



City Council News February 13, 2019

On the road

I've spent the last month on the road, speaking at conferences and meeting with government representatives to advance the City's initiatives and strategies. I forgot how tiring travelling can be, especially in the winter, but I believe it was well worth the effort to get around the province and promote some of the innovative work we're doing here in Quesnel.

My first trip was to Williams Lake for a two-day Cariboo Regional District (CRD) Board meeting. The second day was our regularly scheduled meeting, but day one was a special Board meeting focused on the state of forestry in our region, with presentations from C&C Wood Products, Tolko, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), Red Cross, and a joint presentation from FLNRORD and West Fraser on the Caribou issue. It was a highly informative day that outlined both the complex challenges confronting this sector and some of the opportunities we must take advantage of if we hope to address these challenges in a timely manner.

My second trip was to Prince George for the annual Natural Resources Conference. Prior to the commencement of the conference I was asked to speak at a BC Chamber of Commerce sponsored pre-event that was primarily focused on the state of the economy in the North. I participated on a panel that explored community economic development activities and was able to highlight the key components of our economic transition strategy and the investments we're making to transform Quesnel into a community that people want to come to as visitors, residents, and investors. View the 2018 economic transition strategy at www.quesnel.ca/reports.

During the Natural Resources Conference, I was able to speak with most of the Provincial Ministers who influence resource policy (Forests, Agriculture, Environment, Aboriginal Relations) and even got a few minutes with the Premier. I was also able to meet with senior government bureaucrats and industry representatives to continue to advance our Future of Forestry Think Tank (FFTT) process. There is great interest throughout the Province in this initiative.

My work to advance our FFTT project continued during my third trip, which was to Victoria to speak specifically about our project at the Western Contractors Association AGM. While in Victoria, I had an opportunity to meet with the new Deputy Minister of FLNRORD as well as staff from the Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology. I also had a chance to speak with the Minister of Education's staff to ensure that our request for a new school is advancing

through the budget process.

My final trip entailed travelling to Kamloops to meet with potential funding agencies for our FFTT project and then to speak at the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP) Conference and AGM. Once again, I had been asked to speak about our forestry initiative and, specifically, how radically we must change our “forest management” practices in light of the unprecedented disturbances we’re seeing on the land base and in response to a rapidly changing climate.

After speaking at the ABCFP Conference, I flew to Vancouver to attend my first meeting of the Fraser Basin Council (FBC), as I was just appointed to this Board by the Chair of the CRD. This is a great networking opportunity for our region and City, as the FPC Board is made up of an eclectic group of people from all walks of life and from around the province.

I closed my final week of travelling off with a white-knuckle drive from Kamloops to Williams Lake to attend a regular meeting of the CRD Board before finally heading home.

All-in-all a very good month of networking that is already paying off in the form of partnerships, funding, and support for our community’s economic transition strategy.

Mayor Bob Simpson

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