

HWY97 TASK FORCE SOCIETY

Newsletter December 2013

1. General Update:

Since the distribution of our last Newsletter in June your Board has continued to work to encourage consideration of a **BYPASS** of Peachland when the time comes for highway improvement in our immediate area. We have been involved in a number of events and meetings and have been encouraged by the response of our fellow citizens the overwhelming majority of whom are supportive of a route that goes around rather than through our much loved municipality. Also encouraging has been the response of the many elected officials from federal, provincial and municipal levels who speak positively about the need for and desirability of an alternative route through our town and lakeshore. We realize that it will take more than positive words from our politicians to get the proper levels of commitment and approval, but are buoyed by the current climate and conversation. What follows is a list of events with which we have been involved over the past 6 months.

2. Canada Day Parade:



Our society's float in the Canada Day Parade was well received and won an award for the Most Original Float. No doubt the enthusiasm generated by the float was greatly helped by the Jazz Band from Mount Boucherie Secondary School that loaned energy and good music to the event. These youngsters were generous with their time and their efforts are very much appreciated. For anyone looking for a talented group to play at concerts or other gatherings, please consider these young men. They are always looking for gigs and would appreciate your patronage. Thanks again to the Jazz Band.

3. Traffic Count:

On a hot Friday in early July over 125 volunteers stationed themselves on Highway 97 to do a Traffic Count. These kind folk worked in two-hour shifts at one of three locations, down by Antlers Beach, near the lights at the IGA Shopping Centre and a short way up Drought Hill. Board Member Bert Put, the man who organized this adventure wishes to thank all of those individuals who gave of their time and talent. The data gathered has been compared to data from past years collected by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MOT) and shows definite increases in volume.

4. Meeting with MOT Officials:

In August a meeting took place between municipality and MOT officials and members of the Council's Committee addressing the matter of the future of the Highway. All reports indicate that the meeting was a disappointment and that MOT officials were not mandated to discuss the agenda wished for by Peachland authorities. Nevertheless subsequent meetings have progressed more favourably, and we are informed that money has been put aside to do a study of the impact and viability of a bypass. As yet we are not aware of the amount of monies set aside or the terms of reference of the study, but we are pleased that this action will be taking place. More on this as the study unfolds.

5. Meeting With Local MP:

Also late in the summer we enjoyed a visit with our Federal Member of Parliament Dan Albas. While both Mr Albas and the Board understood that funding for Highway 97 is a Provincial responsibility, we did discuss the fact that most of the improvements done to Highway 97 from Sicamous to the US Border were accomplished at a time when Federal/Provincial cost sharing

programs were available. In the Board's view, the possibility of getting a positive response for progress from the provincial government would be enhanced during a time of cost sharing. Should such a possibility arise in the future, Mr Albas understood that we would be requesting his assistance in achieving our objectives.



6. Website Repair:

Some of you may have noticed that our Website has been down over the past few weeks. We are fortunate to have a volunteer in the person of Ean Price working to repair and restore it in a new and improved manner. The revised site should be up and running by the end of the year. Many thanks to Ted and Donna Cave, Ean and Vice President Pete Warner for their persistence and technological expertise in contributing to this matter. The address for the website will continue as www.hwy97taskforce.com. Please check it out and let us know what you think.

7. Board of Directors:

We have now grown to an organization of more than 600 members. It seemed as though when we started many years ago, we all knew each other. The Board understands that this is no longer the case. Consequently we have decided to provide you with a list of the current Board Members. In future editions our introductions to those members and their histories will be more fulsome. The current members are:

**Bruce Letendre - President
Peter Warner - Vice President
Ted Cave - Treasurer
Gus Richardson - Secretary
John Abernethy - Past President
Bert Put
Gordon Pope
Arne Roosen
Terry Tanner
Bob Wells
Ken Klein
Raf De Guevera**

8. Membership:

As many of you know, our Society receives no grants or financial support of any kind from outside organizations. Thus the membership dues of 15.00 and renewal fee of 5.00 constitute our main source of funding. For those of you who are members, please check to make sure your membership is current. We would also like to see a growth in membership, so if you can encourage your friends and acquaintances who believe that our area would be well served by highway improvements that bypassed the current footprint through town, please do so. Not only would we appreciate the membership dues, but also the additional numbers that will add strength to our case in promoting our cause. Membership Renewal Forms are included at the end of this newsletter, and potential new members can contact any of the current Members of the Board of Directors of the Society.

9. Lessons Learned:

At a recent Board Meeting we held a discussion about the problem that emerged in opening the Bypass between Lake City and Vernon. The road opened without adequate signage pointing to the old road and businesses in Oyama. Local merchants felt the loss and it was hard not to sympathize with them. Our society intends to be supportive of Peachland's merchants and will make every effort to influence proper signage and other considerations should the bypass be built. We are confident that we can learn from the mistakes of others and consider ourselves both forewarned and forearmed.

9. Cause for Optimism:

**Our newsletter in June featured a section which we called Cause for Optimism. If anything that cause has increased over the past 6 months. Premier Clark is now the MLA for the riding to our immediate north, and she has mused aloud about the desirability of a second crossing of the lake north of the current bridge. The upside - this proposition makes a bypass of Peachland even more sensible and achievable. The downside - by increasing the scope and size of an alternate route solution, any concrete action may be further delayed. Nevertheless the positive attitudes being exhibited by politicians and the vision of alternative transportation corridors is exciting, encouraging and makes us feel that we may be on the right track. Just before our heads swell to unmanageable levels of optimism however, we would like to share this cutting from the Kelowna Courier of November 29, 2013. It is an article from the paper 25-years-ago that is self explanatory. Think of it as a poet's corner for our society for it conjures lines from both Burns and Milton. "The best laid plans of mice and men
Gang aft agleyoft aglae" and
"They also serve who only stand and wait."**

AGAIN

25 YEARS AGO

Highway upgrade planned

The four-laning of Highway 97 between Sicamous and the Canadian-U.S. border is one of the highest priorities in a \$7-billion government plan to improve transportation across B.C.

An 18-volume government report calls for that level of spending between now and 1998.

Currently, about half the highway through the Okanagan is four-laned and work is underway on widening the highway through Winfield.

The government report also notes CN and CP are assessing the continued viability of the rail line between Kamloops and Kelowna.

NOV 29/13
KELOWNA Courier.

The Board of Directors of the HWY97Task Force Society want to wish all of its members a very Merry Christmas Season and a wonderful 2014.

**HWY 97 TASK FORCE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM
IF YOU BECAME A MEMBER MORE THAN 3 YEARS AGO, KINDLY
RENEW BY MAILING THIS FORM PLUS \$5.00 TO:**

**Peter Warner
#107-5300 Huston rd
Peachland BC V0H 1X2**

Name: _____
Family members _____
current email address: _____
current phone # _____
Current address _____

**Thanks for your support!
Board of Directors**