all asphalt research in B.C. We do specialized testing when the Ministry needs help on its design work. We also act as an agency for referee testing - if the Ministry and a contractor differ over the quality of materials, we will conduct tests to provide a third opinion.” And that is just a sample of what the Laboratory can do. The Lab building houses an asphalt lab, a chemical lab and a geotechnical and materials section. Plus experienced people do the job. Soils Technician Judy White has been with Geotechnical for 25 years; Terry Kirkbride, 24 years; Steve Geddes, 17 years; Ludvik Mazuch, 14 years; Russ Raine, 12 years, and so on.

They have the knowledge and a full complement of equipment to carry out work that the regional labs aren’t equipped with or staffed to perform. “If a region is having trouble with a particular piece of geotechnical equipment they’ll send it to us to find out why it’s failing,” says Clive Cross, Equipment Machinist. “We can do investigations instantly, as opposed to sending it to an outside agency, which may take two or three weeks.”

Quality assurance is another responsibility. Every year, the Lab tests samples from paint companies vying for the centreline markings contract, to ensure what goes on the highways meets the Ministry’s strict standards for durability and visibility. The tests are followed by regular spot checks that guarantee continued high quality.

The Geotechnical Lab carries out other tests that range from measuring the stress characteristics of plastic used in the Ministry’s safety cones to determining the strength of soil samples. They also test materials by simulating environmental conditions. One machine runs a licence plate decal through bright sunlight to watch for fading; another machine tests signs and maintenance coatings for resistance to a salty environment.

Equipment fabricating and repair is another area. “If any of the regions’ hi-tech gear breaks down, they’ll send it to us for high-precision work that most private shops can’t do,” says Steve Geddes, Senior Geotechnical Laboratory Scientist. “We can do repairs quickly and send it back to the region without long delays.”

But perhaps the area where the Geotechnical Lab is gaining a reputation is in the design of new technology for the Ministry, such as the subsurface data logger. Designed by Electronics Instrument Technician Terry Kirkbride, this prototype device helps predict trends for spring thaws that can cause road instability. The automated device measures the ground temperature at depths of every 100 mm - information the Ministry can access remotely. This technology is a breakthrough for the trucking industry because the data provided helps minimize seasonal load restrictions imposed by the Ministry to protect our highways. “Six of these devices will be in the ground in Region Two this September,” says Terry.

Terry has also assisted in developing a device that tests asphalt pavement for fatigue by simulating the movement and pressure of a tire as it passes over the pavement. This instrument has been under design by the Ministry for the past two years.
NEW TECHNOLOGY GAINS WORLD ATTENTION

Who would have thought that pulp and paper by-products could be used to help build roads? It’s happening in British Columbia thanks to the Geotechnical and Materials Branch Laboratory in Victoria.

The invention is B.C. Stabilizer - a road stabilizing agent that has been successfully used in the construction of 140 kilometres of roads since 1984, mostly in the Cariboo and Kootenays. It is the first invention ever patented by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and one of the few ever patented by the B.C. government.

B.C. Stabilizer is a blend of emulsified bitumen and lignosulphonate, a pulp and paper by-product. The features of B.C. Stabilizer are many. It increases the load-bearing capacity of roads and improves compaction. And stabilized bases do not bleed, rut or crack.

“Stabilizer is inexpensive and easy to apply,” says Senior Asphalt Scientist Ludvik Mazuch, who invented the technology with assistance from Dr. Dave Haughton, Manager of Pavement Development and Design at the Geotechnical and Materials Branch. “It’s environmentally safe and the lignosulphonate is available in large quantities in Canada and the U.S.”

Frank Sawatzky, Paving Project Manager in the Kootenays, says his experience with B.C. Stabilizer has been very positive. “It can bind material that is either clean or dirty. It also gives you a great amount of strength.”

B.C. Stabilizer was recently introduced to Quebec and Manitoba, and has ideal potential for road construction projects in the deserts of the Western United States, Australia, North Africa and the Middle East because it is ideally suited for the stabilization of fine sands.

The potential for B.C. Stabilizer is very exciting. “We made presentations to the Indonesian government and Djakarta University in March,” says Ludvik. “We are planning to visit Africa at the end of summer.”

EVEN A SMALL DONATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Provincial Employees Community Services Fund is preparing to embark on its annual campaign to assist non-profit charities that provide essential services and programs to local communities around B.C. Fund organizers ask you to think about THE DIFFERENCE EVEN A SMALL CONTRIBUTION CAN MAKE.

A little donation goes a long way, according to Evelyn Carter, volunteer Headquarters’ Fund Coordinator. “People shy away from donating because they think they will appear cheap if they make a small bi-weekly donation. NOT SO.” If all 2,387 Ministry employees donated just 50 cents a paycheque (a yearly contribution of $13), the Ministry would contribute more than $31,000.

Government-wide, the Provincial Fund has approximately $800,000 pledged for the 1991 calendar year. “Donations have been increasing every year, even though there are fewer government employees to draw from,” says Barbara Eddy, Provincial Fund Administrator. Of the $800,000 pledged, $49,000 is slated to come from the 372 employees in our Ministry who donate bi-weekly.

The Fund is coordinated regionally by volunteer public service employees. Each district has its own volunteer committee that decides which organizations will receive money pledged in their area. This way, money raised by government employees in Nelson, for example, will be turned over to non-profit charities deemed to be the most deserving in the Nelson area.

All money raised goes directly to the approximately 100 charitable agencies selected by the committees. Administrative costs are absorbed by the government. Agencies receiving money this year range from the B.C. Heart Foundation, to smaller, localized agencies such as the North Peace Care Home Society in Fort St. John.

As part of the fall pledge drive, government employees will get information about the Fund with their pay slips in October. If you wish to contribute, the money you pledge will be deducted from your bi-weekly paycheque beginning in January. Should you leave your job, there is no commitment for donations beyond the period of your employment.

Remember, donations of any amount are appreciated. Let’s aim for 100 per cent.
LEAVING THEIR MARK ON OUR HIGHWAYS

Centreline Marking's Eric Eastick and Barrie Carlson deserved high marks simply for making it to their Road Runner interview. Eric's day had begun with a phone call informing him a department vehicle had been stolen in Nelson. Later that morning, Eric and Barrie learned the Victoria hotel where they were staying had just closed its doors without warning - it was going to become a Japanese girls school - and if they wanted their belongings they had better get back there quickly.

Not exactly a banner day! Things usually go quite a bit more smoothly for Centreline Marking, the people responsible for installing and maintaining all road markings on provincial highways, from centre lines to stop lines, as well as installing reflectors on roads in the Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island.

The Centreline staff consists of 23 regular employees, bolstered by tens of auxiliary workers to handle seasonal demands. Centreline has the most experience of any road-marking branch in Canada. Eric, the Pavement Marking Supervisor, joined Centreline in 1964. Barrie, Administration Officer, has been on board since 1967. There are seven Centreline crews: a thermoplastic crew, a reflective-marking crew, two crosswalk painting crews, a transport driver, a yard person and an office person at Centreline's Cloverdale headquarters.

Centreline marking takes place from April to late October. The pavement has to be completely dry in order to do the work, which makes Eric's job of scheduling crews all the more interesting, given British Columbia's reputation for soggy weather. When it does rain, Eric's foremen radio other accessible areas in search of dry weather. Failing that, vehicle maintenance, surveying and pre-lining can be performed in the rain.

Wet weather is also a good time for safety meetings. Centreline has a strong safety record but is always wary of potential dangers. "Retrieving cones is our most dangerous job," says Eric. "We use a one-and-a-half-ton truck as a barrier to protect the guys picking up cones. If the buffer vehicle driver sees danger coming - for example, gravel flying from an approaching car - he'll radio a warning that the guy picking up cones will hear on a nearby speaker."

Barrie's duties include ensuring all necessary materials are in place for Centreline's jobs throughout the province. This includes receiving goods at the Cloverdale headquarters and re-shipping the materials to 40 destinations in B.C. - an often complex job because the materials are classified as Dangerous Goods.

"Just about half of our seven-million dollar annual budget is spent on materials," says Barrie. Over the course of a year, Centreline paints 25,000 kilometres of road, consuming approximately 150,000 gallons of yellow paint, 80,000 gallons of white paint, 225 tons of thermoplastic and 1.5 million pounds of glass (glass bead is applied on the paint to give it a reflective quality).

The thermoplastic crew carries out all road marking in high-traffic areas.
areas. "We were the first road-marking branch in Canada to use thermoplastics," says Eric. "We began working with a local company in 1975 to develop the technology. Thermoplastic marking dries almost instantly. Our crew puts it down, cools it with water, and traffic can pass over it five minutes later."

If the saying "time means money" is true, then thermoplastics are worth their weight in gold. A crosswalk can be marked in just a fraction of the time that would be required to paint it. With paint, only half of the crosswalk can be done at one time. And the crew has to wait for the paint to dry, then go back to the site to pick up cones.

Durability is another feature of thermoplastics. They usually outlast the life of the blacktop, meaning less maintenance than painted markings and fewer roadwork disruptions for motorists.

The drawback is cost. Thermoplastics cost six times more than paint and therefore are used only on the well-travelled highways of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and other high-traffic density areas of the Province.

Large projects that Centreline has been or will be working on include all road markings on Highway 97 from Summerland to Trout Creek, Highway 1 and 5 near Kamloops, and at the new Lonsdale interchange in North Vancouver. The major project on the horizon is the Cassiar Connector, which will include putting down messages on the road surface, in addition to the normal markings.

All routine projects are scheduled at the beginning of every year by Eric, who travels all the paved highways in B.C. to set priorities. "Highways 1, 3 and 97 are always priorities, especially before the tourists start coming," says Eric.

Oh, yes, those tourists...a Centreline Marking crew's worst nightmare. Out-of-province drivers see nothing wrong with crossing a wet line. They may be allowed to do it at home but many don't know that it is illegal in B.C.

"Fortunately we get good cooperation from the RCMP," says Eric.
REHABILITATING OUR HIGHWAYS

Throughout B.C. this summer Ministry bridge resurfacing, paving and seal coating crews are helping to keep our systems safe by rehabilitating our highways. Rehabilitation is the most cost-effective way to improve the driving surfaces of roads and bridges and extend their useful life. Roads nearing their design lifespan can be restored to almost new for about $60,000 per kilometre. Left to deteriorate further, the only choice is to reconstruct, which could cost five times as much.

Bridge resurfacing is carried out by a crew of 14 supervised by Hans Lehrke. The crew is based in Coquitlam but spends much time away from home. “I’m on the road eight months of the year and my crew from six to seven months,” says Hans. “Our season started in Quesnel in April and will finish in Revelstoke in September. Then in late September and early October the crew will be putting in the bridge seals on jobs we finished during the season.”

The bridge resurfacing process begins when a milling machine is used to grind the concrete deck to a specified depth. This work, along with traffic control, is contracted out. The remainder of the job is completed by the Ministry crew. This includes prep work, such as jackhammering and pressure washing, before laying the new concrete one lane at a time. While the cement is curing, the crew moves to work on other bridges in the vicinity. “We like to have two, three or four bridges on the go at any time,” says Hans.

“Resurfacing a bridge can take anywhere from two weeks to a month to complete, depending on the size of the bridge,” says Larry Thornton, Manager of Equipment and Bridge Resurfacing.

Planning the bridge resurfacing season begins in the previous summer, when decisions are made about where work will take place. Region and District staff select the bridges to be resurfaced and assist Hans over the winter to prepare the detailed work plans for the coming season. Once sites are selected, geotechnical investigations are conducted to compile the information needed to prepare milling contracts. Equipment contracts are also drawn up.

Seal coating is the most cost-effective means of saving maintenance costs on pavement that has begun to show signs of deterioration. It is used both on major highways and minor roads throughout B.C. and is the preferred rehabilitation process for gravel roads. Seal coating involves spraying the road with an emulsified asphalt that includes 30 per cent water. Once the water begins to evaporate, aggregate is applied and rolled into the mixture. This “seals” the road surface to prevent moisture from entering and weakening the roadbed. Seal coating provides a dust-free and uniform travelling surface. Other advantages are a skid-resistant surface which resists black ice conditions in winter and hydroplaning in wet weather.

Performing this work are two 25-person seal coating crews, reputed to be among the finest in North America. The southern crew, under the supervision of Bob Pearson, works mostly in Regions Two and Three from May through September, sometimes longer if the weather permits; the northern crew, headed by Ken Cullen, covers Regions Four and Five from May through August. Each crew is equipped with a field lab.
“Our season is shorter because of the weather, so we usually augment the southern crew in early spring and fall,” says Ken. “We have to have 15 degrees or warmer to do our job and we can’t work in the rain. This year has been poor – we’ve lost about three weeks because of bad weather.” Under decent conditions the crews are capable of seal coating 10 kilometres of two-lane highway a day.

Seal coated sections of highway have withstood B.C.’s most severe weather and traffic conditions, a fact that has “paved” the way for its use as a viable method of treatment in other parts of the world. “We’re still pioneering in the industry,” says Ken. “People from all over North America have come to visit our crews.”

The Ministry’s paving section utilizes 14 crews across B.C. to monitor rehabilitation work done by the contractor. Crew sizes vary from region to region. “We have two crews of seven on Vancouver Island,” says Mike Bishop, Region Six Project Manager, Paving. “We are responsible for all quality and quantity control. We work with the contractor to ensure that Ministry standards are met and that the contracts are completed on time and on budget.”

Tests are done using mobile field labs, regional office labs or both. “Our crews have lab trailers they take with them but they will also send material to the regional lab for final testing,” says John Mill, Region Four Acting Project Manager, Paving. “We perform quality tests in regard to the aggregate used and the asphalt used, as well as the hot mix produced from those products.”

The Ministry crews monitor the work of contractors who perform hot in-place asphalt recycling, overlay repaving and cold in-place repaving. The hot in-place recycling process heats and lifts the existing pavement. A rejuvenating agent is added to restore the binding qualities and the mixture is reapplied to the road on the spot. The resulting surface has all the qualities of new pavement but costs about two thirds less.

Overlay repaving is a lift of pavement applied over the old pavement. This is done when the pavement is too deteriorated to seal coat or recycle in place. Cold in-place recycling involves lifting, grinding and mixing the old asphalt with rejuvenating materials before applying a new asphalt overlay.

During the off-season the paving crews are busy completing reports on work performed during the previous season, as well as gathering data and preparing contracts for the coming year. They also act as regional consultants to other sections such as maintenance and bridge branch.
PRACTISING THE 3 R’S

Do you know the three R’s? Nowadays the three R’s are reduce, re-use and recycle. Give the South Coast Regional Office an “A” for their environmental initiatives. Their volunteer recycling committee has developed a number of measures that have been put into place at their office, including:

- giving all shredded paper to pottery companies so they don’t have to purchase styrofoam packing chips
- promoting Wang Office use to reduce paper memos and photocopying
- using green signs at shared recycle stations which read “RECYCLE IT” in big letters
- dealing with a company that reconditions and re-inks old toner cartridges and printer ribbons at half the cost of purchasing new ones
  - Ministry employees simply drop old ribbons into a recycling box.
- recycling old telephone books
- promoting the use of double-sided photocopying and questioning the need for excess copies
- flattening cardboard boxes and recycling them along with newspapers
- purchasing recycled paper products
- circulating information on recycling at home and at the office

The staff lunch room has a large cork board which displays a recycling tree, onto which leaves are placed everytime enough is recycled to save a small tree. One shaffer bin equals approximately two to three small trees.

REGION 1

TUCKER FORSYTH RETIRES
by Jim Hegan

Tucker Forsyth, District Highways Manager, Howe Sound, has retired after 35 years of dedicated service. Tucker’s career with Highways began in the engineering department of the Burns Lake District. After 10 years he transferred to the North Vancouver Highways District, as a Tech 1 in the Gibsons area. Tucker later became Highways Manager of the Sunshine Coast District and for the last three years, Highways Manager for the Howe Sound District.

Tucker plans to reside in Gibsons and devote more time to his family. Photography, coin and stamp collecting, fishing and curling are some of Tucker’s favourite pastimes.

A retirement party was held for Tucker and his wife, Donna, June 7 at Gleneagles Golf Course in West Vancouver. We wish you well, Tucker, and will be sorry to see you leave the Ministry.

RAY REEKIE RETIRES
by Dave Prince

After working for a private contracting firm on the construction of the Massey Tunnel, Ray was hired by the Highways Department in 1959 and given responsibility for all the electrical maintenance associated with the Tunnel. Ray will always remember the callout during Hurricane Freda in 1962, “On my way to the Tunnel I could look back and see the lights going out by areas, with accompanying flashes. By the time I reached the Tunnel there were only two small pockets of lights left on in the entire city - a very eerie sight!”

In 1969, Ray was recruited as the Assistant Foreman for the Region One electrical crew and in 1977, was appointed District Electrical Maintenance Supervisor. His major accomplishment during the 1980s was the introduction and development of a relatively unique electrical maintenance program which resulted in progressively lower annual repair costs. In 1988, he was appointed Electrical District Manager.

Ray plans to spend much of his leisure time on the golf course or in the garden. Down the road, he and his wife Betty will likely spend more of their time on trips to destinations such as New Zealand.

Good luck to you, Ray, you will be missed by your co-workers and friends!
**REGION 2**

**FIVE YEARS CELEBRATED**

_by Rae-Anne Kurucz_

Driving through the toll booth on May 16, may have left you wondering - barred windows, shackled criminals touting balls and chains, and balloons? Wonder no longer. What you encountered was not the local jail birds on leave but the toll booth staff in celebration.

May 16, was the 5th anniversary of the Coquihalla Highway and the toll booth staff left no gaps in their celebration. The zany trolls (as they affectionately call themselves) decorated booth and body to honour their five years of existence.

While the jail birds did their best to spark the interest of the motorists outside - inside, the celebration continued with walls of memorabilia.

What memories there must be - some of the staff have been there since the beginning and seen it all - streakers, gate crashers and plates from 48 United States in one day.

Ruth Wittenberg (Mama Troll) was there from headquarters to lead the merry bunch of trolls in food and fun. The hardest task demanded of this head troll was the judging of the decorated jail cells (booths). Who won? I think it is safe to say they were all winners.

by Rae-Anne Kurucz

The 22nd annual National Transportation Week was celebrated June 2-8. The objective was to make Canadians more aware of the importance of efficient and safe transportation and the significant role that it plays in our daily lives.

To commemorate the occasion, the Thompson-Okanagan Regional Office “threw down the glove” to challenge Kamloops Transit in a tricycle relay race competition. June 3 saw the long-anticipated competition between the regional office’s ‘women in transportation’ and the highly animated and spirited challengers from Kamloops Transit. Despite the ominous black clouds that loomed about, the neck-breaking pace and photo-finish provided a high level of excitement and fun for all.

In addition, the regional office participated in a number of mall displays throughout the Okanagan Valley during National Transportation Week, exhibiting some of the current and upcoming projects within the region, handling general inquiries from the public and of course, promoting National Transportation Week.

_REGION 2 CELEBRATES NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK_

_REGION 215_
REGION 3

Some of the crews from the Kootenay Lake Ferries gathered aboard the M.V. Anscomb to honour fellow-shipmate Joe Sikorski in a retirement ceremony. Joe started on the ferries in June 1965. Joe lives in Balfour with his wife Barbara. They have two children, Mike and Monica, and two grandchildren. Joe can be found occasionally in his garden, but more often at the new Balfour Golf Course, which conveniently opened upon Joe's retirement.

Letter

A letter, neatly printed on poster-size paper by a Parson elementary school class, was received by a Centreline Marking crew. The crew had conducted an impromptu roadside show-and-tell session on Highway 96 at Parson, southeast of Golden.

To Crew 1962,

Thank you for showing us around the truck. We never knew about the glass beads. We remember about all the special wheels on your painting truck. We learned that you have to wear special boots and safety reflector vests.

Our photos turned out very good.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Murphy's class
Columbia Valley
Elementary School

REGION 4

by Ron Wiebe

June 12 marked the 12th Annual Corporate Cup in Prince George. This year, the event was staged at Massey Place Stadium, home of last year's B.C. Summer Games.

The Corporate Cup is billed as an exciting development in health and fitness participation, in which the objective is to stimulate enthusiasm and participation in appropriate activities to achieve a higher level of fitness and health throughout business, industry, employee and occupational groups. In simple terms, the emphasis is on fun!

This year, a total of 24 teams, some travelling from as far away as Fort St. John and Kitimat, took part in a combination of 13 fun-filled athletic and not-so-athletic events. There were your standard endurance tests such as power walking, running and cycling, but the Corporate Cup encompassed many more events you won't find in your everyday team competition.

Orienteering was the opening event of the day whereby participants had to navigate their way through a course using a map. The fun was just beginning! Later on, the Team Ski event proved to be a hoot! Five team members strapped themselves to a pair of 2"x10" "skis" and attempted to work in unison to race a seemingly endless 40 metres.

The Centipede Race required six participants per team to be physically joined by a costume and then to estimate the time it would take them to race around a 400-metre track. Points were awarded for closest estimated time and best costume.

Region Four was represented by a cross-section of Regional and District office staff including Sue Gravelle, Marilyne Foulston, Cheryl Squair, Larry and Debbie Rowe, Errol and Noreen Redman, Chris Thornhill, Bill Williams and Niels Edelman.

Despite the rain and the cold, the primary objective of the meet was met and a good time was had by all. Way to go team!

Letter

The following letter from a resident of Charlie Lake was received by Geoff Warrington, North Peace District Highways Manager:

Dear Mr. Warrington:

I'd like to thank you for responding to my concerns of the Charlie Lake School Crossing.

Also, on behalf of our family and others, thank you to you and all your department for assisting and resolving an unsafe crossing area.

Sincerely,

W.J. Hartman

IN THE FIELD
REGION 5

JOZEF HAIT RETIRES
NORTH WEST STYLE

by Jane Sparkes

The North West Region bid farewell to Jozef Haits on June 27 at a unique retirement party.

The party was held in the salt shed at gravel “Pit 1” in Terrace with survey tape “streamers” and copies of an old photo of Joe pinned up around the shed.

Joe started with the Ministry in 1967 as a machine operator and over the past 24 years has seen a lot of DHMs come and go. Joe has worked for Wilf MacDonald, Homer Good, Stan Palaposki, Bill Stanley, Peter Wightman and John Newhouse.

Joe’s favourite hobby is photography and he is well known in Terrace for his magnificent photos of the rare Kermodei Bear. Shortly after his retirement bash, Joe flew off to Montreal, where he plans to reside and manage an apartment building. We wish him well in his retirement.

IN MEMORIUM

The regional director’s secretary for the North West Region, Thelma Campbell, died June 20 after a year-long battle with cancer.

Thelma had an interesting and varied life. Born in the Okanagan, she lived and worked in a variety of B.C. locations, including Fort St. John, Kamloops, Nakusp and Terrace. Her careers included bookkeeping, operating a successful flower shop, working for the Department of Highways during Phil Gagliardi’s time, and employment as executive secretary with B.C. Hydro, before rejoining the Ministry in Terrace in 1986.

Thelma had talent in drama, creative writing and painting. She was a published author and poet with several of her works appearing in Readers Digest. Her creative gifts were often put to work in Ministry extra curricular activities including the writing and organizing of Christmas party skits and songs. She also became known as the legendary “Broomhilda” who left nicely wrapped Halloween surprises on everyone’s desk. Thelma was otherwise affectionately known as the Regional “Mom.”

Surviving Thelma are her husband Bob, and two grown sons, Les and David. She will be greatly missed by her co-workers.

REGION 6

PARKIN WINS AWARD

Tom Parkin, Information Officer for Region Six, recently won an international award for natural history writing.

Tom accepted first prize for newspaper writing from his peers at the Outdoor Writers Association of America annual for his piece, “Ptarmigan Too Dumb to Know Better,” published in the December 16, 1990 issue of the Victoria Times-Colonist.

“Ptarmigan are an alpine grouse common in B.C.,” explains Tom. “It was written with a sense of humour which you rarely find in natural history articles. I think it won the award because people like that different style.”

Tom’s current writing project, Green Giants, a children’s book about Pacific Northwest rainforests, will be released next spring.

IN THE FIELD
HIGHWAYS GO GREEN
by Tom Parkin

A trial project by Ministry employees on Saltspring Island has been “wildly” successful. In October 1989, District Development Technician Ross Deveau and Regional Landscape Technician Ann Griffin cooperated with a Ministry hydroseed crew to plant wildflowers on three roads on that Gulf Island.

Deveau’s job includes approving the design and construction of rural land developments as well as new roads. “Normally we sow rye or grass seed along newly-built roadsides, but I felt Saltspring deserved extra effort due to its special character. I wanted to show my Ministry’s concern about this area’s attractiveness. It’s part of our ongoing work with the Islands Trust to modify road standards so they fit within the beauty and lifestyle of the region.”

The result of the joint effort was a technicolour delight. By June 1990, blue eyes of mary, purple fingers of foxglove and red petals of poppies graced the roadsides.

Ross Deveau

“I prefer to use native plants because they’re more resistant to disease than cultivated species,” said Griffin. “And I’m careful to select seed from B.C. suppliers. Such plants are better adapted to our climate. That increases our chance for on-going germination.”

The initial planting was accomplished by hydrosedding, where a mixture of flower and grass seed, fertilizer and water is sprayed under pressure from a truck-mounted tank. As the driver rolls along the road shoulder, another worker can spread the seed up embankments and across rough ground at a rate of 750 litres per minute. Once established, the annual and perennial flowers are left to reproduce on their own. On steep slopes, the plants have practical purpose by preventing soil erosion and aiding slope stability. And since they have aesthetic value, the sowed areas don’t need to be mowed - a cost-savings to the Ministry and to taxpayers. That was particularly evident this year, when angry residents accosted a maintenance crew who had started to operate a mower over nearby roadsides. “The locals have become very protective of their wildflower garden,” says Deveau. “I’ve never had such a positive response from so many people - especially realtors!”

The effort of these employees set up a “win” situation for all parties involved. Their effort not only illustrates appreciation for our environment, but also willingness to innovate and service with excellence.

HOLLYWOOD NORTH STARS WIN HOCKEY POOL

The first annual Ministry hockey pool was a rousing success, drawing 24 teams from throughout the Ministry. The race was hot - only four points separated the first and third place teams. Here, Bill E. Cat, President, Ack-Ack-Enterprises, presents Denise Kors of the winning team, the Hollywood North Stars, with first prize, $240 cash. Jeff Smith fellow Planning Branch employee assists.
NEW LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE OPEN

About 250 people attended the official opening of the new Library Resource Centre July 24 at headquarters. This 2000-square foot facility is brighter and more spacious than the previous third-floor location. The extra room allows for a study area, a feature not found in the old library.

“Our collection is growing all the time,” says Librarian Del Rosario. Information available includes a substantial number of subscription serials, a video collection complete with viewing area, and annual reports of all B.C. ministries and transportation agencies across Canada. If what you are looking for isn't on site, the Resource Centre has the capabilities to locate it for you.

A number of other services are also offered. There's an off-site photocopying service for regional and district offices (in July alone, approximately 150 requests were handled).

The Ministry's Current Awareness Circular, listing recently published journal articles, is distributed to 150 Ministry staff, allowing them to place orders for any of the articles listed.

When it comes to having a good time, the Highway Planning Branch really knows how to tie one on! One afternoon in June, the Planning Branch staged its first annual "Ugly Tie Friday," a contest that drew about 25 entrants. Prizes were awarded in four categories:

Ugliest tie - Michael Goodhelpsen, winner of a cheap bottle of wine.
Brightest tie - Lynda Daniels, winner of a pair of sunglasses.
Most outdated tie - Michael Trickey, for an old bow tie, winner of a plastic watch.
Most tasteless tie - Dave Bachynski, winner of chewing gum.
Wondering what’s happening around the province? Here’s the place to find out.

Listed in each issue of the Road Runner are a few of the contracts that have been awarded, by Region.
The following contracts were awarded between April 1 and July 31, 1991.

**REGION 1**

$1,505,819
Repaving two sections totalling 24 kilometres on the Trans-Canada Highway in the Fraser Canyon and milling and paving in the Sailor Bay Tunnel. Scheduled for completion this fall.

$848,466
Reconstruction of the Mariner Way/Dewdney Trunk Road intersection in Coquitlam.
Phase One of the Johnston/Mariner Connector Project. Scheduled to be completed by fall.

$310,315
Repainting the main cables and suspend cable of the Lions Gate Bridge. Scheduled to be completed by fall.

**REGION 2**

$380,000
Paving two sections totalling 21 kilometres on the Trans-Canada Highway in the Sicamous Malakwa area, from the east side of Bruhn Bridge to the west end of the Malakwa four-lane section and from the east end of the four-lane section to the west side of the Perry River Bridge. Completed this summer.

$229,500
Paving Ashcroft Loop Road and two sections of the Trans-Canada Highway near Spences Bridge. Completed this summer.

**REGION 3**

$737,532
Construction of a new Panorama Bridge, 20 kilometres west of Invermere on Panorama Road near the Panorama Resort area. The 35-metre concrete two-lane structure will replace the existing wooden bridge. Scheduled for completion this fall.

$1,071,805
Repaving a total of 23 kilometres of Highway 23 between Nakusp and Halfway River. Was scheduled for completion by the end of summer.

**REGION 4**

$5,600,000
Reconstructing a three-kilometre section of Mackenzie Avenue between Comer Street and the Weldwood Access Road in Williams Lake to a four-lane curb and gutter standard. Cost shared with the City of Williams Lake. Due to be completed in the fall of 1993.

$3,800,000

$889,000
Resurfacing 44 kilometres of the John Hart Highway 97 from the Parsnip River Bridge, 160 kilometres north of Prince George, north to Azouzetta Lake. Was to be completed by the end of August.

**REGION 5**

$1,983,869
Resurfacing and reconstructing Highway 16 between Moricetown and Lake Kathlyn near Smithers. Involves reconstructing three sections totalling 1.6 km., recycling existing pavement on the highway and using it to pave 22 km of secondary roads and laying new pavement on a 23.5 km section of Highway 16. Scheduled for completion in July 1992.

**REGION 6**

$937,888
Resurfacing a total of 26 kilometres of Trans-Canada Highway 1, Highway 1A and Admirals Road, all in the Victoria area. Was completed this summer.

$700,000
Detailed design work on the East Wellington Road to Biggs Road section of the Nanaimo Inner Route. The first of four sections to go to detailed design. Scheduled for completion by spring of 1992. This is part of the Vancouver Island Highway Major Project.

$319,290
Reconstruction of Lee Road, three kilometres north of Parksville. Scheduled for completion by the end of August, work was to include removal of the existing road fill across Morningstar Creek, emplacing a culvert and installing water, sewer and irrigation lines for a nearby development.