Automated Avalanche Detection
Launched on Hwy 37A
Submitted by Oliver Schwuchow, Regional Project Manager

To reach the historic coastal towns of Stewart B.C., and Hyder, Alaska, motorists travel spectacularly scenic, 62-kilometre-long, Highway 37A. The route is lined with cascading waterfalls and glaciers, high mountain peaks, abundant wildlife and is home to the notoriously unruly Bear Pass avalanche zone. (See “Bear Pass Facts” sidebar, Page 4).

Highway 37A is the only road into and out of the communities. It supports the growing tourism industry and is a vital link for the mining and forestry sectors to deliver commodities to world markets. The port town of Stewart, located on the Pacific Ocean, is Canada’s most northerly ice-free port and boasts shipping advantages to Asia. The Port of Stewart, Stewart Bulk Terminals and Stewart World Port support major projects in B.C., the Yukon, Alberta and further east, with access along Highway 37A.

Avalanche Radar a Solution
District Avalanche Supervisor Ryan Boyle leads the Bear Pass Avalanche Program and given the area’s 72 active avalanche paths and remoteness, he and his co-worker District Avalanche Technician Bree Stefanson, are always looking to improve avalanche forecasting and control. In 2017, they began investigating technology that could deliver real-time monitoring and alert notifications for natural avalanche activity, 24/7, in all weather conditions. Reliable, timely data of this nature could improve avalanche forecasting, shorten event response time, and help reduce closures while enhancing overall highway safety.

Fortunately, funding from the Bulkley-Stikine District and our ministry’s Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Program was available to launch the Automated Avalanche Detection System (AADS). This investment includes two radar detection stations with high-definition cameras and communications equipment, located at Bear Pass’ most active avalanche areas – George Copper and Little Bears (click on video, upper left). There is also a high-elevation repeater tower that transmits data back to the base station and network links in Stewart.

The avalanche radar works in any weather and at any time of day, has a range of up to five kilometres and gathers data about moving snow and ice masses on large expanses of...
Editor’s Note

We’re in unsettling times right now. At this moment, it’s hard not to think of the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the public health emergency which has resulted.

In the ministry, many of us are used to handling emergencies. We stay level-headed, with a focus on safety and the public interest. This situation feels different – it’s unprecedented, unfamiliar and it’s wide-ranging. Most of us don’t have experience with pandemics and their progression, which we can draw on to envision our future.

So, how do we weather these circumstances, and their impacts on us as individual employees, and on the people close to us? How do we stay well, mentally and physically, when we’re working among fewer colleagues, we’re working remotely, or while we’re interacting with the public to maintain safe highways? Some thoughts and resources...

Stay calm – Check out this helpful article from Psychology Today, “Anxiety Contagion: Tips for Relief.” Wise advice includes to stop obsessively checking the news, avoid contributing to others’ anxieties by over-sharing your own, and (if you’re working from home) to establish a work space separate from your living space, and stick to a daily schedule.

Stay kind and generous – A University of Zurich study offers scientific proof that being generous makes us happier. Giving help or small gifts to our colleagues, neighbours, friends or strangers buoys up the giver and the receiver. (Everyone needs a hand sometime.) Check out Page 14 of this issue, for a story about how our ministry’s Provincial Employees’ Community Service Fund donations increased by a whopping 19 per cent – that’s something to feel good about!

Stay curious – Now is a great time to try out remote communications tools, that you might never have used, or sharpen your online meeting facilitation skills or email effectiveness.

Stay healthy – Sleeping well, exercising and eating right are foundational to our well-being (and our immune systems). For inspiration to keep active, read the TransAction story on Page 6 where nine employees who plunged into physical activity for one month, share their exhilarating experiences.

I wish everyone good health and a balanced state of mind, at work and at home. From my 16 years in this ministry, I know that we’re resourceful and resilient, and we’ll carry on.

Nancy McLeod
Editor

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”
– Winston Churchill

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The RoadRunner employee newsletter is published four times a year, on the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Internet site.

We welcome your story submissions. Email your article as a Word document (approx. 500 words) and your high-resolution photographs as JPEGs to: RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca.

In the email for your story, please attach the Word document and graphics (photos, charts, etc.) separately. Please DO NOT embed graphics in the article — this compromises reproduction quality and the images may not be useable by our graphic artist. Photos supplied should be one megabyte.

For contributor guidelines, writing tips and upcoming deadlines, see Road Runner on TRANnet.

Check out the Employee Advisory Forum website for regular updates: gww.th.gov.bc.ca/EAF/home_intra.asp.

For @Work – the Public Service Community Website, visit: gww.gov.bc.ca/

Graphic design for Road Runner is provided by Kathy Macovichuk.
Avalanche terrain, using a single device. When the radar detects movement, it recognizes that movement as an algorithm matching avalanche activity, captures the avalanche information and triggers a real-time alert that is sent to the Bear Pass avalanche team. The message contains critical information such as location, size and frontal speed of the event, that the team can immediately analyze, to determine the response required and residual risk of the path.

Capturing Avalanches on Camera – Automatically

When avalanches happen in daylight hours, the cameras stationed with the radar devices automatically capture high-resolution photos at three-to-six-second intervals, further enriching the data. They’re also programmed to take photos every hour when there are no events, so avalanche forecasters can observe changes in snowpack distribution over time, zoom in and observe fracture line character and real-time weather conditions.

The larger benefit of the AADS is that the avalanche team can extrapolate, from the data set captured, invaluable information on timing, location, aspect, terrain feature, elevation band, presence of and types of natural triggers, avalanche frequency, magnitude, character and terminus. This helps to better predict avalanche activity through the whole corridor.

Construction of the Bear Pass system began in September last year, was completed by mid-November, and data collection began only a few days later. It’s a pilot project, to run for one year, with an option to be extended for an additional year.

The two radar stations and the communications repeater are powered by solar panels and fuel cells that serve for the entire winter.

Detection System Improves Forecasting, Prevention

Since Nov 10, the system has detected 916 avalanche events (527 at George Copper and 389 at Little Bears). Without the system, many of these events would have been less accurately recorded – multiple events occurring overnight into the same runout zone would be noted as a single avalanche. Or they would not have been recorded at all, in the case of smaller avalanches at upper elevation start zones that can’t be seen from the road.

The information gathered has given the team a more comprehensive understanding of Bear Pass’ avalanche conditions and dynamics, which has improved forecasting and preventative strategies for avalanche control. Ryan and Bree say that with every avalanche recorded, the system becomes more valuable in their forecasting and risk management decisions, as they can compare the range of data collected, with observed avalanches.

So far this season, the team has been able to greatly reduce closure time to 36 hours, with the help of the AADS. That includes 14 hours of avalanche control, and 21 hours to remove a large avalanche deposit that buried half a kilometre of highway under more than five metres of snow and ice.

The system at Bear Pass was designed so that new components, like additional radar sites and automatic avalanche gates could potentially be installed, in the future, to manage traffic flow and further increase traveller safety. The gates would close the highway if the avalanches were large enough to impact traffic with “snow dust” or avalanche debris. (Automatic avalanche detection systems are used in Norway and Switzerland, in combination with gates.)
First Nations Leaders’ Gathering
a Powerful Experience for Indigenous Youth Intern

Submitted by Darian Edwards, Transportation Analyst

The B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders’ Gathering, which provides insight into ministry issues and how governments – provincial and Indigenous – are building grassroots partnerships, was an amazing experience for me as an Indigenous Youth Intern.

The event, held Nov. 4 to 6 in Vancouver, was co-hosted and organized by the provincial government and the First Nations Leadership Council. More than 650 one-on-one meetings occurred at this sixth annual gathering. Members of Cabinet and provincial government representatives met with leaders of 151 Indigenous nations. A record-breaking 900 people participated in the gathering, more than half of whom were First Nations delegates from 179 Indigenous nations. The B.C. Green Party caucus and 10 members of the B.C. Liberal Party caucus also attended.

The gathering was an opportunity to build my networks and meet provincial government representatives, like Minister of Finance Carol James, Minister of State for Trade George Chow, Minister of Advanced Education Melanie Mark, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Scott Fraser and Premier John Horgan. I also sat in on one-on-one meetings with Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Claire Trevena, Deputy Minister Grant Main, Associate Deputy Minister Kevin Richter and Assistant Deputy Minister Renée Mounteney.

In these meetings, many delegates raised concerns about the procurement process through which labour contracts are granted. They felt the current process provides limited or no job opportunities for residents in rural communities, even though the labour force is more than capable of completing the projects.

Breakout sessions covered topics like shared territories and overlaps, CleanBC, Emergency Program Act modernization, missing and murdered Indigenous women, education priorities and the Province’s engagement that was underway for accessibility legislation.

On the last day of the gathering, the Province’s Indigenous Youth Internship Program cohort and B.C. First Nations Youth delegates attended the Youth Caucus workshop with Premier Horgan and Minister Fraser. We were asked an array of questions, including how climate change will impact the future of B.C.

The workshop served as an empowering platform, where the Youth Caucus reported back to the entire plenary. One Indigenous Youth Intern from our ministry’s Prince George office, Project Management Coordinator Sarah Powell, told the group, “Climate change will change the way we interact with the land as we know it.” Overall, it was a powerful experience.

Bear Pass Facts

Bear Pass has about 72 avalanche paths that are active, from around mid November until early May.

They stand shoulder-to-shoulder along the steep, sharp peaks of the Coast Mountains and deliver avalanches from both sides of the highway. Due to Bear Pass’ north coast location, near-constant rain or snow combined with Arctic winds, result in more than 700 naturally occurring and planned avalanches, each season.

The pass has seen up to 336 hours of closure time in a winter, with the 30-year average being close to 100 hours of road closures for avalanche control, preventative high hazard closures and deposit removal.
South Peace Inspectors Take Unsafe Vehicles Off the Road
Submitted by Gerri Goulet, CVSE District Manager

A focused inspection team zeroed in on commercial vehicle tires and chains, at the brake check on Highway 29, near Chetwynd, on Jan. 29.

Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement officers Tamara Hasz, Dale McDonald and Bill Hynbida inspected several vehicles, some of which were taken off the road due to unsatisfactory tire condition, a cracked trailer frame and a truck bunk actually riding on (and wearing at) one vehicle’s tires.

The photos here, were from a single loaded logging truck, but it was not the only truck that had some highly concerning defects.

Well done team! Thank you for making a difference in our road safety.

Dale McDonald inspecting the logging truck.

View of cracked trailer frame, from underneath, showing the crack was all the way through.

The truck’s cracked trailer frame, from the side.

The logging truck’s bunk was actually resting on the tire, due to the truck’s suspension being deflated.

Wear on the logging truck’s tire from the bunk resting on it.

Automated Avalanche Detection Launched on Hwy 37A... Continued from Page 3

If the Bear Pass AADS proves successful over time, this technology could also be implemented in other avalanche-prone areas of the province.

It Takes a Team
This unique project required coordination with numerous engineering disciplines throughout the ministry and the Information Management Branch. It was a massive effort from the project team:

- Brigid Canil – Acting Director, Electrical & ITS Engineering
- Carl Lutz – District Manager, Bulkley Stikine District
- Robb Anderson – Senior Manager, Avalanche and Weather Programs
- Bryan Crosby – Regional Manager, Planning & Partnerships
- Ryan Boyle – District Avalanche Supervisor
- Eric Constantinescu – Geotechnical Engineer
- Prema Sohal – Senior Structural Engineer
- Jason Wood – Manager, Radio and Telecommunications
- Emma Krakow – Business Analyst (Information Management Branch)
- Eileen Laframboise – Environmental Coordinator
- Ian Steele – Owners Engineer (PBX Engineeering)
TransAction 2019 was a fun, social and dynamic way of getting active during Healthy Workplace Month, in October.

Led by the ministry’s Employee Advisory Forum and Executive, this year was special for two reasons. We introduced a brand-new mobile-friendly TransAction website, and we created two categories – competitive and recreational. The website was easier to navigate and offered several new features, and the two categories enabled teams to choose how they wanted to approach the event.

The participation of 57 teams made up of 238 employees tells me that TransAction continues to be a popular event. Cheers to everyone who participated!

Thanks to the introduction of the new categories, we got to congratulate two winning teams. The competitive champions were “Trans Wars” members Jill Carruthers, Katie Ward, Kieran Lee Kam and Rajeeta Bains, who racked up 49,890 points. The top recreational team was “Ready 4 Sweaty,” with Christina Klatt, Haley Leech, Owen Page and Ryan Gerow earning 32,394 points. (Not bad for a team of four!)

I wanted to find out what it takes to be a part of these winning teams, so I got in touch with members from each who kindly shared their stories…but not all their secrets.

**Kieran Lee Kam**

Kieran was hesitant to give away too many secrets, but he did share that “Trans Wars” had a goal of no “zero days,” so members were exercising daily to rack up points. Kieran goes to the gym four times a week but increased this to six times, by incorporating more cardio. Kieran also took full advantage of any organized activities, such as soccer practice. He spent his weekends being active in Nelson’s beautiful surroundings, and went on some moderate mountain hikes.

“You don’t want to let anyone else on your team down,” says Kieran. “You’re accountable to other people, which helped motivate me.”

**Katie Ward**

Katie says it’s easy for her to fall out of her routine and healthy habits after summer, which makes TransAction a great way to prioritize exercise. Her activities are mostly working out at the gym, taking yoga classes or hiking. She was committed to getting as many points as possible, which included tagging along for a walk with her mother – everything counts!

Katie is currently on a temporary assignment in Fort St. John and sends kudos to anyone in the Northern Region who participated in TransAction. With the climate being a lot colder than she was used to, extra motivation was needed to get moving!

**Kevin Lewis**

What got Kevin started – often the hardest part – were team goals. Once he got going, he found it easy to push himself from medium to high intensity. Kevin played soccer and began to drop in on squash. He walked to work, and took the stairs rather than the elevator, more often. A memorable six-hour hike with members of his team was a highlight, and the steep mountains surrounding Nelson offered vigorous exercise only 10 minutes from the office. While Kevin enjoyed the surge of high-intensity activity, he says he’s happy it was limited to one month!

**Rajeeta Bains**

Fearless “Trans Wars” Team Leader Rajeeta has been participating in TransAction from the very beginning, and she’s found that the trick is to just keep moving. She considers it “the month of doing things she normally wouldn’t do,” like running rather than hiking up a mountain. She ran 10 kilometres daily instead of five, and family dance parties were a must every evening before dinner.

She also fit yoga and high-intensity workouts into her routine. All of Rajeeta’s hard work during TransAction pays off with a great ski season. Her legs are strong and ready for the slopes!
This year, Rajeeta got her three-year-old out for hikes, and took it to the next level by carrying him when he tired. She ran alongside him while he rode his pedal bike on the rail trail, and then carried him and his bike back. What a Supermom!

Jill Carruthers and Rajeeta and hiked 25 kilometres around the Lepsoe Basin, near Rossland. Breaking trail in two feet of snow was challenging, but sharing stories from past TransAction adventures kept their spirits up. The next morning, when they woke up sore and tired, they decided to shake it off by running the cycling trails around town. Any other month, this would have been a good day for resting, but in October there were no rest days for “Trans Wars”.

RECREATIONAL WINNERS – “READY 4 SWEATY”

This was a new team, participating in a new category which they liked because they didn’t want to be too competitive. But as it turns out, they may need to change categories next year. Watch out for this feisty team of four!

Ryan Gerow

Ryan had recently moved from Nanaimo to Victoria so he felt TransAction would be a great way to meet people in the office and bond over physical activity.

He’s quite active already, but TransAction was an excellent incentive for even more activity. Ryan Gerow and Christina Klatt have a miniature Australian Shepherd, named Shadow, that urges them to get outside every day, and they completed 15-kilometre hikes together. Ryan is an avid mountain biker and he also took on a 30-day hot yoga challenge.

Christina Klatt

Christina frequently travelled to Vancouver for work in October, and walked from the Helijet terminal to the office (and back) rather than using the free shuttle service, even during inclement weather. In addition to taking demanding hikes with Ryan and Shadow, she went on a 13-kilometre hike through Gowlland Todd Park with friends.

Owen Page

Owen is a devoted soccer player who often plays five hours a week. He also enjoys basketball, and for him TransAction as an opportunity to go back to the gym regularly. He took more walks around Rithet’s Bog at lunch, walked his dog and got out for hikes when the weather was good.

“TransAction is a great opportunity to change your habits and routines,” say Owen.

Hayley Leech

Haley tried to do two activities every single day in October. On weekdays, she often went to the gym or for a walk at lunch, and then in the evening, played soccer. Her weekends were filled with hikes, running and more soccer games. She says she has enjoyed maintaining the level of fitness that she gained during TransAction.

As the TransAction project manager and a TransAction participant, I thank the Employee Advisory Forum for bringing the challenge to life each year. I’m especially grateful for this year’s sponsor, Renée Mounteney, and the project team that created the new and improved TransAction website.

I hope these stories have inspired you to participate in TransAction next year!

My Valentine’s Day Visitors

Submitted by Steven Marcyniuk, Regional Operations Technician

On Feb. 14, I had a special visit from my wife and my two boys. They stopped by my work space at noon to drop off lunch for me…and some Purdy’s chocolates!

The boys sure love the Garbage Gobbler that greets them when they arrive at the front entrance of the ministry’s Kamloops transportation building. They always want to stop and check it out. They posed for a photo and I sent it to my manager Michelle Evans, and she suggested I send it into the Road Runner.

Kesler, Steven and Carter Marcyniuk enjoy a Valentine’s Day visit during lunchtime at the Kamloops office.

Carter and Kesler always stop off to spend time with the ministry’s original Garbage Gobbler stationed outside our Kamloops offices.
Our New TRANnet – Everything You Ever Wanted to Know and More
Submitted by Kim Struthers, Strategic Human Resources and TRANnet Replacement Team

Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of more than 100 ministry employees, the new TRANnet was launched in early December. As people explore the new site, they have provided helpful feedback, questions and suggestions to the project team, and we thought we’d share some answers to your most frequently asked questions.

I can’t find what I’m looking for on the new TRANnet. What should I do?
The first thing you should try is the search function (look for the magnifying glass icon in the top right corner of the homepage). The new version of TRANnet is structured by topic and/or service which means the content will no longer be organized solely by departments, branches and teams.

The new TRANnet is organized into six major sections, all of which are accessible from the homepage:
- **Doing Business**: the best place to go if you’re looking for ways to do your job, like project management tools or information about correspondence.
- **Our People**: all of the resources you need to help you supervise, lead and support people, access Employee Advisory Forum initiatives and projects, and learn about Succession Planning.
- **Our Workplace**: information about facilities or the employee parking deduction policy.
- **Our Ministry**: find information on our Vision, Mission and Goals, descriptions of ministry departments and Crown corporations and a link to the Org Charts.
- **What’s Happening**: the best way to catch up on the latest TRANsmissions Podcast or Road Runner newsletter, and read the daily TRANnews articles.
- **Initiatives**: get the scoop on some of the ministry’s major priorities, like Journey Towards Reconciliation, Active Transportation and the Development Services Enhancement Initiative.

I miss the tabs from the old TRANnet. Can they be added? Unfortunatelty, no. A new standardized content management system is now in place for all government websites (internal and external). Tabs are not a function of the new platform and cannot be created.

What happened to “My Shortcuts”? The new platform does not allow for customized “My Shortcuts”. As an alternative, check out the “What would you like to do?”, “Quick Links” and “Ministry Tools” sections on the right side of the homepage. Don’t forget to update your bookmarks with links to the new TRANnet, for pages that you visit often.

The information I need is not on the new website. Can you add it? More than 90 business and content owners across the ministry, as well as the project team, have worked to transition all required content. If you can’t find something that is vital to your job, please email the project team, and we will reach out to the content owner.

The old TRANnet is gone and we didn’t transition all of our content. How can we get it back? Content from the old TRANnet will still be available to business owners through an archived version. This copy will be moved to long-term storage after March 31, 2020.

The reason for all this work? The servers that hosted the former site reached the end of their service life on Dec. 31. This provided an opportunity to move TRANnet to a new platform that complies with government standards, and provides updated features along with a modern look and feel.

Thank you again to the content owners across the ministry who worked hard to transition their information and tools, and to everyone for their patience and understanding during the process to create a new and improved TRANnet. If you have any questions or feedback, or you don’t see something you think should be there, please get in touch with the TRANnet Replacement team.

What’s improved with the new TRANnet?
- Better search function
- Organized by topics, making it easier for employees (especially new ones) to find information
- Complies with government accessibility standards
- Mobile friendly
- Ability to track webpage usage to find out what’s popular, and organize information accordingly

The new TRANnet is a big change from how the previous intranet was organized, and we know it will take some time to get used to. Please send us your questions and feedback so we can help make the transition easier!

Learning in the BC Public Service
Check out the courses available at Learning Centre
New Mobile Command Vehicle to Roll Out in May
Submitted by Mark Pratt, Maintenance Programs Manager

We’re replacing the old “taco truck” with a new state-of-the-art mobile response unit. Unlike a fine wine (or ministry staff), vehicles do not improve with age. The old blue and white 1992 GM Grumman conversion, purchased in 2013 for a mere $12,000 from the Vancouver Fire Department, was beginning to miss too many days on the job while being serviced in local repair shops.

The final indignity was the old truck’s inability to climb the last hill on its way to attend a flood event in Pemberton.

Replacing a “Z Class” vehicle (i.e. larger than a pickup) is not as easy as ordering a new Subaru. This project started in 2017, with the first task being to get estimates, then convince our understanding Treasury Board analysts that the vehicle would serve the public in more ways than being a mobile coffee maker. To do this, we engaged our Emergency Management BC partners, Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement, Coquitlam Search and Rescue and a professor of communications/emergency response from Simon Fraser University.

Wisely, Treasury Board saw the value of purchasing a new vehicle that would work as a compact office on wheels for conducting major commercial vehicle enforcement road checks; supporting field operations at emergencies like floods, rock and mud slides and fires; and participating in community awareness events.

We selected a 2019 Ford F650, with a 20-foot-long structure for a command unit space. Once a general design was decided, and the winner of the RFP was selected, we began work with International Truck Body (ITB), an experienced mobile communications unit design-build company, located in the Lower Mainland. Steve Bauer and Rick Wiltshire (Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement), Jason Wood (Radio and Telecommunications) and their team members contributed invaluable ideas and efficiencies, based on their extensive experience and knowledge, to customize the vehicle.

Features include a Wi-Fi hotspot, multiple highways radios to operate different channels, built-in inverters, a four-person work station, and a meeting area, washroom and generator.

Our new command vehicle will be rolling out for its inaugural duty at the May 2020 Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Road Check, a high-volume, high-visibility three-day enforcement initiative. The unit is also available as a mobile communications and command centre for any major events or incidents in the Lower Mainland, and potentially if needed, beyond Hope. It complements our 2011 Ford F550 command vehicle, which is kept at the ministry’s compound in Kamloops and serves the Southern Interior and Northern regions.

I’m happy we now have a reliable multi-purpose vehicle that will give employees in the Lower Mainland a safe, useable space whether they are responding to an emergency incident, conducting a commercial vehicle road check or engaging with the public at a community happening.

If anyone is interested in starting a “quasi-mobile” taco stand, the old truck should be available soon through BC Asset Investment Recovery.
B.C.'s New Act on the Rights of Indigenous People
Submitted by Rakiya Larkin, Strategic Human Resources

The evolution of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) began 75 years ago, when the United Nations (UN) was first formed in 1945.

This was in response to the traumatic events of the Second World War, which brought home the fact that human rights were not universally acknowledged and upheld. Three years after the UN was formed, 50 of the member states came together, under the guidance of Eleanor Roosevelt, to develop a list of 30 human rights that everybody around the world should have and enjoy. On Dec. 10, 1948, the UN announced those rights and freedoms as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as a common standard for all peoples and all nations.

It is important to remember that although these were developed as universal human rights, they failed to include Indigenous people in the development and implementation of those rights. That, along with many other reasons, is why UNDRIP was developed.

UNDRIP was adopted by the UN in 2007, by 144 countries, to enshrine (according to Article 43) the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.”

The purpose of the declaration is to provide a mechanism to protect the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and protection of traditional lands and territories. It is centered around having Indigenous people at the table and providing them with the space to make decisions in a shared decision-making process. UNDRIP is not legally binding, but it will be a significant tool toward eliminating human rights violations against the world’s 370 million Indigenous people and assist them in combating discrimination and marginalization.

Fast forward another 12 years from UNDRIP’s adoption, and on Nov. 26, 2019, B.C. became the first province in Canada to pass legislation to implement the UN declaration which is the foundation for the Province’s work toward reconciliation in B.C. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People’s Act (DRIPA) was passed unanimously in the Legislative Assembly, and aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous people while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.

With the legislation, the Province, Indigenous peoples, businesses and local governments will have better tools to build effective relationships and a robust and sustainable economy together. The Province worked with the First Nations Leadership Council (BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs), who were directed by First Nations Chiefs of B.C., to develop the legislation.

The legislation requires alignment of B.C.’s laws with the UN Declaration as they are modified or built, and an action plan that includes consistent public reporting. DRIPA will move B.C. into a new era of rights recognition, and away from conflict and court battles. It will provide a clear route for everyone to work together as partners.

UNDRIP, and now DRIPA here in B.C., are steps in our collective journey toward greater inclusion, co-creating reconciliation and recognizing and respecting Indigenous people here at home, and across the globe, so nobody is left behind any longer. We do not have the answers, and this won’t be fixed overnight but this is a good place to start.

You’ll find a lot of helpful information about B.C.’s new act, including how it relates to environmental assessment, local governments, business and economic sectors, here.

Gilakas’la my colleagues and friends.

Ride Hail – It’s Here
By Katrina LaRoy, Communications Officer PTB/CVSE

You might recognize a name or two from this list of approved ride-hail companies in the province. Maybe you’ve even hailed a ride already.

Whistle! was the first ride-hail company approved by the Passenger Transportation Board on Dec. 16. Approvals for Uber and Lyft came on Jan. 23, and the last two on Feb. 7.

First, check out the map on this page. The board is responsible for setting operating boundaries for ride hail in the province and they’ve established five regions.

Second, you may have questions like those we’ve fielded from the public, so let’s make this a Q&A.

Q: Which areas actually have ride hail?
A: Whistle! is up and running in Tofino and Whistler. The company plans to expand to other resort towns (Ucluelet, Pemberton and Squamish). Uber and Lyft are operating in Metro Vancouver and their websites include maps of their service areas. One thing to keep in mind is even if you can’t hail a ride at this time from the Fraser Valley, you will be able to get a ride back to the Fraser Valley from those companies’ service areas.

Apt Rides is preparing to launch in spring 2020 and intends to focus on North Vancouver and West Vancouver.

Kabu has been approved for all five regions. From what we’ve read in the media, Kabu intends to launch in Metro Vancouver immediately and Victoria within the next few months, and aims to be in Kamloops by the end of the year.

Q: Why was Uber not approved to operate in more areas, like Victoria?
A: When filling out a ride-hail application, companies indicate which of the five regions (or all) they intend to offer services in. Uber and Lyft selected Region 1 — the Lower Mainland and Whistler. From the map, you can see that Victoria is Region 2, and Kamloops and Kelowna are in Region 4. Companies are able to re-apply at any time to request additional regions.

Q: If these companies are approved for Region 1, why can’t I hail a ride from Abbotsford? Or Chilliwack? Or White Rock? Aren’t these in Region 1?
A: Yes, they are. Companies are expanding their scope of their services as drivers come on board. Both Uber and Lyft have already extended their service areas to include additional municipalities, from when they began operation on Jan. 24.

Q: When will more approvals happen?
A: Honestly, your guess is as good as mine. The board is independent of the Passenger Transportation Branch and issues decisions on applications. So far, 35 applications have been received. The board has ruled on 11 (five approvals, six denials), so that leaves a lot more decisions to come. What is really neat is the majority of applications are from B.C.-based companies. That was one goal of the legislation that came in on Sept. 16 last year — to allow local companies to compete in this new sector.

Q: I’m concerned about safety when taking ride-hail vehicles. I’ve heard about sexual assault cases.
A: We share your concern. One short answer is legislation is in place to screen out dangerous individuals. You can read about that here. Another answer is passengers need to also be diligent about ensuring their own safety by following a few basic tips, such as verifying the vehicle’s licence plate number with the one provided in the app, and looking for the ride-hail identifier on the vehicle. More tips here.

Q: As a public servant, can I drive for a ride-hail company?
A: Solid question. It depends. I definitely cannot, as I work in a branch directly involved with the industry and there is a conflict of interest. Best to have a conversation with your direct supervisor to learn if this is an option for you.

Thanks for reading along. And happy hailing!
Tracking Thrush and Other Migratory Birds
Submitted by Duane Wells, Environmental Services Regional Manager

Houston…we have some good news…

Sorry, not Houston B.C., but a city close to Houston, Texas where Assistant Professor Kira Delmore works at Texas A&M University in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department.

Kira contacted the ministry for help in getting the proper permits for placing Motus Wildlife Tracking systems which are used to track migratory birds, along the Coquihalla Highway and Highway 5A, through the southern interior of B.C.

With the assistance of Development Services, Electrical Services and Environmental Services, eight radio towers were installed adding to an existing tracking network that stretches across North America.

In August 2019, 100 Swainson’s Thrushes were fitted with radio transmitters in the Pemberton, Tatlayoko Lake and Bella Coola areas. Now, 51 of those birds have been detected by B.C.’s new radio towers and those across the continent.

Where did the birds go you ask? They have been tracked to Ohio, South Carolina and Florida, and with how cold it’s been here this winter, I can’t say that I blame them. The birds breed in Canada, Alaska and the northwest U.S., and migrate as far south as Argentina.

Thanks to Kira, and the great folks in Development Services and Electrical Services for all your help in giving us a better understanding of the environment, and more specifically, how these birds interact with the environment.

Moose Hide Campaign a Step to Reconciliation
Submitted by Rakiya Larkin, Strategic Human Resources

We talk about reconciliation and what we can do as Canadians to ensure that Indigenous people and communities know that we are serious about this new path forward, building true and sustainable relationships.

The Moose Hide Campaign is part of our work of incremental, yet critical steps toward ending violence against women and girls and our larger vision of reconciliation. By participating in the Moose Hide Campaign you are directly supporting the work of reconciliation. Wearing a moose hide pin signifies that you stand in solidarity with women and girls across the province and across our country. It is a reminder that violence against women and girls, especially Indigenous women and girls, is not okay and will not be tolerated.

The Moose Hide Campaign has now distributed more 1.2 million pins to more than 1,000 communities. About 3,400 individuals and organizations across North America have made the commitment to “wear and share” the Moose Hide pin.

Whether you are new to government, are just starting on your journey, have participated in the Moose Hide Campaign in the past, or are discovering the campaign this year, we are all on this road together to end violence. We have a responsibility to ensure that our policies, practices and environments are safer and more inclusive of the diversity within British Columbia.

We do not want the atrocities of the past to be our future and we do not want women and girls today to still be experiencing the same level of violence, lack of respect and lack of love, tomorrow. We all want to ensure that our girls grow up in a society where they know they will be protected and safe; and that our boys grow up knowing they have a responsibility to ensure that happens.

We are creating a new generation that will think differently from us, that will change the status quo and shift the power dynamic so that everyone is included and that everyone feels they belong and matter in this world.

More on Page 14…
**EV in HOV Lane Program Cuts Processing Time in Half**
Submitted by Isabella Lam, Program Assistant, Programs and Corporate Initiatives Branch

Did you know that owners of electric vehicles (EVs) can access the time-saving benefits of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, regardless of the number of passengers in the car?

Our ministry’s [Electric Vehicles in HOV Lanes (EV in HOV) Program](https://www.gov.bc.ca/en/transportation/electric-vehicles-in-hov-lanes) allows EVs to drive in HOV lanes on British Columbia’s provincial and municipal highways. EV owners can apply to receive an “EV OK” decal to display on their vehicle to set them apart from non-electric vehicles, so law enforcement can identify them as qualifying HOV lane users. Since the launch of this program in 2016, there have been more than 21,000 decals issued.

In its first few years, the program had a paper-based application process, which meant applicants might wait three to six weeks before receiving their decal.

However, an automated application system has been developed, to streamline program intake. Now, EV owners can apply for their HOV decals online. Since its official launch in December 2019, the new system has been extremely successful, with more than 1,700 online applications submitted and approved. It only requires a few minutes for EV owners to complete the easier-to-use application, and the system has greatly improved processing time. Now that the application, processing and mailing times have been cut by more than half, EV owners are receiving their decals in just one to two weeks (or less)!

Executive Director of Engineering Services Ed Miska recently applied for an EV OK decal for his vehicle. The day after he submitted the application, he dropped by the Programs and Corporate Initiatives Branch to see if he could pick up the decal. Ed was advised that his application had already been processed and the decal was in transit. “I got it the day after in the mail,” says Ed.

The success of this project would not have been possible without the hard work, collaboration and support of the ministry’s Information Management Branch and Web Services.

The EV in HOV Lanes Program supports government’s CleanBC initiative by encouraging the use of clean-energy vehicles. We’re moving toward a future where new vehicles produce no greenhouse gas emissions at all, and our ministry is striving to support the Province’s goal to have a cleaner, brighter future.

Have any questions about this popular program? Email EVHOV@gov.bc.ca.

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**Plus Four for Canada**
Submitted by Callum Campbell, Inland Ferries Director

At a citizenship ceremony on a bright, cold January day in Victoria, Janna Fabrikova (Information Management Branch), Andriy Fabrikov (Marine Branch), and their two young children, Dasha and Pavlo, took the Oath of Citizenship and became Canadian citizens.

In four short years since they first arrived from Odessa, Ukraine, the Fabrikovs have gone from Canadian newbies to Canadian pros. Along the way, the family has made some serious contributions to Canada and Canadian life. Janna and Andriy are active in all realms of life and are prodigious community volunteers. Andriy sits on the board of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, where the children both take language and Veselka dance lessons. All of them help with organizing cultural events and celebrations.

For employees looking to learn more about Ukraine, Ukrainian suppers and perogies, Janna and Andriy are a wealth of knowledge and always happy to chat. If you want to impress Andriy, wear a classic embroidered Ukrainian shirt on Vyshyvanka Day (the third Thursday of May is a celebration of the traditional colourful Ukrainian shirts). Andriy wore one of his vyshyvankas at his family’s Canadian citizenship ceremony.

According to Wikipedia, vyshyvankas emerged as high fashion in 2015, and they have been worn by European actresses and royalty at events like the Cannes Film Festival and the 2016 Summer Olympics. Traditionally, vyshyvankas were believed to protect the wearer and to tell a story about family or region of origin.

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**The Oath of Citizenship**

I swear (or affirm) That I will be faithful And bear true allegiance To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second Queen of Canada Her Heirs and Successors And that I will faithfully observe The laws of Canada And fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen.

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Andriy Fabrikov (wearing an embroidered Ukrainian vyshyvanka), children Dasha and Pavlo, and Janna Fabrikova at their Canadian citizenship ceremony.

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The “EV OK” decal displayed on this Nissan Leaf shows law enforcement (and other motorists) that the vehicle is approved for travel in HOV lanes.
The 2019 Provincial Employees Community Services Fund (PECSF) campaign has concluded, and we now can reflect on the kindness, selflessness and compassion of our ministry colleagues and friends throughout the BC Public Service.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure had a record-setting year for the 54th annual PECSF campaign. Thanks to the immense generosity of our 145 donors and the many employees who donated through special events, we raised $58,850 – an increase of almost 19 per cent over our 2018 campaign total. Way to go people!

There was also an impressive new record set for the campaign total, which exceeded $2.1 million. The altruism of 6,653 donors in the BC Public Service means that more than 900 agencies in communities across the province can continue to provide their much-needed programs and services.

PECSF is an opportunity for everyone to give back and it’s one way we can contribute to making the future a little brighter for those who need it the most. This year’s campaign was another shining example of what can happen when people come together to give selflessly and share openly, for a common cause.

As we continue to evolve as individuals and groups of families, friends, co-workers and community members, as our relationships become stronger and our connections deepen, I want all of us to ensure that our desire to help others never wanes.

Gilakas’la, to you, for your charitable giving and kind hearts; lets keep it up and see what we can accomplish next year!

Healthy lives free of heart disease and stroke. Together, we will make it happen.

Thanks to your support, patients across the province will receive free, critical resources to aid recovery and live a healthier life.

– Heart and Stroke Foundation

Celebrating Paul Riegert’s 25 and 26 Years of Service

Submitted by Michelle Evans, Senior Manager Rehabilitation and Construction Programs

Paul Riegert achieved 25 years of public service last year; and unfortunately, due to a combination of things, we did not schedule an opportunity to present his pin.

In order to make this right, I planned an ad-hoc meeting with the team in our Kamloops office, and kept the reason a surprise. As I was mostly responsible for the delay in presenting the pin, I wanted to try to make it up to Paul. Unfortunately (again) I had since lost Paul’s 25-year pin, but thankfully one of his teammates offered his pin (until Paul’s could be located) so we could honour Paul on Feb. 20.

It’s important to celebrate these milestones with each other.

Each person went around the table to say one thing they appreciated about Paul, and that was a cool thing to do. In the end, we had an excellent time, and there were some really nice things said.

I also took the occasion to present Paul with a “Special Edition 26-Year Pin” for the long delay!

This personalized “Special Edition 26-Year Pin” was presented to Electrical Services Program Manager Paul Riegert.

Moose Hide Campaign a Step to Reconciliation… Continued from Page 12

This is about ending violence for women and girls every day, not just on the annual campaign day, so reach out to Strategic HR, the Indigenous Relations Team, or the Moose Hide Campaign Team to find out how you can help spread awareness about reconciliation, both at work and in your personal life.