



Western Newsletter

Transport 2000 Canada

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba & Saskatchewan



The Coastal Inspiration departed on its maiden voyage in service from Duke Point in Nanaimo, on June 16th. Photo credit: Jon Calon

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A CALL FOR ACTION

We are at a critical point in time and we have a cause that requires all Transport 2000 activists and would be activists to get involved by engaging with politicians of all levels of government, the media and the general public to generate awareness and support for retention as we face the prospect of losing most of the Prairie rail network.

It may seem as if the prairie branchline railway network has already been reduced to a skeleton but the task has yet to be completed. CP still has 1040 kilometers of track listed for abandonment on its three year network plan for the prairie provinces, while CN has 613

kilometers. This situation does not exclude further abandonment plans by the Class 1 carriers, as they revise their three years plans each autumn. One of the major railways has delivered the opinion that there are still too many grain collection points and presumably too much railway track. This illustrates the gravity of the situation and the need for maximum activism by all members and particularly those living in western Canada. Failure to act is not an option if we want to ensure that we want a rail system that has not been reduced to just two or three trunk lines.

Ironically we are witnessing the culmination of a process that

started as long ago as immediately following the second world war with major public financing of an all weather road network. A laudable aim to improve the mobility and market opportunities for rural populations. As has been well recorded the knock on effect of the vast majority of rural people having the flexibility of personal transportation for all seasons was the continuous scaling back of passenger train services to the point of being non-existent and the subsequent disappearance of the express freight business. As a result commodities such as milk, butter, cream and other perishables, express parcels and mail were no longer hauled by trains.

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A CALL FOR ACTION (CONTINUED)

The erosion of other traffic was lost to the perceived flexibility and convenience of road transport until the basis for the continued existence of the railway network was solely related to moving grain and associated products.

With the privatization of CN in 1995 both carriers were driven purely by short term shareholder value. This has been achieved by ruthless cost cutting exercises including deferred maintenance and a focus on high value unit train movements on the trunk system. A decade ago in Saskatchewan all container traffic destined for Regina and other southern Saskatchewan centres was rail routed via the Craik subdivision to an intermodal terminal in Regina. Today, CN has decided to concentrate on a single intermodal center in Saskatoon and trucks all container traffic from this facility all over the province using the publicly funded highway system. This policy has been detrimental to traffic flows on, for example, the Craik Subdivision which is paralleled by highway #11 from Saskatoon to Regina for most of the distance.

Saskatchewan now has 9 shortline railways with the most recent a community owned operation named the Torch River Railway which acquired the CP Rail White Fox Subdivision in December 2007. These shortlines have benefited from assistance provided by the Saskatchewan government, an initial program which covers 80% of the cost of an initial feasibility study up to \$25,000 and subsequently providing a 15 year interest free loan for up to a third of the

purchase price of the line. Sadly, neither Alberta or Manitoba have similar programs.

It is doubly ironic that the rail discontinuation program has accelerated at a time when society is being confronted, as never before, with the twin challenges of rapidly increasing fuel costs, global warming and environmental degradation. The members of Transport 2000 need no reminder that railways are the most efficient transport mode in terms of ton miles moved and its environmental footprint.

Not every length of track can be justifiably saved, as the rationale for its existence may have gone when the horse and buggy ceased to be the prime mover. A country elevator at approximately every seven miles will never again be part of the prairie landscape, however every "iron highway" should be the subject of a feasibility study. The need to preserve options for the future as well as the ability to diversify and take advantage of new economic opportunities are ensured when a rail line continues in existence. A number of tangible examples have occurred with the existing shortline operations.

Two of these include Great Western Railway, a major shortline operator in SW Saskatchewan moving over 1000 producer cars of speciality crops (pulses, peas, lentils, etc) in the past twelve months and the Fife Lake Railway, based in Coronach, Sask. is gearing up to handle some 1200 cars of metakaolin from a new mine site adjacent to the track.

The rationalization of the prairie rail network has reached

the point of absurdity when the CN direct link between Saskatoon and Regina has the southern 85 miles scheduled for abandonment. Interestingly, this intercity connection has been classified as a grain dependent branchline and with CN recently issuing a formal notice of discontinuance on April 28th 2008 the abandonment is controlled by the formal process laid out in the Canadian Transportation Act of July 1996, and as amended in June 2000.

As part of the process the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) will fix a binding purchase price based on the Net Salvage Value (NSV) of the line in the event that an interested purchaser is unable to reach agreement with the selling railway. A purchase offer has been submitted by the locally owned company formed to acquire and operate the Davidson-Regina portion of the line, so the project has moved to the next stage.

Given the extent of the threat to the prairie network I suggest to all the readers that here is a cause that needs to be championed at every opportunity. Its not just about freight trains vs. passenger trains but about retaining the maximum amount of iron highway for the future and preserving a full range of transport options.

The contemporary conventional transportation assumptions are going to have to change albeit with reluctance in many cases. If much of the threatened network is available then we will be ready for the New Railway Age when it arrives.

*Martin Wooldridge
dreenbill@gmail.com*

OPEN LETTER TO EDMONTON COUNCIL REGARDING TROLLEY BUS DISCONTINUANCE

As a past visitor to Edmonton, and former editor of "Transit News Canada" magazine ('82-'90), I am writing to support retention of Edmonton's trolley bus system, for the following reasons:

- Low floor accessible trolley buses, both articulated and standard, are available now, in Canada, from Winnipeg's New Flyer Industries. In fact ETS tested one on loan from Vancouver only last year. I did not get to Edmonton while "Vanna", as it was nicknamed, was in service, but I rode on a good many of her sisters in Vancouver last summer. From what I have heard, everyone who either rode on, drove, or maintained Vanna liked that bus.

- Besides accessibility, Vanna and her Vancouver sisters have:

- energy-efficient power electronics, including regenerative braking that feeds power back into the supply system; battery-powered off-wire capability, for power failures, dewirements, or short diversions; new design trolley poles and shoes that are much less prone to dewirements and are easier to reset if they do dewire; and automatic retrievers

that will lower the poles in case of dewirement. All these features were, or should have been, well and thoroughly demonstrated.

- Trolley buses may be powered from "dirty" thermal power, but so is Edmonton's electric LRT system - and for that matter every building (including City Hall) in Edmonton. The pollution generated at a fixed generating plant is better controlled there than in millions of diesel or gasoline engines. Calgary has for the past 7 years offset its LRT power requirements by purchasing an equivalent amount of wind-generated electricity from Southern Alberta. Perhaps Edmonton could do the same for both LRT and Trolleys.

- Recent sharp increases in fuel prices, which are not likely to ease any time soon and will in fact only get worse, will be a problem for continued operation of diesel and hybrid buses. Trolleys can be completely independent of scarce and expensive fossil fuels, as their power can be generated from any number of sources including garbage, as Ottawa is about to do.

- Hybrid buses, touted as the trolleys' replacements, are turning out not to be as fuel-efficient as claimed. The Toronto Transit Commission's Orion VII hybrids are returning only 10-15% fuel-efficiency over standard diesel buses, not the 25% claimed.

- Overhead wires need not be "visual pollution"; they should advertise the presence of frequent transit service on routes that have for many years had heavy ridership. Long-term diversions can and should be planned for, as was done when the LRT tunnels under Jasper Avenue were built in the 1970s and early 1980s.

- Some Edmonton media, including Kerry Diotte of the Edmonton Sun, are admitting that the trolley issue may need further study after all. His column is on the Edmonton Sun website.

For the above reasons I hope that council will retain, expand, and modernize Edmonton's trolley bus system, to carry city residents accessibly, safely, reliably, and comfortably.

Mark Walton

*T2000 Member in Ottawa, Ontario
mark.walton@sympatico.ca*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – TRANSPORT 2000 PRAIRIE

When: Saturday, Sept 13, 2008, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Where: Metropolitan United Church, 2476 Victoria Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan

Theme: Prairie railways for passengers and freight

When can we go "all aboard"? (speakers and program to be confirmed)

Consider volunteering for Transport 2000 Prairie!

Gain satisfaction in contributing to a "Great Work" - enhancing climate, economy, social justice and Earth's threatened richness; enjoying new friends and new skills. We need:

- President or Co-president
- VP for Alberta
- VP for Saskatchewan

- Manager of Prairie Website

Other positions to be confirmed (or contested): Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President Manitoba, Director of Disability Issues

For more info, contact Catherine Verrall by e-mail at cverrall@transport2000.ca or by phone at 306-569-7699.

COASTAL INSPIRATION
COMMENCES SERVICE

VICTORIA – BC Ferries’ newest vessel, Coastal Inspiration, officially commenced service on June 16 on the scheduled 3:15 pm sailing from Duke Point in Nanaimo to Tsawwassen.

Coastal Inspiration is the second of three new Coastal Class vessels. Coastal Renaissance commenced service on the Departure Bay – Horseshoe Bay route in March, and Coastal Celebration, the third vessel, arrived in B.C. from Germany on June 18. Like its sister ships, Coastal Inspiration features the latest in passenger amenities, vessel technology and environmental safeguards.

“BC Ferries is pleased to deploy its brand new ship, Coastal Inspiration, on the Duke Point – Tsawwassen route” said David L. Hahn, BC Ferries’ President and CEO. “This route offers early morning sailings so customers can get a jump start on their day, as well as late night connections between Vancouver and Vancouver Island so people can enjoy an evening in Vancouver and return home that evening.”

The Duke Point – Tsawwassen route is a welcome alternative for RVers and motorists alike, who want to avoid driving through downtown cores in Vancouver and Nanaimo. Coastal Inspiration, along with the newly refurbished Queen of Alberni, will provide improved service on this major route and enhance travel options for customers as mid and northern Vancouver Island communities continue to grow.

For more information, visit www.bcferreries.com.

MEND YOUR FUELISH WAYS

Bike, Walk, Bus, Train

That’s a sign on my bike, taped onto my handy milk- crate carrier. It inspires lots of comments as I go about town (not owning a car). Often, I pull out a Transport 2000 Prairie flyer which I always carry. “Here’s something I’m involved in...” A young professional woman has a bike sign which reads “**0 cents a litre**”. The time is ripe for attracting new members and new involvement. With gas prices skyrocketing, people are sprucing up their bikes. The top bike-repair/ sales shop in Regina is overloaded with work. The City’s Green Ribbon Committee (one of our partners in some events) held Biking for Commuting workshops. Transport 2000 and Regina EcoLiving are holding a Better Biking Brainstorming - preparing recommendations for City planners, and also reaching out to include new people and new energies. Transit ridership is up too, especially in Saskatoon. There, ridership jumped 12 percent through the first 4 months of 2008 over its record-breaking 2007. Last year’s increase was the biggest among Canadian bus systems that year. That followed the remapping of the city’s bus routes, improving frequency and cutting travel times, and the University of Saskatchewan students approving the U-pass, which gives undergrads a discount bus pass (Transport 2000 prairie had a part in this through Jonathan Bodvarson.)

The Regina area has 12 new keen members since March. I’m trying to figure out how. A couple reasons might be:

- They can see we are doing something about issues that concern them (biking and walking and wheelchairs conditions, public transit as well as rail) and making the links between transportation and “other” issues such as tar sands, climate change, land-use planning.
- We show up at all sorts of events, with one of our displays, or speaking to city council committees supporting other groups on related issues. (supporting the students on better transit service to the universities, supporting neighbourhood groups on urban planning, etc.)

So, in your place, what can you do? We can help you with a display on Transport 2000 and transport issues. A triptych display board from an office supply store is just the thing, and easy to carry around, even on a bus. Look out for clippings, pictures, cartoons. Some of the events where you could ask to set up a display might be fairs, or speakers on peace, environmental ,agricultural, city planning issues. In Regina we were honoured to have a Transport 2000 table within the National Aboriginal Day celebration, as the Day’s theme was Living in Balance with Mother Earth.

May you have a summer of discovery - of old trails and new.

*Catherine Verrall
Past/Acting President,
Transport 2000 Prairie
cverrall@transport2000.ca*

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings from Calgary, Chilliwack, Surrey, Vancouver, Vancouver Island and even the Sunshine Coast! Apologies about this issue being late but a previously planned vacation led me to delay the issue for potentially new material which appears elsewhere in this issue. Turns out delaying this issue may be a good thing, with respect to the pending dismantlement of the electric trolley bus system in Edmonton within the next couple years. Edmonton City Council did vote to have the system shut down in 2010, but call me an optimist, there may be hope yet for that system, if we can muster enough people to convince Edmonton Transit to invest in the system and provide better service with newer trolleys and perhaps an expanded route system. After all, Vancouver is most definitely taking advantage of the technology and reportedly has asked New Flyer Industries to change 10 of the hybrid busses on order to be trolleys!

While I was out to BC, I had an opportunity to experience some of the unique bits of public transportation in the lower mainland, and spent about 4 hours travelling from Chilliwack into Vancouver and then back to Mission. Some thoughts:

- Greyhound provides a really good service within the lower mainland. The bus schedules, fares, and the busses themselves were all top notch, and despite the stop-and-go traffic leading up to the Port Mann bridge, we were still on-time into Pacific Central Station. It seems Greyhound seems to get a bad rap sometimes

for being the absolute last choice for transportation, but they are doing very good work, and should be commended for it. For me, it's a viable option!

- The Intermodalism of Pacific Central Station in Vancouver is wonderful. Having connections between Greyhound, VIA Rail, Amtrak, and TransLink (both SkyTrain and bus) was a godsend. It's a pity this isn't replicated elsewhere in Western Canada.

- Something can definitely be said for having frequency over sheer capacity with respect to light/heavy rail mass transit. Three car C-trains in Calgary are good, but not so much when they run on a 15 minute schedule during off-peak hours and every 5 minutes during peak hours. Contrast this to every few minutes the entire day within the Skytrain system and the TTC subway in Toronto. I'll take frequency any day!

- Congrats to the efforts of everyone in TransLink and Canadian Pacific for the West Coast Express. I was aboard this service for the 5:30 departure from Waterfront station and the train was PACKED. And not due to a lack of cars either. This train had 8 cars and they were all full. Good to see a lot of connecting busses at the stops along the way as well. Now, if we could get commuter rail running in Calgary...

- Closer to home, Calgary's LRT system is growing again. As reported in these pages in the Fall 2007 edition, the northwest and northeast lines are seeing extensions to Tuscany/Rocky Ridge and Saddle Ridge

respectively. Now, we're finally going to see construction start on the West leg of the city's C-Train system. The plan has been in the works for quite some time, but now that funding has been obtained, the debates roared up from the communities along the line wishing to ensure the routing doesn't affect their property values, vistas and so forth. The original plan was to have an elevated station and elevated track from close to the time the tracks left 7th Avenue SW to the time it got to the top of the hill on Bow Trail, and then travel on the outside of Bow Trail until it dove under Westbrook Mall. Residents put up a fight and now we have the train on the ground up hill in the median of a now-needing-to-be-widened Bow Trail. This means more road building and a higher cost for construction as a result. Still impressive is the fact the City still wants to have the train in service by end of 2012! A mere three and a half years for 8.4km of track, seven stations, three bus terminal & park 'n' ride facilities, and the acquisition of enough LRT cars to provide service to this side of the city! To put this schedule into perspective, it's taking two years to extend the NE line to Saddle Ridge!

- One last note and unrelated to public transportation. I've been sending this newsletter in PDF format to only a couple people. If you want this full-colour newsletter delivered to you via e-mail in Acrobat 5 format, drop me a line. I'll be happy add you to the list.

Jon Calon
jcalon@transport2000.ca.



TAR SANDS & TRANSPORTATION

Tar Sands and Transportation drew a capacity crowd to Regina City Hall for Transport 2000 Prairie's 6th Annual Clean Air Day forum, June 4, 2008. Our Key speaker was Peter Prebble, director of Energy and Water Policy for the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, and former Provincial Minister of Energy Conservation. This event was co-sponsored with Regina EcoLiving, with support from the City of Regina, Amalgamated Transit Union and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Here is an shortened version of Peter Prebble's presentation:

I want to link this tar sands issue directly to climate change, because we are at time in human history when millions of peoples' well-being is at stake and will be heavily influenced by what human beings decide to do on this planet over the next 20 years - whether or not we are going to reduce greenhouse gases. Also tens of thousands of species and their future will be determined by what we do over the next 2 decades . Already the world is experiencing the early consequences of climate change. :

1. Increased drought as a result of higher global temperatures. Many parts of the world cannot sustain much more heat or dry weather, before they can no longer grow a crop. So there will be far more malnutrition and starvation.
2. The international scientific community is saying that 15% to 40% of species will go extinct if the temperature rises by 2% C. The United Nations Inter-

governmental Panel on Climate Change is saying if the greenhouse gas emission trend continues as it is now we will hit that 2% temp increase in this century and the temp may rise as much as 5% C. It's equivalent to the opposite temperature difference which brought on the ice age!

3. Water availability will diminish if glaciers continue to shrink.
4. Storms and floods are already up 5-fold since 1970 and will be more intense if climate change emissions continue to rise.

Such emissions don't just dissipate over a few years. The nitrous oxides, the carbon dioxide and the methane stay around in the atmosphere for a long, long time, and continue to build up. That is why it is critical that we work for an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Look at Saskatchewan's emissions (and Alberta's would be much the same) - we produce greenhouse gases in this province at a rate of 72.9 tonnes per person. The average for Canada and the US is 19 tonnes per person. Our Saskatchewan output is so high because of the way we generate electricity, the way we undertake oil and gas activities, and because we have never been serious in developing public transportation. If we were a country, we would have the second highest greenhouse gas emissions on the planet. So we cannot ask any other nation to reduce their emissions until we reduce ours. Given the consequences for the planet, and the lives that are at stake, we have an ethical obligation to reducing our

emissions right away.

At the same time, there is one obvious thing we can't do - embark on major industrial projects that we know will dramatically increase our greenhouse gas emissions - as the tar sands will. So it is time to declare a moratorium on new tar sands development in Canada until we figure out a way of fully mitigating the environmental impacts that go with it.

There are many environmental impacts of the tar sands. Eriel Deranger spoke eloquently about the impact on her home community, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, on the Athabasca River in northern Alberta. Also, there are huge emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide, and 70% of it is coming into Saskatchewan raining acid on our northern lakes. The federal government should put a cap on these emissions, and regulate transborder pollution. The federal government should start enforcing national legislation, like the Fisheries Act, and cleaning up the existing tar sands should be a precondition of any further tar sands development in Canada.

Another impact is fragmentation of the forest anywhere that "in situ" extraction is used, as is planned for northern Saskatchewan. That is not open pit mining, but steam extraction to remove the bitumen. The infrastructure associated with these kind of projects is huge - spread throughout at least 8 or 9 percent of the forested land. That means a lot of damage to the biodiversity in the ecosystem.

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TAR SANDS & TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

The Tar Sands are all about providing the US with oil, using natural gas - our precious, limited resource - in massive quantities, to remove the bitumen, and also using 2 to 5 barrels of water to produce 1 barrel of oil. We currently export about 3.2 million barrels of oil a day to the US. About half of that is from oil sands. The US could easily displace this oil from the most modest conservation measures such as:

- Emission reduction legislation as in California where the government is trying to implement 30% reduction of emissions from vehicles by 2016, but is being sued by auto and oil companies and by the US federal government, yet is supported by 11 other US states.
- Introduction of hybrid and eco-vehicles as in some states
- Enormous opportunities for improving public transport, moving more goods by rail instead of by road, serious anti-idling programs, and initiatives to encourage more efficient use of electricity. Within a decade, if the US adopted these measures, they could reduce energy consumption by 10 to 15% and so would not need any tar sands oil, and could eliminate all imports of oil from Iraq.

The same opportunities exist in Canada, especially in the West. You can't address climate change without spending money to do it. See Nicholas Stern's report, from the UK. He was also head of the World Bank at the time, and said "Nations of the world must be prepared to spend at least 15% of

the GDP on addressing climate change each year..." (In Sask. that would be \$450m a year. There would be a lot of jobs and a lot of economic opportunity associated with that) Stern also said that the economic cost of climate change to the global economy would be at least 5% of GDP every year and probably 20%: storm damage, tornadoes, cyclones, drought. So to avoid these costs, we have to invest in climate change and get clean air as we do it. The province needs to work with the private sector to accomplish this.

Looking at the Transportation in Saskatchewan:

1. The rail line between Davidson and Regina is up for sale. The provincial government should buy that rail line, and re-establish passenger rail service between Regina and Saskatoon.
2. Slow down on the highways (speed limit 100 kph) to reduce our emissions. The alternative is that we will have used up all the fossil fuels on this planet.
3. Vehicles idling is totally unacceptable. Go to any McDonalds, commercial trucking operation, and see why they must change.
4. Change how we move goods. Half of the stuff moved by truck should be moved by rail.
5. The province must sit down with every municipality in Saskatchewan, saying when we design new neighbourhoods, make these pedestrian and bike friendly neighbourhoods, not reliant on the car. This means bike lanes on arterial roads, bus shelters, local grocery stores in each neighbourhood, and also designing neighbourhoods and

buildings that are energy efficient. Political will is the key. We can make that happen!

The province should get back into urban transit, saying to municipalities "If you upgrade your transit system, improve the frequency of your routes, provide better service to high-occupancy places like the University, there will be extra money for you." The province should cost-share so we can establish really good transit systems. Many provinces have financial incentives to retire old vehicles (pre -1995) which have significantly higher GG emissions.

The oil and gas industry is the area of our biggest emissions growth. The increase of methane, a much more potent gas than CO₂, in the conventional industry has been enormous. The gas leaks out in many parts of the process. The website for US Environmental Protection Agency says that at today's natural gas prices, it is possible to reduce emissions by a third by using best practices. We need to make these best practices regulation. Say to the industry: "You have 3 years to meet these regulations."

There is a lot at stake and it is imperative that we move forward with major greenhouse gas reductions. There are enormous opportunities across Canada: wind power, solar heating in every community, good public transport. We owe it to ourselves and future generations not to invest in projects which we know are destroying the planet. So it's time for a moratorium on tar sands.

Peter Prebble

SHORTLINE RAIL PROGRAM KEEPS INFRASTRUCTURE ON TRACK

The Saskatchewan Government announced on July 3rd the first-ever series of provincial grants for shortline rail infrastructure projects to help that sector of the transportation system keep pace with the current economic momentum.

Through a new cost-sharing provincial program with Saskatchewan shortline rail companies, the province will invest \$500,000. With the province's grants and shortline rail companies' contributions combined, this sector will see a total infrastructure investment this fiscal year of \$1 million.

"Shortline rail is important because it links Saskatchewan's export-based economy to provincial, national and worldwide markets," Highways and Infrastructure Minister Wayne Elhard said. "It also provides shippers with another effective transportation option, supports economic development in rural parts of the province and reduces truck-traffic congestion, related greenhouse gases and road wear."

Provincial grants will be distributed in the following amounts:

- Carlton Trail Railway will receive almost \$200,000
- Great Western Railway Ltd. will get about \$150,000
- Southern Rails Cooperative will be given about \$85,000
- Arborfield Thunder Rail will obtain almost \$30,000
- Fife Lake Railway Ltd. will be receiving about \$20,000
- Red Coat Road and Railway will acquire more than \$10,000

Infrastructure projects include improvements on ballast, which is the gravel between and under railroad ties, bridge repairs, upgrading of switch components and other track stabilization work.

Saskatchewan currently has eight shortline railways covering 1,411 kilometres, which are regulated by the province. These provincial shortlines connect to the rail lines of national railways, which are regulated by the federal government.

MICHAEL CORMIER

Over the past six years I have enjoyed volunteering for Transport 2000 in the Prairie Region. However, Due to my relocation and acceptance of a new job in Halifax, Nova Scotia, It is with regret I am informing you of my resignation from the Board of Directors as Vice President as well as my other responsibilities representing Alberta, newsletter support and website maintenance effective June 28th 2008.

I've enjoyed the time spent in Calgary and Western Canada, and look forward to helping T2000 Atlantic with their endeavors.

In my absence I am making the recommendation Jon Calon of Calgary be appointed my proxy and or replacement representing the province of Alberta for all vice president and board of director's duties until your next Prairie Region AGM.

Thank you. Sincerely,

Michael Cormier
mcormier@transport2000.ca

TRANSPORT 2000 WESTERN EXECUTIVES

Transport 2000 Prairie:

(Vacant), President, VP SK
Catherine Verrall, Past President
 (306) 569-7699
Peter Lacey, VP. MB
 (204) 233-0252
Jon Calon, Acting VP. AB
 (403) 685-0138
Denise MacDonald, Secretary
 (306) 584-5945
Bob Ivanochko, Acting Treasurer
 (306) 757-5939
Mellissa Northe, Disabilities Dir.
 (306) 569-7434

T2000 British Columbia:

John Bakker, Acting Pres.
 (250)675-4779
jaapbakker@telus.net
David Stubbs, Vice President
 (604)576-9294
Jim Ramsay, Secretary
 (250)247-9374
jgramsay@telus.net
Jon Calon, Editor
 (403) 685-0138
jcalon@transport2000.ca

Transport 2000 Canada

Mailing Address:
 Box 858, Stn. B
 Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9
 Office Address:
 The Bronson Centre
 211 Bronson Ave., #303
 Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5
 Tel. (613) 594-3290
 Fax (613) 594-3271
t2000@transport2000.ca
www.transport2000.ca

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