Dale Hillman inspects a sign celebrating the Alaska Highway 50th Anniversary.
**Intro**

Wow! We asked for submissions for the "Working With Nature" edition and submissions we got... lots of them, from all around the province.

Thanks to our contributors, you can meet the *Urophora Affinis*, a biological control agent extraordinary, drive a "Highway to Hollywood", and learn about a very simple, inexpensive way to help the environment.

Deadline for the Fall Road Runner is August 15, 1992. Stories should be no more than 650 words in length and please, send in a couple of pictures (no smaller than 4"x6") per story so we have a choice. Pictures with people are the best.

This is the second edition of the new Road Runner, your comments as to what works and what doesn't, as well as suggestions on how to improve the publication are appreciated.

It is, after all, your magazine.

For this issue, our thanks to staff contributors: Tom Parkin, Brian Stone, Cathy Whitmore, Gerry LeBlanc, Lisa Hobban, Lisa Capitanio, Wally Smith, Chris Thornhill, Ron Wiebe, Al Planiden, John Clark and Fred Hughes.

Thanks also to the staff at South Peace and North Peace Districts for letting us put them in the Spotlight.

**Kris Aitken, Editor**

Remember last issue, the story "On the Road... To Laughter" about Phyllis Diller and Jackie Baird, Manager, Payroll Operations, headquarters? Well there's a sequel. Jackie was invited to attend Phyllis's annual Celebrity Memorabilia Auction for the National Parkinson Foundation at her Brentwood California Estate June 7th.

And here's-re-see Jackie... at the auction standing next to the *Entertainment Tonight* cameras. Jackie says they raised $155,000.
A FISH STORY
Annacis Highway
Environmental Mitigation

By Brian Stone, Project Director, Fraser River Crossing and Connectors

Mike Kent, our new Director of Highway Environment, is tenacious — he doesn’t give up (which is lucky for us because if he did we’d find ourselves working under environmental regulatory agencies that wouldn’t allow us the independence we currently enjoy).

Take a look at the time and effort it has taken to lessen the impact of construction of the Alex Fraser Bridge in the Lower Mainland.

The Alex Fraser Bridge crosses the South Arm of the Fraser River and, with a system of feeder roads and bridges, also provides connections over the Annacis Channel.

The bridges and highway system were constructed in 1984/86 and only now, seven years after opening, is the final mitigation taking place. And that’s not the end of it. The mitigation work will be monitored for a further three years to evaluate its effectiveness.

Let’s start from the beginning. The environmental aspects of the river are managed by the Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP).

Annacis Highway and Alex Fraser Bridge construction disturbed and, in some cases, eliminated fish habitat areas along the river banks. To lessen these impacts meant that replacement sites had to be negotiated with FREMP and constructed by this ministry.

One site, Patrick Island in the Annacis Channel, was developed in the early 1980s during the project design phase. Property was purchased to develop a fish habitat backwater and construction was completed along with the road and bridge works.

As this didn’t provide all the replacement habitat required by FREMP, a second site was located.

The south pier of the main span of the Alex Fraser Bridge is located on the South Sand Island. This is a bit of land built out into the river to provide ship collision protection for the pier and a staging area for bridge construction.

On completion of the bridge, the site was abandoned and, while fenced, became overgrown and used as a local dump.

To transform this site into fish habitat, sand behind the protecting dyke was excavated providing approximately 9000 square metres of ponding area.

Prior to excavation, the underground electric power line to the bridge was brought above ground to cross the pond, a municipal storm sewer was diverted to a new outfall in the river and the new slopes were covered with a filter fabric and rip-rap (a layer of soccer-ball-size stones) to provide bank protection.

The environment to support the fish is provided by Carex marsh grass transplanted from a donor site on the Annacis Channel. A breach in the dyke downstream from the pier provides fish access.

Thanks to the tenacity of Mike Kent, and through negotiation with the Federal Department of Fisheries and FREMP, the successful concept was developed by two consulting firms: P. A. Harder and Kellerhalls Engineering Services. The detailed design was prepared by CBA Engineering with environmental coordination handled by Barbara Archer.

Construction, by day labour, has been supervised by Dan Templeton from the South Coast Region and the Project Management and Administration undertaken by Paul Baal of Major Projects Branch.

It’s a good team, working on a great project — one that should make us all proud to work for MoTH.

Visit the site next time you’re in the Lower Mainland.
Bridging the Environment

"When the spawning season is over, we'll start the bridge." That statement is not coming from a meeting of environmentalists but from a group of bridge builders planning construction of the new Savona Bridge across the Thompson River west of Kamloops.

Construction of the $8-million structure to replace the existing bridge (built in 1928) will start in late fall. The 1992 construction start up coincides with an "off-year" for pink salmon spawning. (Large runs of "Pinks" spawn every odd year.)

It's this kind of sensitivity that is starting to give MoTH a reputation — as a government agency that cares to lead the way when it comes to working with the environment.

Angela Buckingham, Senior Environmental Co-ordinator at headquarters says, "We knew the Thompson River was a major spawning area for pink salmon, but we did not know where it took place relative to the new bridge site.

'It was vital that the new bridge does not affect spawning because the ministry cannot compensate. We've had success with rearing habitat compensation projects, but undertaking spawning habitat replacement in the Thompson River is very risky business.'

Thompson Okanagan Regional Bridge Engineer, John Coyne, surveys the Savona Bridge to be replaced when spawning season is over.

Through Region 2, Environmental Services hired a private fishery consultant who conducted extensive underwater and aerial surveys; observed the spawning distribution and mapped the critical spawning areas.

Aimed with this information project engineers were able to locate bridge piers that avoided critical spawning habitat.

"As a result, we received approval to proceed with bridge building from the federal and provincial fishery agencies," says Angela.

The fishery consultant will continue to work with the project engineers, to ensure critical spawning areas are not disturbed during construction.

On Cable, On-Line

Road Report is now on Rogers Cable, providing up-to-the-minute travel conditions in the Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island, 24 hours a day. There are negotiations now underway for Delta Cable, Whistler Cable and Shaw Cable to come on-line.

With the addition of Inet 2000 Data Base and Microlog, road report is also available on-line. Access is a phone call or a FAX away, as long as a business or an individual has a personal computer, the software and a modem.

Congratulations to Rob McLean and Mike Williams. The Road Report is becoming an electronic ambassador for the ministry and an important public-safety initiative.
From Booms to Bugs!

By Cathy Whitmore and Gerry LeBlanc, Kootenays Region

Biological control agents, such as the Urophora Affinis (that's a seed-head gall fly), are being introduced to challenge the traditional chemical weed control methods ... and they're winning some gains.

In the late 1950s, the ministry began using herbicides for chemical weed and brush control on highway rights-of-way. By the early 1960s, another herbicide program was initiated — commonly known as "shoulder sterilization." Then, in 1973, the government declared a moratorium on the use of chemical vegetation control. When the program started back up in 1974, new licensing and applicator certification requirements from the Ministry of Environment meant the end of widespread chemical brush control. Shoulder sterilization continued only to maintain drainage of gravel shoulders.

The majority of noxious weed infestations (a noxious weed is a pesky, non-native plant which harms or reduces crops or useable rangeland) on highway rights-of-way were still controlled chemically with the use of herbicides but as the ministry became more "environmentally aware," broadcast spraying of noxious weeds from booms (see photo) was abandoned in favour of spot spraying of individual plants or weed patches from hand-held equipment.

A "team" approach was developed with other ministries and livestock associations, to ensure co-ordination of all available resources for the control of noxious weeds, and to avoid overlapping programs.

In recent years, greater emphasis has been placed on an integrated approach, combining biological control agents and manual control methods (such as hand weeding or mowing) with judicious herbicide applications.

The introduction of biological control agents on highway rights-of-way is viewed as a long-term solution to the problem of noxious weeds, designed to reduce the use of chemical herbicides as the agents become more effective. Good news for us and our environment.

Herbicide applications using a 24-foot contour-matic boom, last used in 1979.

Jumping Hoops

By Lisa Hobben, Herbicide Program Co-ordinator, Region 4

This year, as a result of public concern over herbicide use, our permits contain a host of new and more rigid herbicide use restrictions. The most challenging is a requirement to locate and map all domestic water sources within 30 metres of the right-of-way prior to herbicide application.

Our first stop was the Water Management Branch of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. Surely the agency that imposed the restriction would also have the information necessary to fulfill its requirements.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. Wells, dugouts and other water sources are not required to be registered.

We then proceeded to the field. A door-to-door survey along roads scheduled for treatment was initiated on a trial basis. Empty houses, ferocious guard dogs, and more than 1000 kilometres of road to be covered ended our field survey in a hurry.

A mail survey was the final solution — although it couldn't possibly identify all water sources and was dependent on the co-operation of residents. The response to date has been encouraging at a little over 10 per cent.

(A minor set back occurred in the North and South Peace Highway Districts when our survey questionnaire was misinterpreted as a plot by the government to obtain the information necessary to tax residents for water use. But that's another story.)

All the hoops have been jumped and we're finally gearing up for another successful season of noxious weed control in Region 4, with a minimum of risk to both the environment and the public.
Esker Pit Reclamation

By Lisa Capitanio, a co-op student in Region 5

In the North West region, we're becoming more aware of the need to incorporate environmental plans in the design of projects. Increasingly, our projects cross with environmental issues. The Esker Creek Project is one example.

The ministry needed a ready source of gravel for the Esker Creek Overpass Project across the CNR tracks, 30 kilometres west of Terrace on Highway 16. A natural source of gravel was found on a nearby bar in the Skeena River. The ministry logged along the edge of the site to gain access and then began excavating gravel.

When gravel pits are no longer needed, the ministry is simply required to fill the site and replant the logged vegetation.

But, on this project, we saw an opportunity to learn more about ways to minimize the impact of the gravel pit on the environment and even, if we could, improve on nature. We decided to create coho rearing habitat to help increase fish productivity in the area.

When the project was completed, the mitigation work began in consultation with the Ministry of Environment and the Department of Fisheries and the assistance of Environment Services.

The slopes of the pit were contoured and channels of varying depths were dug to provide access to the Skeena River. Special wildseed mixtures were planted to create food, and cottonwood trees to create cover — shade and shelter.

Fish sampling during the fall of 1991 and through the winter indicate that at least 5,000 fish, mainly juvenile coho, entered the reclaimed Esker Gravel Pit during the summer of 1990 to overwinter. Groundwater inflows into the pit apparently provided the perfect water temperatures for fish throughout the winter.

A recent study, between December 1991 and March 1992, showed fish populations increased significantly due to dissolved oxygen levels, providing conditions even more suitable for overwinter survival.

A biologist's report stated, 'This site should have the potential to provide rearing habitat for substantially higher fish numbers as cover and vegetation establish.'

Armed with this knowledge, the next phase is to increase productivity. We plan to plant more cottonwood and put trees into the pond which we refer to as large organic debris (LOD). We're hoping that, over time, leaf litter and insects from adjacent vegetation will provide the main food source for fish as it re-establishes.

Watch out... Please

The centreline section was concerned about their crew's safety on the road with drivers rushing past without care, angry at any delay.

Education, they suggested, was the answer. Let everyone know what they're doing to keep the public safe and maybe the public would then try a little harder to keep our centreline and other road crews safe.

The result: a print, radio and television campaign. The theme is 'Watch for our crews, as you cruise.' Watch out for it.

And watch out for our centreline, bridge resurfacing and sealcoating crews, as you cruise too. Give them a friendly honk and a wave (they're so used to angry honks) and let them know we appreciate what they do for us.
Plant a Tree
For the Environment

By Wally Smith, Roadside Development Supervisor,
South Coast Region

The earth is warming. Carbon dioxide released in the atmosphere is trapping the sun’s energy, turning the earth into a “greenhouse.” Average global temperatures are the highest on record.

I'd like to tell you about something very easy and inexpensive that you can do to make a difference: plant a tree.

Not only do trees cool the earth; they purify air and water, protect watersheds, enhance wildlife habitats and prevent soil erosion. That's why maintaining healthy forests is so important.

Here's the facts about trees:
- Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into life-giving oxygen. One square metre of leaf surface emits 1.07 grams of oxygen.
- Trees shade pavement keeping temperatures lower.
- Trees can reduce the visual glare from paved surfaces and adjacent buildings by as much as 60 per cent.
- Trees can reduce your energy bills by shading your house in the summer and protecting it in the winter.
- A tree, if supplied with adequate water will produce the same effect as five air conditioners running 20 hours per day. A large tree can transpire up to 360 litres of water a day.
- A 12-metre tree can produce 4.5 kilograms of carbohydrates from 190 litres of dissolved minerals via photosynthesis. These carbohydrates form the new growth on the plant and become a source of food for wildlife.

There are many opportunities within the ministry and in our own backyards to help the environment and, possibly, avoid an environmental crisis. Do something about it. Plant a tree.

A row of "Crimson King" maple trees recently planted on Highway #1 in Hope by the South Coast Roadside Development Crew.

20 Years of Jetsam

By Chris Thornhill, Fort George District

How do you unload the jetsam of twenty years of ministry operations? That was the dilemma I recently faced when I was given the mandate to clean up a gravel pit in Prince George.

The "jetsam" consisted of bent lamp standards, damaged and rusting culverts, spent grader blades, about a zillion used tires and tonnes of other discarded materials.

Obviously, this was going to entail more than a Saturday afternoon in the family garage!

With a growing emphasis on the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle), it's important for us to be able to look at ways of disposing of these materials in a positive and constructive way.

I contracted F & K Salvage to remove material to appropriate recyclers.

The steel was sent to Allan's Scrap and Salvage where it was bulk loaded and sent to Vancouver.

One-thousand-six-hundred-and-fifty light truck tires and 160 large truck/grader tires were picked up by Trac Tire Recovery, which shipped them off to Western Rubber Products in New Westminster. They grind spent tires into rubber crumble (raw rubber) and sell this resource to a variety of re-manufacturing companies throughout Western Canada.

(Some of the products that originate from rubber crumble include: rubber matting for rail crossings, rubber for sporting events, interlocking bricks, embedded track flange filler for LRT such as SkyTrain, sidewalk panels, etc.)

While this isn’t the answer to all of our waste disposal problems, it’s comforting to know our ministry has joined a growing network of suppliers, producers and distributors intent on becoming part of the solution.
Rest Areas
Upgraded
By Wally Smith, Roadside Development Supervisor, South Coast Region

Safety rest areas along highways allow motorists to safely exit the travelled way and give them a break from the monotony and fatigue of driving. The ministry is responsible for about 170 rest areas along provincial highways ranging from small sites with pit toilets to large areas with modern facilities.

In May of 1991, the ministry embarked on a program to upgrade provincial safety rest area sites. The program included upgrading high-use rest area sites along B.C. highways from pit toilet facilities to full-service facilities.

The initial priority involved approximately 10 locations around the province, which would boost the total number of sites having full-service facilities to 26.

The rehabilitation included provisions for water, electricity, telephone, sewage disposal and the construction of heated restroom buildings.

Johnson Slough Rest Area, 17 km west of Hope on Highway #7, in Fraser Valley District was chosen as the first upgrading project in South Coast Region.

Rehabilitation included drilling a well, installing a sewage system, sidewalks, fencing, picnic tables (including a specially designed, wheelchair accessible table) and a heated washroom building.

The building is unique, as it has a separate room which is wheelchair accessible. This room, as well as the "Mens" and "Womens" rooms, is equipped with baby change facilities. Interior lighting, ventilation and hand dryers are controlled by sensors to conserve energy and a public telephone is attached to the building as well as a drinking fountain.

Since completion of construction early this spring, many motorists have expressed their approval of the improvements at Johnson Slough Rest Area.

The continuing safety rest area upgrading program will further enhance the ministry's favourable image to the public.

National Transportation Week

All around the province, ministry staff were busy organizing and participating in activities to celebrate National Transportation Week, June 7-13. The theme of this year's event was "Transportation and Technology."

Here's a list of some of the activities.

REGION 1
Set-up mall Displays at Robson Square and Royal Centre in Vancouver and in several public libraries throughout the Lower Mainland, and sponsored an NTW Colouring Contest.

REGION 2
Set-up an outdoor display at Village Green Mall in Vernon in conjunction with the Okanagan Transportation Club and an indoor/outdoor display at Aberdeen Mall in Kamloops, participated in a car rally at 100 Mile House, held an open house at South Cariboo District, South Cariboo District sub-office, Nicola District and Okanagan District sub-office.

REGION 3
Set-up a mall display (History of Highways in the Kootenays) at Chalko-Mika in Nelson and held an open house at Selkirk District office.

REGION 4
Set-up a display at Dawson Creek Mall on theme of "Maintaining Safe Passage through the Years."

REGION 5
Set-up a display at Skeena Mall in Terrace and the Smither's Centre, sponsored a poster contest, challenged each branch as well as other ministries and other local transportation companies to a tricycle race, and participated in the Seafest Parade.

REGION 6
Held an open house at region office, co-sponsored service ads with Island Highway Services Ltd. (maintenance contractor), as well as produced a half-hour show on Shaw Cable in Nanaimo area hosted by Don Smith the Regional Highway Planner and a feature story in the Times-Colonist on Island road history, specifically, bridges.

We'll have pictures in the next Road Runner.
Enabling the Disabled

The Marine Section hired Peter R. Ash (demonstrating a drop curb above), a member of the B.C. Paraplegic Association Advisory Committee, whose duties include assessing access for the disabled on ferries and terminals. Peter also works with personnel on Employment Equity issues specific to the disabled.

The ministry was highlighted, along with other ministries, in a B.C. Government display at Independence '92 — a three-day trade show April 22-25 at B.C. Place in Vancouver that promoted products and services for the disabled.

We thought you'd like to know what we do to enable the disabled in serving the public's need.

• Drop curbs on sidewalks/traffic islands at pedestrian crossings.
• Reduced grades with flat landings at intervals on pedestrian overpasses.
• Studies to intensify traffic signal lamps for the colour blind and seeing impaired.
• Improved rest area sites and buildings (when upgraded or newly designed) including washrooms and picnic tables designed to better accommodate the disabled.
• Audible signals for pedestrian crossings where need is identified.
• Increased walk signal times where need is identified.
• Evaluation of ferry terminals/structures to identify means to enhance accessibility to the disabled.
• Modifications to vessel passenger lounges, doorways and ramp entranceways as well as washrooms.
• Larger and brighter ferry signage for the seeing impaired.

A Better Way

"There's got to be a better way."

That's the message our minister, Art Charbonneau gave roadbuilders and consulting engineers of B.C. when he talked about funding capital highway projects.

He was addressing more than 250 delegates at the wrap-up dinner, sponsored by the B.C. Roadbuilders, for the third annual joint seminar sponsored by the ministry, B.C. Roadbuilders and the Consulting Engineers of B.C. at the Richmond Inn, April 28.

Charbonneau talked of sinking funds, tolls and combinations of funding alternatives to "avoid the roller coaster of capital funding that takes place, based on available funds."

"We provide a sinking fund for school and hospital construction which is paid out over a period of 20 or 25 years — why can we not do that with major highway construction which would have a life span of some 50 to 70 years?"

Our minister's speech concluded a day-long seminar that encompassed an administrative session dedicated to our ministry's proposed changes to the major work agreement, followed by consulting engineers' presentation on workers' safety and roadbuilders' presentation on bonding.

A job well done by Pat Bonser (Construction Contracts and Services Engineering, headquarters) in organizing the conference and by Rodney Chapman (Director, Construction Engineering, headquarters) and Russ Fuller (Manager, Contract Administration) in guiding the ministry's work session.

Minister Art Charbonneau (left) on tour of headquarters, stops in at Financial Systems and talks to Ruth Wittenburg, Senior Manager and Michael Loster, Co-ordinator, Application and Technical Support.
**REGION 1**

**Darrell Bay Upgrade**

To complement the Porteau Cove project, Regional Director Joe Jensen approved $100,000 to upgrade ferry facilities at Darrell Bay, south of Squamish. This upgrade enables the ministry to operate emergency ferry service between Porteau Cove and Darrell Bay if the Sea-to-Sky Highway is closed by a slide north of Porteau.

**Kudos for Cassiar!**

Dale Cripps, Project Supervisor for the project, received the National Transportation Week “Award of Achievement” at the NTW Awards dinner in Vancouver, June 11. The Cassiar project also won the 1992 “Award of Excellence” from the Consulting Engineers of B.C. South Coast salutes Dale and the entire Cassiar project team!

**For the Kids**

Bravo Region 1. Half the staff donned ‘Wear Jeans for Kids’ buttons on March 30th in support of the B.C. Children’s Hospital — raising a lot of awareness and over $200. Now that’s community spirit!

**Ministry at the PNE**

The ministry will again have a display at the Showcase British Columbia Pavilion during the PNE, August 21-September 7, 1992. Come and visit us.

**REGION 2**

**Thanks Mother Nature**

Completion of 10-kilometres of four-laning from Barnhartvale to Campbell Creek near Kamloops, finishes another section in the ongoing effort to upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway. Construction started in May of 1990 and was completed six months ahead of schedule, thanks to mother nature.

**Beat the Clock**

Region 2 will beat the clock once again with another major project — four-laning on Highway 97 from Kelowna Airport to Winfield — despite a major controversy that threatened to slow things down.

The people of Winfield petitioned against the contractor. They weren’t impressed with other work Peters Bros. had done in the area.

The ministry and contractor worked together and, thanks to a lot of pro-active media/public relations, this difficult situation was turned around. The public is now pleased with the project management and will be doubly pleased when the project is completed October 31, 1992, nine months ahead of schedule.

**Wildlife Viewing**

In response to a growing interest in wildlife viewing, the provincial government has established a Wildlife Watch program involving the ministries of Tourism and Environment, Lands and Parks. MoTH’s role is to install the program signs.

March 5, Bill Coates, Area Manager from Osoyoos, attended the first meeting of the Okanagan Regional Wildlife Viewing Steering Committee, which was set up to identify viewing sites in our region. Fifteen sites were located in the Thompson-Okanagan. Sixty sites were identified provincewide.

**New DHM**

May 25th, Steve Husband, Acting DHM turned over the Vernon fort to a new leader, Dan Williams — an import from the Kootenays. For the past five months, Steve has kept the district running smoothly. A job well done Steve and a welcome Dan from the staff in Region 2.

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**Signs Warn**

The new electronic changeable message signs on the Sumas Prairie section of Trans-Canada Highway are a real plus for traffic control. During a sodium hydroxide chemical spill which closed Highway 15 from the Trans-Canada to Highway 10 on May 1st, the sign at Lickman Road warned westbound motorists about the closure.

Congratulations Peter Boudreau, HQ, Electrical and Mark Pratt, Area Manager, Fraser Valley for delivering a quality product.

**Ralph Retires**

Ralph Polnau retired from South Coast Region after enjoying 35 years with the ministry. Ralph’s MoTH career includes operating a grader out of Cloverdale, working on drill rigs with Geotech, hauling for the Centreline Marking crews and, finally, with the Hydroseeder crew. The Roadside Development crew presented him a plaque attached to a piece of ministry cedar picnic table seat, fitted with an old brass hydroseeder nozzle. Ralph and his wife Joan plan to spoil their grandchildren and enjoy their new retirement home in Penticton.

**Porteau Cove Wins**

Geoff Vickery of Reid, Crowther accepted the “Award of Merit” from the Consulting Engineers of B.C. for the Porteau Cove emergency mooring facility. Hats off to Geoff and his colleagues at Reid, Crowther and to the Project Managers: Ellis Meadows of B.C. Ferries and Phil Munn, for this award and the “Feature Project of the Year” award from the Project Management Institute.

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![Porteau Cove, award winning "Feature Project of the Year"]
REGION 3

The Columbia Connection

Region 3 held a “Name the Newsletter Contest” for their staff publication. The winner was the Regional Director himself — Gordon Sutherland — for his The Columbia Connection. A good choice since the Columbia River runs through all four districts. The region is now holding a contest for the design of a region logo for its publication.

Sue Lakeman (left) and Pam Olson were presented awards when Executive Committee met in Nelson for their work on the Occupational Health (Sue) and Wellness Committee (Pam).

Frank receiving a Meritorious Service Award, presented by Gordon Sutherland, Regional Director of the Kootenays Region.

“Leslie and the Potlickers” performing King of the Road at Frank’s retirement party. May 2, 1992

REGION 4

New Digs

Staff in North Peace District are again happy as clams. They were to be the first occupants of the new provincial government building in Fort St. John, but they ended up being last. No matter!

After almost two months of living out of boxes, they’re putting down roots and staff is looking forward to greeting visitors as they gear up for Rendezvous ’92. They invite you to drop by if you’re in their neck of the woods.

April Fools

Some of the staff in South Peace district composed a letter to all Area Managers that have private vehicles on mileage that stated: “Due to the high cost to the ministry, no mileage will be paid as of fiscal year end.”

There were a lot of pale, sick looking Area Managers walking around the office.

The staff responsible are now all booking holidays for next April 1st, because they know revenge will be served.

Training for Tomorrow

The Central/ North East is undergoing a comprehensive review of its Regional Training Plan to identify how to increase frequency and effectiveness of training. Staff is asked to help out by completing training profiles along with Performance Planning Appraisals. These “profiles” will give personnel a clearer picture of what is needed to better “target” training courses.

An enhanced Regional Training Program is expected this Fall.

King of the Road

Frank Sawatzky, Project Manager, Paving retired after working with the ministry for 36 years. A party was held in Frank’s honour in Nelson and 300 people attended.

Frank received a number of gifts including a seven-foot-long BBQ apron with all of his favourite sayings on it and a chair from the Savoy Hotel Pub, where he’s been a regular patron for 20 years.

A special song was written in his honour (to the tune of “King of the Road”) and was performed by “Leslie and the Potlickers,” also known as Susan Lakeman and the men on the Regional Paving Crews.

Frank has the distinction of having every copy of the Road Runner ever published. We hope this one’s a keeper too.
REGION 5

In the Community

At the Fair

In April, the North West Region took part in two trade fairs. The first was in Burns Lake, April 10-11. Lakes District staff put together an excellent display and worked in the booth answering questions.

The second fair was in Terrace, April 24-25. Skeena District and regional staff presented the ministry with an interesting display that included a 1951 transit system and two colour monitors— one showing the highways road inventory. We felt our involvement was worthwhile based on the enthusiasm and number of people we spoke to.

Career Day

May 7th, we participated in Careers Day ’92 at the North West Community College, sponsored by the Kamloops Friendship Society to introduce high school and college students to various careers. Thanks to regional office staff Gail McFadden, Shawn McKinley, Bob Penner, Lisa Capitano (co-op student) and Jane Sparks; and Skeena District and Geotechnical staff Todd Broughton and Dave Carson.

Wilf Taekema, our Senior Design Technician, gave an excellent presentation describing the ministry and various careers within the organization.

Parade Season

May 15th marked the beginning of Parade Season in the North West. This year the region developed a “Highways” mural mounted on the maintenance contractor’s flatbed and added lots of balloons, banners and flowers. Carey Derksen (Engineering Aide from Lakes District) brought out his boys Riley and Clayton, and really got into the spirit of things. Riley dressed as a clown and Clayton a mini-highways worker, while Carey came out as “Orange Man”! Thanks to Lakes District Maintenance for all their help!

We plan to participate in several parades this year. The next one is in Prince Rupert on June 13th. Join us if you’re up this way.

REGION 6

Writer Inspires Kids

A well-known Toronto book publisher has just released Green Giants: Rainforest of the Pacific Northwest—a children’s book written by our very own Tom Parkin, Public Information Officer for Vancouver Island Region.

“It discusses forests and their management in a way which allows kids to better understand environmental events,” says Tom. “I’m hopeful it will inspire and warn kids of the threats to our last big trees.”

The book is part of Douglas & McIntyre’s “Earth Care Series” featuring 48-pages, 64 full-colour photographs and three maps.

Greening the Gulf

An island off the Sunshine Coast, with help from MoTH, did its bit toward “greening the gulf” last fall when they aided in the removal of local relics. Lasqueti Island lies in the Strait of Georgia off Parksville and is reached by private commuter ferry from Vancouver Island. Vehicles arrive and leave only by barge, chartered at owner’s expense.

Over the years, abandoned vehicles accumulated on the island, including some left at a MoTH gravel pit and maintenance yard.

When MoTH agreed to sell the pit to a new owner, the island’s community association asked if we would work with them in cleaning up that and other “unsightly sites.”

Central Island District committed $4,100 toward the effort. Employees from the local maintenance contractor— Island Highway Services Ltd. — donated machine time and labour to haul and stack 154 wrecked or abandoned vehicles, four fridges, dozens of acid batteries, and assorted junk onto a barge for disposal through a metal recycling company.

Volunteers hand-picked the collection areas clean. Congratulations to CID for their environment and community-minded support. We were proud to lend a hand.

Auto Bodies and batteries prior to trucking to barge. Photo by Craig Peterson
HEADQUARTERS

New Environment Branch

The Highway Environment Branch brings together two former Highway Engineering Branch departments — Environmental Services and Roadside Development.

The services of these departments have long been integral with the design and construction of highways. But, it's probably a safe bet that people don't realize the effort that went into protecting fish habitat at a bridge crossing or ensuring migration patterns of deer were not adversely affected by construction of a wide divided highway. And the grasses and lupine flowers on those steep embankments were always there, right?

With the formation of this branch, the ministry has recognized the increasing importance of environmental responsibility, and emphasized its commitment to providing service excellence with respect to sensitive environmental, social and aesthetic issues.

The Director, Mike Kent, is looking forward to building a branch that is second to none in North America when it comes to delivering programs and services that are innovative and technically sound.

A strong network of liaison with the best consultants in the field has already been established, and it is a priority for the Branch to be highly accessible to all offices requiring assistance with environmental mitigation and roadside development matters.

IN THE FIELD

“E” Day

Monday, April 13th was “E” Earthquake Day.

Everybody in headquarters had to duck and cover under their desks — even executive. It was all part of an earthquake drill to prepare us for the real thing. Thanks to the organizers, Steve Netherton and gang, we knew what to do.

Tim Stevens, Director Highway Planning practicing for ‘E’ Day

Snow Flakes Win

Congratulations to Snow Avalanche Programs employees Mike Boissonneault, Gordon Bonwick, and Mark Gale as well as Chris Garrett-Petts from Highway Engineering and Karen Boissonneault. They entered as the “Snow Flakes” in the Garden City, 10-kilometre road race and placed second in the Corporate Team category.

Budgets vs. Major Projects

A few months back, the “budget” group in headquarters challenged the “major projects” crew to a hockey tourney... and won. The come back challenge for a baseball game and the “major projects” team won. What in the name of “employee wellness” is next?

New Construction Branch

May 12th, the new headquarters Highway Construction Branch opened for business. The branch’s director, Rodney Chapman and his staff will provide ministry employees, contractors and consultants guidance in the areas of construction systems engineering, highway construction engineering, contract services, claims, the cost estimating system, insurance and bonds and standard specifications.

“Car” Free

Wednesday, June 3rd was “Air Clean/Car Free” day in Victoria. The challenge was to park your car and walk, bicycle, carpool or take transit to work. Staff was asked to sign a tally board in the lobby. 43 walked, 33 rode a bike, 75 took transit, 40 carpooled, and 14 did a combination (car/bike, car/walk, etc.).

(left to right) Mike Kent, Director Highway Environment Branch and some of his staff. Angela Buckingham, Jane Waters and Al Flamand.
Happy 50th, Alaska Highway

In 1942, fear of a Japanese invasion during World War II drove 16,000 American and Canadian soldiers/civilians to work 24 hours a day to build a 2,400 km temporary, military-supply line — connecting Dawson Creek, B.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska — within eight and a half months.

American military leaders saw the route as a direct land link to Alaska to connect a half-dozen existing airfields. Business and political groups in Canada and the States saw the road as the key to developing the sparsely populated northwestern corner of North America.

The thousands of men and hundreds of machines building the route needed a constant flow of enormous amounts of food, gas and machinery parts.

According to an army pamphlet at the time, "Once they pushed back the wilderness, men and machines must build well or starve. Hence the road was drained, graded, bridged and surfaced in many sections to supply the advancing work points. The temporary road became the (Alaska) highway."

It was backbreaking work. One hundred rivers and five mountain ranges were crossed. Along the way, machinery snapped, streams flooded and ripped out bridges, rain dumped days worth of soil in hours, and mud swallowed cats and tractors. Instant towns sprang up along the route.

The road was built without much regard for grades. At one point, a sign was erected that read, "Suicide Hill, prepare to meet thy maker."

The intention was to go back over the route and build a properly engineered road. Several construction contracts were let but, before long, the threat of a Japanese invasion ended and no further contracts were undertaken.

One stretch that was completed with good alignment and grade and a gravel surface — from Dawson Creek to Charlie Lake.

Public travel on the highway beyond Charlie Lake was restricted until 1948 because of the limited number of facilities and accommodations.

But there was no turning back. The road was an open door to the north and the people came.

Canada Takes Over

It was an American invasion. Ottawa sat back and let the U.S. do what it wanted.

Even after the highway was completed in November 1942, maintenance was carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

It wasn't until April 1, 1946 that the highway within the Yukon and British Columbia was passed to Canada. Maintenance then came under the Royal Canadian Engineers, with their headquarters in Whitehorse.

April 1, 1961, maintenance was transferred to the Department of Public Works Canada, Whitehorse.

Over the years, Public Works Canada's reconstruction and paving programs have eliminated most of the "problems and challenges" experienced by drivers in the early years, including Suicide Hill.

The Ministry's Role

The Survey's Branch of the Department of Lands conducted the first legal surveys for the Alaska Highway in 1942. Early in 1961, the Department of Highways began to resurvey the Alaska Highway rights-of-way to a higher standard between Dawson Creek and the Peace River.
Driving the Alaska Highway

By Frank Clapp, retired ministry employee

While I've driven the length of the Alaska Highway to its farthest westerly point in British Columbia, most of my trips covered the 300 miles between Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson.

Between 1961 and 1978, I travelled the area sometimes twice a year — a week in the summer and another in the fall. Initially the highway north of Mile 83 was, for the most part, in its original location. Some sections had been widened, while many other portions were narrow and had little gravel, if any.

In places where the gumbo had worked its way to the surface, and when it was raining, it was all one could do to stay on the road.

On one trip, I recall seeing numerous camper vans and cars from the United States, off the road and waiting for it to dry or a truck to come along and pull them out.

When it was dry, on many sections, one had little difficulty determining whether or not there were oncoming vehicles, as their presence was announced by clouds of dust that could be seen from miles away.

For me, one of the most memorable sights on this highway has always been the road leading up to Trutch (Mile 200). At one point, looking north, one could see sections of the road far ahead, not as one continuous stretch but as three, one offset from the other, as the road wound its way up and over the ridge through the dark green spruce.

The realigned highway no longer goes over Trutch "Mountain" but skirts it on an easy, almost level gradient.

Today, the Alaska Highway is a pleasure to drive — with its good alignment, wide roadway, easy grades and paved surface. Much of its 500 foot right-of-way has been cleared which allows for many scenic views of the surrounding hills and distant mountains.
The challenge is out. Ron Wiebe, Public Information Officer in Region 4, sent in this list of Service Excellence performance highlights that were compiled by Regional Manager, Operations Laureen Wagar. I'm sure other regions and branches have some Service Excellence performances they can brag about too. Send them to the attention of the Road Runner Editor. We'd love to share them.

Excellence Challenge

"Excellence" in the delivery of our services is something that is practiced every day by many of the staff and managers throughout the Central North East. Here are a few of the things that have been happening recently:

A sealcoating project ran into problems when the asphalt would not cure or "set" properly, and as a result many vehicles ended up with tar spots on them from the stones that were picked up.

Fort George ensured that we paid for any cleaning done to these vehicles, and accepted invoices at the district office.

It has been noted by many individuals that response time to queries/complaints, etc. is one area where we must improve.

Stan Gladysz in our South Peace District gets our nod on this one. He answers everything immediately, and it doesn't matter what else he is involved with at the time!

Service to employees is sometimes forgotten in our search for excellence in customer service.

Fred Hughes, Manager of Financial Services and his team found a way to improve service to employees and to other business units. Regional Financial Clerks were divided into three teams. Each team is responsible for all financial aspects (payroll, cost distribution, travel vouchers, invoice and contract payments, trust account replenishment) for a group of business units. Thanks gang. You put the human touch back into business and at the same time made the Financial Clerks jobs more interesting and challenging.

We're often asked to meet with newly elected officials or staff from other agencies to inform them of the ministry and its programs.

Fort George staff prepared an information booklet about the district, its staff and services, which has been well received.

We are increasingly expected to keep our public informed of our programs, and to solicit their input and participation.

Tracy Cooper, DHM, Central Cariboo District goes to great lengths to meet with community groups, parent/teacher associations, school boards, etc. and much of it is after hours...way to go Tracy!

Traffic control and assurance of minimal disruption/delay is of paramount importance during construction works.

Gordon Wagner and North Cariboo District staff became involved via public relations/media advertising and innovative on-site scheduling controls to minimize problems during deck resurfacing of the Moffat Street Bridge, with excellent results. First class work!

We often work co-operatively with local communities in order to assist them with programs on their street networks.

Kevin Higgins of Robson District has been advising/assisting McBride Village with their efforts to have Main Street paved, and we have no direct responsibility to do so.

Now that's service!

Similar to the general information booklet, there sometimes is need for a list of staff that includes job titles and a short description of duties/interests/background.

Fort George had such a list for Vince Collins and Dan Doyle when they visited their office, which was very helpful to them in meeting the staff. Hats off to your innovation Emrol Redman!

We often have the task of explaining our programs and details of the technologies we use, to individuals or groups who've preconceived ideas or solutions.

Reg Fredrickson, Nechako District has had some success (finally) in convincing Francois Lake area residents that sealcoating the road from Fraser Lake will provide an acceptable surface, and paving would not be achievable due to high cost. Great stuff!

John Clark's staff has been addressing a number of drainage problems in the North Peace District with much enthusiasm. John derives great personal satisfaction from solving problems that create satisfied customers. Both he and his staff have realized a number of "small wins" along the road to a larger, more significant contribution.

There's nothing really special about Service Excellence, except the sincere desire to serve our customers... so let's keep it going!
Unsung Hero Sings

Raelyn Scott, in the headquarters Payroll Department, has made a difference to Stikine District employees, says Tracy Hubner.

Deputy Minister, Vince Collins wrote to Raelyn to congratulate her saying, "Many of our people in central administration are often the unsung heroes by quietly but effectively carrying out their duties in a way that keeps the wheels greased. You developed the right customer focus in regard to the folks in the Stikine District and I thank you for it."

What exactly did Raelyn do?

Tracy said, "On a 'Service Excellence' trip to Victoria, I introduced myself to Raelyn and told her about our district. We don't have a bank. The closest one is seven to eight hours south of us.

"When the odd pay cheque doesn't go direct deposit, for whatever reason, it's a major inconvenience to the employee who receives it.

"Well, we've had a couple of instances where the computer printed one of our cheques for manual deposit. But it proved no problem because Raelyn stopped it, phoned us to let us know and volunteered to deposit the cheque in the appropriate bank."

Mission Impossible

The ministry was asked to set up an audio-control signal for the B.C. government display at Independence '92 — the biggest conference for the disabled ever — (see article on page 9).

Al Sadler's electrical crew at headquarters said, "Sure, we can set something up in two weeks." Public Affairs Branch told them they had one week. They heaved a collective sigh, said it was a challenge to do the impossible and then did it!

Congratulations . . . Dave Trodd, Jamie Hill, Gary Stajduhar and contractor Wayne Murphy too. And, thanks for not saying we didn't give you enough time, so tough.

Suggestion Award Winners

Regional Director (right) Neville Hope presents Dean Anderson his award.

Dean F. Anderson, Regional Development Technician, Vancouver Island Region, was awarded $500 in March for his idea to simplify closure procedures for Section IV roads which avoided survey costs and paperwork for both our ministry and the Lands Title Office.

Marie Stebbing, Senior Budget Officer, headquarters, won for her suggestion to make financial information, Chart of Accounts Manual, available on-line instead of just in hard copy.

Barb Fowles, Personnel Operations Assistant at headquarters, was awarded for her initiative in creating a word processing glossary for performance planning and appraisal forms.

Chuck Milne and Karen Scherr, North Island District Office cut some red tape when they suggested that annual registration requirements for companies renting or leasing equipment to the ministry be eliminated.

Dick Jones and Pearl Allen, District Office in Hope, won for their suggestion to print related forms, which are always used together, back-to-back on the same piece of paper.

Nellie Thompson, Thompson Office, suggested that only black ink pens be stocked to reduce the problem of faded signatures on photocopies.
Purveyors of Green Slurry

By Tom W. Parkin, Public Information Officer, Vancouver Island Region

“Here, why don’t you give it a try?” said Ian Walker. He passed the nozzle and hand controls to me, keeping the microphones in order to direct driver Ralph Hayward below.

I pointed the nozzle and opened the pump throttle. A jet of green spray shot out with force, arcing 30 metres across a ditch and onto a recently-cleaned embankment near French Creek (on the new inland section of the Vancouver Island Highway Project).

“No wonder fire fighters love their work,” I thought. “Squirting water long distances raises the competitive spirit in every boy. These guys get to do it with the most sophisticated equipment available.”

I was standing atop one of four hydroseeders which MoTH owns. These “machines” are used to control erosion and beautify scarred slopes around the province. Ian and crew, which also included Rick Philbrick and Kirby Ruskell, are dedicated to the Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island areas.

Like old-time pharmacists who sold medicine from the back of a travelling wagon, these pilgrims travel about dispensing a formula of grass/flower/clover seed, grains of fall rye, kelp meal, fertilizer, wood fibre and tackifier.

This “elixir of beauty” is churned in with 11,000 litres of water inside the tank and laid down as a green slurry with the spray gun.

We were at French Creek because heavy rains this previous winter had caused soil erosion on a large embankment. Efforts to dam and filter the runoff were useful on a small scale but a vegetative cover with a stable root system was required for long-term control.

Fall rye provides this by growing fast and shading the grass, which is slower to establish, and more tender. The rye doesn’t reseed, but by next year the grass and legumes are secure enough to do the job alone.

“We work in conjunction with project supervisors,” says Ian, “and also with area managers through the Regional Roadside Development Technician, Bruce Nixon on Vancouver Island and Wally Smith in South Coast Region. This work is important enough that we come at their beck and call, rather than wait until we have lots to do in one area.”

Since I had nearly emptied the entire tank in just three or four minutes and still left some areas bare of the green slurry, Ian took over the controls to finish the job.

With graceful swoops of restorative “elixir,” he quickly covered the spots I’d missed, while avoiding an adjacent watercourse.

I was reminded of a landscape painter, a watercolourist on a grand scale. Our hydroseeding crews are surely both artists and environmentalists in their own specialty.
Employment Equity in Action

A recent three-day workshop in Victoria was an eye-opener for members of the ministry’s Employment Equity Committee.

They heard first-hand from a guest speaker with cerebral palsy about the barriers faced by disabled people in getting a job. And from an aboriginal woman who described the discrimination that First Nations people have experienced since the Indian Act was proclaimed in 1876. A number of other speakers came to discuss employment equity.

Having gained a better understanding about employment equity and the issues surrounding it, the committee is now developing an action plan for the ministry’s employment equity program.

Employment equity in the public service will be a policy of the provincial government. The ministry’s goal is to attract and retain the best available workforce; one that also reflects the diversity of British Columbia’s population.

Four groups have been historically under-represented in our ministry, or largely confined to lower-level jobs: women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

The Employment Equity Committee’s mandate is to raise awareness and develop action plans to achieve employment equity within the ministry.

The committee, which has merged with the Women’s Programs Committee to form one group, includes the following representatives from headquarters: Dan Doyle, ADM; Highways Operations; Veronica Walsh, Highways Operations; Barb Harrison, Women’s Programs Alternate Advisor; Deputy Minister’s Office: Mac Godo, Planning and Major Projects; Jeff Knight, Public Affairs; Cyndy Dinter, Ministry Employment Equity Representative, Personnel Services; and Pauline Stewart, Administrative Services.

And the regional representatives: Sharlie Huffman, Women’s Programs Advisor: Central/North East; Lynda Jones, South Coast; Joanne Harder, Thompson-Okanagan; Maureen McCrae, Kootenays; Nella Todd, Central/North East (Chair); Marilyn Mattson, North West; Judy Robertson, Vancouver Island.

A progress report on the committee’s action plan will appear in the next issue of Road Runner.

(left to right)
Judy Robertson, Region 6.
Sylvia Holland, Action Plan Workshop leader;
Pauline Stewart, HQ.
and David Robertson, HQ.

To Second, Or Not To Second

By Fred Hughes, Region 4

That is the question you may ask when you see a secondment notice. Fred Hughes asked himself the same question. His answer may help you the next time you’re wondering whether to second, or not to second.

With mixed feelings I applied for a secondment into the position of Manager, Finance and Administration, Highways Operations in Victoria. While it was an opportunity to work closely with Dan Doyle, Assistant Deputy Minister, Highways Operations, it meant a long absence from my two families (personal and work).

Throwing caution to the wind, I applied and in August was accepted for a five-week term commencing January 6th.

Arriving right after Christmas, my first week served as a settling-in period. Over the next four, I worked on a number of things including canvassing headquarters staff to see how they got to work (only 24 per cent drove), participating in producing issue papers for our 92/93 budget submission, and reviewing financial reports for professional services branches.

At the 11th hour, as I was preparing to return home, the incumbent of this position opted to delay her return. (Judy Stokes was enjoying her time at home with her five-month-old son, Tory.) After consulting with my wife and my regional director, I accepted the offer to stay an additional four weeks.

To unwind after hours, I picked up a new hobby — gem and mineral collecting. I bought some books on the subject and a few samples, but now that I’m back in Prince George, I’ll be out with my geologist pick and field guide to collect my own samples.

Reflecting upon my experience, I’d encourage anyone who has an opportunity to participate in a secondment to do so. As a training and personal growth vehicle, I have nothing but positive feelings about it and I learned some things about headquarters.

One, the Deputy and Assistant Deputies are real people. Two, the staff in executive branch is as dedicated and hardworking as any in the province. And three, the pressures that exist at headquarters to answer impossible questions within impossible deadlines are real.
Introducing ....

Personnel Services Branch welcomes Bob Marsh, our new Manager, Health and Safety. Bob joins us with an extensive background in the field, having previously worked with Workers Compensation Board, Juan de Fuca Hospital and recently as a private sector consultant.

Bob is also a dedicated athlete and participant in Iron-man Triathlons. So what’s an Iron-Man Triathlon? A race that includes running 26.2 miles, swimming 2.4 miles and cycling 112 miles. I think we’ve found a role model for employee wellness!

Recruitment and Selection
How to Beat the Odds

When you apply on a job, do you feel you’ve just bought a ticket on the lottery? It doesn’t have to be a matter of luck.

When you see an advertisement in the ‘Postings’ that interests you, look at the education and experience qualifications.

The qualifications listed are the minimum required to qualify for the position. If you meet them, great. If you don’t, stop now! You must meet the basic education and experience qualifications to be considered in the selection process.

Often, it’s not ‘black and white.’ The ad may refer to an equivalent combination of education and experience. If this is the case, phone the contact person listed and find out what it means.

Okay, you meet the basic qualifications. What about the preferred qualifications? What do they mean?

Preferred qualifications may or may not be used by the employer to further screen applicants. This often depends on the quality and quantity of applications received on a competition.

If you meet both the basic and preferred qualifications you will, in all likelihood, be considered for further testing and/or an interview. Should you decide to apply:

Research

Before you decide, get as much information as possible about the job. Make up a list of questions and call the contact person if one is listed. (If not, find out the immediate supervisor.) Try to arrange a meeting. Then call the personnel office and ask for a copy of the job description.

Now you know what the job’s all about and need to ask yourself: Am I still interested? Is the job what I thought it was? Do I have the education, experience, knowledge and skills required to do the job? If the job is in another location, am I and my family prepared to move? Can I afford to relocate?

So, you decide to go for it. Now you have to sell yourself. I see your research information. In your application, describe your education and experience in terms of the job requirements. Outline what you’ve done and how it relates to the job duties and responsibilities. (Often the application form has space limitations, don’t be afraid to attach additional pages or use a covering letter.)

In providing this information, don’t exaggerate but be thorough. How well you complete your application will often determine if you’ll be called for interview.

Success!

You’ve just been invited for an interview and a test — well done! What do you do now? At this stage, the employer will be examining your knowledge and skills as they pertain to the job requirements.

From your research, you’ve a copy of the job description and possibly notes taken from your discussion with the supervisor. Review this information to prepare yourself for questions that might be asked.

If you’re concerned how you might react in an interview, practice. Prepare questions that might be asked and do a ‘role play’ with a friend or colleague. Have him/her ask you the questions.

If you come prepared to the interview you’ll be more confident and knowledgeable than those that aren’t. This may just be the edge you need.

Applying on a competition doesn’t have to be solely a matter of chance. By applying common sense, understanding the selection process and doing some research you can be in control.

The better prepared you are, the more likely you are to win. GO FOR IT!
Meet Our 1992 EITs

No, we are not talking about little creatures from other planets; that would be ETs. EITs are student "Engineers in Training."

The way the program works is, engineering students receive job experience while the ministry creates a pool of potential employees.

Trainees complete two assignments under the mentorship of a professional engineer. Each assignment lasts approximately one year.

EDUARD MISKA is completing courses toward a Masters Degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Eduard's previous work history was with the Canadian Forces where he was responsible for the quality assurance of combat and electrical systems for the (TRUMP) Tribal Class Update and Modernization Project. He decided that Systems Engineering was the area in which he wished to specialize.

BRIGID MCGORAN has her degree in Electrical Engineering. She previously worked with Environment in the Systems Services Branch, Victoria. Her first assignment will be in the Highway Maintenance Branch, Victoria.

DENNIS BICKEL is attaining his degree in Civil Engineering. He lives in Richmond but his first assignment will bring him to Victoria to work in the Highway Maintenance Branch.

DAVID GOODING attained his degree in Civil Engineering. He's lived in northern B.C. for a number of years but his initial assignment will be in the Highway Engineering Branch, Victoria

RONDA ZHENG has her Masters Degree, China, in Civil Engineering and has now completed her course work for a Ph.D. She previously worked as a Co-op Graduate Engineer in Highway Engineering, Victoria. Ronda's initial assignment will be in the Highway Engineering Branch, Victoria.

Contest!

We need cartoons/graphics for our columns. We thought staff might like to try their hand at it.

Send us your ideas to illustrate "Your Serve," "Spotlight on..." and "The Reflector." The winning illustration will appear in the Fall Road Runner; so make sure your illustration is in to the Editor by August 15.

DENNIS NADON is attaining his degree in Computer Engineering. His initial assignment will be in Construction Engineering, Victoria. Dennis has had previous work experience with the Ministry of Forests in the Information Systems Branch.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER is attaining his degree in Geological Engineering with an emphasis on Soil and Rock Mechanics as well as Groundwater Engineering. Stephen worked last summer in the Geotechnical and Materials Branch in the Kamloops office. His initial assignment will be with the Highway Geotechnical Branch, Region 5, Terrace.

MARIO PONZINI is attaining his degree in Civil Engineering. He graduated from BCIT with a diploma in Civil and Structural Technology and began working with the ministry in 1981. In 1988 he decided to specialize in civil engineering, took special education leave and enrolled at UBC. Mario will be beginning his first assignment in the Construction and Design Branch, Region 4, Prince George.

ALEX KARLICKI has attained her degree in Civil Engineering from the University of British Columbia. Alexa has worked previously as a junior engineer with the Department of National Defence. Her initial assignment with the ministry will take her to the Kootenays Regional Office.

EDUARD MISKA with his mentor, (right) Dr. Wei-Wu Yau, Senior Traffic Engineer, headquarters.

BRIGID MCGORAN with her mentor, Garth Shearing.
Spotlight on...

We put two districts in the Spotlight this issue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Highway.

South Peace District

PHOTOS BY KEN SETO

LOCATION: On the Alberta border south of the Peace River and north east of Hart Mountains

Office: Dawson Creek
Lane Kilometres of Road: 2,787
Number of Bridges: 93
Number of District staff: 20
DHM: Stan Gladysz
Main Towns: Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd
Main Highways: 97, 29
Maintenance Contractor: Peace Country Maintenance Ltd.
Scenic Points: Old Kiskatinaw Bridge, Kinuso Falls, Peace River Valley, Mile Zero of Alaska
Highway Activities: Hiking, snowmobiling, skiing, cross-country skiing, camping, fishing.

Mile "O"

In 1942, the village of Dawson Creek was a sleepy little community with approximately 500 people. Early March of that year the community woke up to the first troop train of U.S. Military Engineers arriving to construct the Alaska Highway. Dawson Creek has since been known as Mile "O" of the Alaska Highway.

Rendezvous '92 in South Peace

Here's just a peek at what's happening in the South Peace District for Rendezvous '92 this summer. You're invited to come out and join the celebrations.

July 7 and 8, Dawson Creek hosts the Airmada (re-enactment of the historic ferrying of military aircraft during the war).

In August, there's a fair and rodeo in Dawson Creek the 7th to 9th, another fair and rodeo in Tumbler Ridge the 15th to 17th, and the B.C. Seniors Summer Games in Dawson Creek the 25th to 28th.

In September, there's a special "Rallye Alaska Highway '92" that starts in Dawson Creek September 17 and ends in Fairbanks, Alaska on the 27th. Events are planned for seven categories of vehicles: antique, military, passenger cars, motorhomes, commercial, pickup trucks and competition cars. Anyone can enter. Call (604) 583-1197 for information.
North Peace District

LOCATION: In the northeast corner of B.C., bordering on Alberta to the east and the Yukon and North West Territories to the north.

Offices: District Office - Fort St. John
Sub-Office - Fort Nelson
Regional Depot - Fort St. John

Lane Kilometres of Road: 4,710
Number of Bridges: 105
Number of Staff: 23 (plus a region comm. tech, electrician and yardman)

District Highways Manager: John Clark
Main Towns: Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Hudson Hope, Taylor
Main Highways: 97, 29 and 17
Maintenance Contractor: Northland Road Services

Scenic Points: W.A.C. Bennett Dam, Truth Mountain, Liard Hot Springs, Muncho Lake, Summit Lake

Activities: Skiing, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, boating, trail rides, golfing, motorcross

Historic Mileposts
By John Clark DDM

North Peace District co-ordinated installation of Historic Mileposts and other signs for the Alaska Highway 50th Anniversary.

This was a unique situation, as Public Works Canada, maintains the Alaska Highway from Mile 83.6 (Km 135) to Mile 627 (Km 1009) at the Yukon border. The provincial government only has jurisdiction over the use of the highway rights-of-way.
Our district had to determine historic locations along 1000 km of highway and in the end, co-ordinated installation of 180 signs.

We would like to express our thanks to all involved for their support and co-operation, with special thanks to headquarters Traffic Branch, in particular, Neil Vickers.

This district is involved in preparations for an Air Show in Fort St. John, July 19th. We extend an invitation for all to drive the Alaska Highway and join the celebrations.

Rendezvous '92 in North Peace

Highlights of events in the North Peace District this summer: In July, Fort St. John hosts the Airmada the 7th and 8th, a rodeo the 10th to 12th, a War Bird Fun Fly the 11th to 12th, and an International Airshow on the 19th of July.

In August, Taylor hosts the "World Class Goldpanning Championships" on the 1st and 2nd, Fort St. John hosts a summer Arts and Crafts Festival the 5th and 6th, a Scavenger Hunt and the Dinosaur Paddlers Raft Race on the 30th.

Bruce Craig, District Development Tech
and Ray Tardiff, Project Tech

(left) Shannon Savard and Pat Quinnan, our newest members to the district staff

(right) Ray Fortier, Engineering Assistant;
Todd Lang, EA1; Colin American Engineering
Aide 3; Rex Wallace, EA2 and District Tech,
Lawrence Olson

(left) Gail Martin, S. District Clerk
and Debra Pool, F&A Officer

(right) John Clark,
DHM and
Dale Hillman,
District
Development
Tech

Allan Esker, Area Manager Roads; Floyd Erickstad, Area Manager Bridges; Cliff Thorsen, Area Manager Roads, Dennis Culling, Area Manager Roads, Bob Keitzer, Area Manager, Roads; Leslie Elder, Area Manager Trainee and Brian Deakin, Area Manager Roads
(standing left to right above)
ON THE ROAD...

To Hollywood

By Tom Parkin, Public Information Officer, Region 6

All of us have favourite drives — routes we enjoy for their scenery, history, design, or for personal memories. For me, such a highway is #37A in northwestern B.C.

Officially, MoTH calls it the Stewart Highway, but locals know it as the Glacier Highway — a path of pavement which branches off the Cassiar Highway 37, takes you to Stewart, B.C. and then ends just beyond Hyder, Alaska.

The 64-kilometre Glacier Highway is the only road which links B.C. directly to Alaska. It cuts through the mountains at Bear Pass, then plunges to tidewater down a narrow valley.

This is neck-kinking country. Massive glaciers flow within echo distance of the road. Nowhere in B.C. can you drive so close to such prehistoric ice.

First into view is the crystalline cascade of Bear Glacier, which paws down a mountainside to crack off icebergs into a roadsides lake. (In 1968, a photo in Road Runner showed this glacier grinding against the slope where the highway now runs. A warming climate has since caused the Bear’s toe to melt back.)

A hundred-metres above the present highway is a single-lane ruin of a road. It looks like a goat trail, but was once the way cars bounced into this valley, surrounded by ice field capped summits.

These mountains once held the world’s record for a winter’s snowfall, with an annual average of eight metres. In December 1984, Stewart set the Canadian record for a 24-hour period — 102 cm! Consequently, many of our avalanche specialists start their careers in Cassiar country.

Small wonder that winter scenes for the movies The Thing and Bear Island, starring Donald Sutherland and Vanessa Redgrave, were shot here. More recently, The Iceman, starring Timothy Hutton, thawed out here in 1982.

In the spring of 1985, I was actually involved in a film segment shot on a glacier above this highway. Walt Disney Co. had hired a friend, Bob Ennis, as director of photography for “Portraits of Canada,” a film shown in Telecom Canada’s pavilion at Expo ’86.

(You may remember Telecom for its round-theatre giving viewers a 360-degree scene. Some readers may remember Bob also as producer of a Bridge to Tomorrow, the ministry’s story of building the Annacis Bridge.)

For my part, we stood two oil barrels on stilts on the run-out fan of an avalanche path. Inside them were rented (but insured) cameras.

Triggering the cameras by remote control, we lifted off in a helicopter. Above, MoTH avalanche techs set off charges in a cornice (a massive snow overhang) to start a slide which threatened to wipe out the road.

Down it came, gathering speed like a formula one racer. Film audiences saw a rolling white cloud get closer . . . closer . . . It was approaching from every angle . . . . . .

There was no escape.

By flipping the film in alternate projectors, an illusion had been created of a snowy bowl with a ridge all around from which multiple avalanches were about to smoother viewers.

Death screamed down from every direction until the screen went BLACK.

It has been six years now, and I’m still awaiting that call from California. Well . . . maybe I’m safer staying out of stunts anyway.

Still, I’ll never forget the Glacier Highway — it’s as close as I’ve come to a Highway to Hollywood.

Perfect Partnership

The Professional Partnership Program operates through the Highways Operations Branch in headquarters. It provides the ministry with a ready source of problem-solving and research work at reduced costs, while giving students practical (and paid) research experience needed to complete a Masters Degree. The perfect partnership.

Right now, UBC is the only university involved in the program. A good working relationship has been established between individual professors and directors to identify projects as well as to ensure each student is well supervised and guided.

Here’s just a few of the projects we’re working on with our “partners.”

Avalanche Run Out Distances for the B.C. Coastal Range by Ian Nixon (a former Avalanche Technician with MoTH) will allow roadway designs to include better provisions for avoiding avalanches.

Development of Hybrid Bridge Evaluation Program by A. Felber uses some of the work done by Buckland and Taylor on the assessment of the Second Narrows Bridge.

Shear Strength of Existing Concrete Bridges by Scott Webster of MO)H) is of great interest for the assessment of bridges for seismic (earthquake) response.

Seismic Foundation Evaluation of Five Bridge Sites in the Richmond/ Delta Area by Kevin Ritcher directly relates to MoTH projects in the area.

Testing of MoTH Roadside Barriers by Rob Thomson will produce a box 50 per cent of the world’s knowledge of the performance of segmented concrete barriers.

Design of Roads by Ronda Zheng develops a state-of-the-art design procedure using Limited State Analysis and Probabilities and promises to produce standards that can be flexibly applied to better meet project requirements.

Trip Division by Paul de Leur investigates the decision-making process used by motorists who must choose between two routes.
Happy 125th, Canada

This year we celebrate our 125th year of nationhood. Across Canada and in B.C., many special events were held on July 1st, Canada Day. But there's still six months left to show your support, to celebrate what makes us unique: our environment, our supportive attitude beyond our borders, and our people and their achievements. The event theme is "The Future Begins with You."

Road Runner Swap

Public Information Officer, Tom Parlin (390-6122) in Nanaimo is looking to complete his set of old Road Runners. In particular, he wants issues prior to 1967.

"I'm willing to trade," he says. "If you have any of these issues I'll trade you some spares from my library, I offer three for one."

Up for swap are April '73, Summer '76, Fall '79, Autumn '80, Spring '81, Summer of '81, Fall '81, Spring '82, Summer '87, Fall '87, Winter '87 and December 1988.

Bravo F&A Officers and Managers

A summary report showed that, in February, a total of 86 per cent of ministry suppliers were paid within 30 days which is up considerably from the 71 per cent paid within the same time frame in January. At the district level, in February, 95 per cent of ministry suppliers were paid within 30 days.

Bob Buckingham, Director, Finance and Administration (headquarters) says, "This impressive performance is the result of collective efforts of everyone involved in the disbursement process. Thank you for making this ministry the very best in government at making timely payments to our suppliers and contractors."

Your Fan Mail

Dedication and Continued Concern

Mr. Tracy Cooper, District Highways Manager (Central Cariboo), and his staff must be congratulated on the dedication and continued concern they displayed throughout the (Chimney Lake Road) paving contract. They were in contact with property owners continually to ensure satisfaction regarding driveway elevations. Mr. Cooper was out here several times in the evenings.

Jim Fraser, Director, Chimney-Feller Lakes Landholders Association

Attention to Concerns

Thank you, Peter Wightman, for the attention you and your staff have given to our concerns over local road conditions in the Nanoose area. We realises road improvement funds have been scarce and we are very pleased you will be able to finish portions of Dolphin Drive and Powder Point Road that needed resurfacing.

Charles R. Gehr, President, Nanoose Peninsula Owners & Residents Association

Extra Care and Attention

(Sent to SNC Lavalin, Cassiar Connector project management contractor)

I would like to thank your company for the extra care and attention you gave our students while the Cassiar Connector was under construction. The students safety was assured with the bus pick up and extra supervisors.

Lesley Chambers, Chairperson, Begbie Parent's Committee

Generous and Quick

Thanks Ron Wiebe (Public Information Officer, Central/North East region) for generously and quickly sending pictures and negatives of the Alaska Highway for our exhibit! Because you were so timely, it made my job so much easier (and less stressful) and we were able to meet our deadline.

Andrew A. Veach, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, State of Alaska

Excellent Treatment

(From a local Vancouver Island publication, The Yellow Point Flyer)

In 1981, Gordon and Jane Vipond had to move their business when the Ministry of Transportation and Highways widened the road on which it was located. They relocated to the Island Highway but in 1990 Highways again saw fit to widen through their business and they moved to their present location in South Wellington. Gordon says that all his dealings with Highways were excellent and he was pleased with the treatment he received.

Patience and Courtesy

I would like to express my appreciation for your support of North Saanich Council in its decision to endorse your engineer's plan for an alternative connection from Curries Point to Highway No. 17. The role of one of your staff deserves special recognition. Mr. Joe Callalli (who works on the Vancouver Island Highway Project) presented his arguments frankly and fairly, exhibited the greatest patience and courtesy in responding to questions while leaving no doubt as to the extremely tight deadlines. I found his thoroughly professional attitude a credit to the ministry.

Maurice Chazottes, Mayor
District of North Saanich

Good Work, Highways

(From the Sechelt Press)

Last June, I noticed on my daily walks along Chapman Creek, that the south bank had eroded six to eight feet, threatening footings of the bridge on Highway 101. I contacted Mr. Drummond at Highways in Gibsons in October and, after some delays, the various departments: Fisheries, Highways and Environment, were convinced to do something about the situation. I commended Mr. Drummond for his co-operation in this matter and the ministry for a job well done in putting rip rap along the bank.

C.H. Collins, Sechelt resident
In Search of Native Plants

At one time, planting grasses was all the ministry did to “clean up” the rights-of-way after road construction was completed. Not any more. Take the Island Highway Project for example.

Long before construction began, Roadside Development was looking at ways to lessen its impact on the valuable scenic resources along the route.

The search was on to find the most attractive and easiest to maintain native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.

Sounds easy; just transplant some of the bushes and flowers growing wild on the property near the road, right? Wrong.

Roadside Development hired an outside consultant, Jones and Associates, Victoria, to prepare a report outlining the selection and planting of attractive native plant species. Besides soil and climate conditions, here are just a few of the problems the Roadside Development team asked the consultant to consider.

Planting of species on which deer like to browse adjacent to high-speed highway traffic, could lead to increased numbers of road kills. If sites have high deer populations and cannot be protected by adequate fencing, many native tree and shrub plantings should be avoided.

Special consideration is required if any of the grass/wildflower cuttings are to be used as livestock feed by local farmers. Some of the wildflowers (e.g. larkspurs) contain high levels of alkaloids or other potential toxins.

Another major problem, many wildflowers native to coastal B.C. are not currently commercially available and the potential exists for introduced species to out compete resident plants and become a weed.

In the end, a mail survey was developed and sent to nurseries across North America to locate which could produce and supply native plants suitable for the project.

What a job! Who’d believe so much dedication and know-how was behind keeping road rights-of-way looking “natural.”

Congratulations and thanks to the Roadside Development team: Al Planiden (Manager) and his staff, Jane Waters and Bruce Nixon, and the Regional Roadside Development Technicians. Their work on the Vancouver Island Highway Project and other projects, will pay off for the ministry, the public and the environment.

We should say thanks to the University of British Columbia too. Roadside Development test plots native plants through liaison with its “Native Plant Introduction Programs.”