**Public information Session**Dawson City Business Owners   
and the Impact of COVID-19

Held Thursday, August 20th, 2020, via ZOOM Conference

With:

Mark Mather, DCCC President   
Kathleen Derusha, Dawson City Chamber of Commerce  
Larry Bagnell, MP Yukon, CaNor

Dan Davidson, Klondike Sun

Pat Brooks, Gold Rush Campground   
Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Highways & Public Works

12:00 pm – Meeting starts

**Kathleen Derusha**: Welcome everybody that is here on zoom, and listening on CFYT. DCCC weekly update. Mark Mather, President of the DCCC, is here with us today. Hon. Richard Mostyn is here with us, as well as Larry Bagnell.

**Minister Mostyn:** Nice to see everyone, hello Dawson! Things are going well here in Whitehorse.

**Kathleen Derusha:** How are things going with Highways and Public Works, any updates?

**Minister Mostyn:** A few updates from Highway and Public Works:

* We finished the paving of the Dawson City Runway this year;
* We also have another capital project we are proud of. We are rebuilding the North Klondike Highway outside of Dawson. Largest single capital project in Yukon history worth several million dollars over the next several years. Project is moving quickly. There is lots of work in the territory. We’re working on kilometre 624-632 and -------. The total cost of projects this year will be about 10 million dollars. I mentioned the rain earlier and that has complicated that particular project. What we're doing up there is rebuilding the highway and putting in a proper road bed. More robust, making sure it can handle the amount of traffic from tourism, mining and trucks. Hope is that when it is completed, we will have fewer weight restrictions. Hoping To lessen them and reduce the amount of time that they are in place.

**Mark mather:** I have a question on the construction, what impact will that have on the road bend in the spring of 2021 because you’re rebuilding the road bend etc, is it still going to maintain the existing restrictions or will there be complications?

**Minister Mostyn:** at this point, we are hoping these two stretches of road will be done by the end of this year, beginning of next year. Weight restrictions will be improved but this is just one stretch that will be improved. Were trying to structure the jobs to try and have as little impact on the businesses on the north highway. I can’t say for certain if there will be more restrictions or if they will lessen. Will depend on how much work happens and the rain – it has really slowed down construction. Hard to say.

**Mark Mather:** I appreciate that. I have two other questions :

Last week when the road bend went into effect, there was no flashing light or warning on the mat. I'd like to suggest a request that we put that back into effect and that we have at least 5 days in advance of the road bend going in. It's because when loading trucks in the south, everything is pre ordered. So if we have zero warning in regards to what day the road bend is going in, it makes it very difficult to land up at the scales in Whitehorse and not be overweight.

**Minister Mostyn:** Thanks for that, Mark. That’s a level of detail as someone who uses the roads often knows. I will look into the department and make sure that is implemented. I'll ask if they will be implemented five days before.

**Mark Mather:** I really appreciate that thank you so much.

**Kathleen Derusha:** any other questions for Richard on the line here?

**Kathleen Derusha:** I think that’s good

**Mark Mather:** maybe we can thank Larry Bagnell for the contribution from the federal government. This construction wouldn’t be happening if it wasn’t for the federal contributions.

**Minister Mostyn:**  this is true. The support and funding we are getting from Ottawa is making this possible. Tremendous.

**Kathleen Derusha:** big thank you! A big thank you to minister Richard to take the time to update the community and to be here with us. Big thanks, highways and public works and YG. Also big thanks to Cobalt Construction.

**Minister Mostyn:** all of our construction companies are working really hard throughout the territory and they’re taking extraordinary measures to keep everyone safe during the pandemic. The government hasn’t stopped working through the pandemic and despite all this, we’ve managed to get cutting edge programs out there in the territory to help keep the economy going and put the work forward. The construction companies manage to hire and work within the territory to improve the foundations of the territory so that we can reduce weight limit, get goods and services, work on airports, work on buildings, green energy power projects through economic development community services- all this work is continuing through this global pandemic. Lots of effort from Canadians across the country and all living in the territory.

**Kathleen Derusha:** thanks to everyone out there who’s been working through this and to everyone involved.

**Mark Mather:** I just wanted to comment that Brooke Rudolph from KPMA has joined us.

**Kathleen Derusha:** Minister Mostyn, is there anything else you’d like to chat about?

**Minister Mostyn:** thank you so much for the invitation. It’s my pleasure to update everyone on the road construction happening on the northern area of the Klondike highway.

**Larry Bagnell:** Richard I went to Dawson for Discovery Days supporting that and I went through the highway both ways, looks great. Lots of work going on there.

* When I was in Dawson for Discovery Days, we announced 1.5 million for the TH youth center which is going to be beside Bonanza market;
* Today I’m announcing, right now for the first time, 4.6 million dollars across the north for basically related to food security. So that is for the three territories, and for the Yukon it's going to multiple local businesses. Those are all exciting
* Krista Feeling is announcing the transition from the CERB, which is expiring, but the first thing is it is extended for four weeks to September 27th, transition to EI will occur. There's a number of technical details that I will get too when I have them on paper; but basically they’re giving every region in the country the 13.1% which is the lowest unemployment rate;
* They’re also giving a one time top up of 300 hours so if you didn’t get the number of hours because of covid, you will get an extra 300 hour credit, single parental and maternity benefits will also get a top up of 480 hours. Some people will only need 120 hours to qualify . there will still be some people that fall into the cracks, three new benefits
* One for self employed and not eligible for EI – recovery benefit. $400 a week for 26 weeks.
* Caregiving benefit for those who have to stay home for caregiving, 26 weeks, $500 a week
* Sick benefit, $500 week for 2 weeks
* We’re freezing the EI contributions from employees and employers for 2020, save about 2 billion dollars that people will not have to pay
* All those changes should make the transition from CERB to EI seamless for most people. The idea is that no one will fall through the cracks. Those are the new things from the federal government

**Kathleen Derusha:** I have a question about the transition from CERB to EI – I’m wondering if new applicants will be applying for EI, or for CERB?

**Larry Bagnell:** after September 27th, that is the date that CERB will now expire. If you apply after that, you will be receiving EI or one of the three benefits.

**Kathleen Derusha:** any questions for Larry?

No, okay. We have Brooke Rudolphe from the KPMA

**Brooke Rudolphe:** okay thanks. I’m finally back in the office. I’ve been in the field with my children for the past 2.5 months living at the Gold Rush Campground. We’ve visited over 45 mines to touch base with folks and ask questions for the Yukon mineral strategy. We have other stats on funding and what our expenses are and what's being spent in dawson, as well as the territory. We also have another big thing on our plates: the Xplornet challenges. It appears they will be cancelling their services at the end of this season. Will be a major issue across the Yukon, now just for the mining industry, any questions?

**Kathleen Derusha:** thank you for providing this update. If anyone has any concerns, contact the kpma@kpma.ca or the DCCc, thank you so much brooke.

Any other updates? Peter turner?

**Peter Turner:** sorry to join late I apologize. Larry may have touched on the Canadian emergency wage subsidy for claim period five which was July 5th august 1st. you can link to an online calculator and there's an outline of the changes to the program. That can be referenced if you need it.

Another thing is that we’ve been hearing across the territory from businesses is that this crazy deluge of job applications significantly from places overseas- I just wanted to let you know that this has been called out by a number of community chambers of commerce and there's a lot of incorrect information being circulated around youtube right now in regards to hiring foreign workers. YG is working on getting good information out there and we are aware of what is happening.

That’s about all I’ve got at the moment.

**Dan Davidson:** it’s been happening in the Klondike Sun offices as well.

**Peter turner:** this is being done by people looking to up their youtube scores by relaying this false information.

**Mark Mather:** we've got two job listings postings and we’re receiving hundreds of these applications. It’s hard to deal with because 99% of these applications are not valid.

**Peter Turner:** your experience is very similar to many other businesses around the Yukon.

**Kathleen Derusha:** Thank you for your update! Any questions or comments for peter? That’s it? Thank you so much for being here. Mark, any updates? How's the general store?

**Mark Mather:** it’s actually been a better summer than we thought. The town itself is pretty quiet and I’m pretty sure the smaller businesses in Dawson are struggling big time.

**Kathleen Derusha:** Pat how are things at the campground, what are your plans for the rest of the season?

**Pat Brooks:** Well, we’ve had a more successful season than we thought initially. When we came up here we didn’t know the numbers but given that we’re only using every second site, we were full for disco days. Subsequent to that, most of our normal season would be European guests- of course we will not see these people. Unfortunately we are a bit of a ghost town, down to two units. Today is our last day for laundry, and we will be closing the 24th, last night for guests. 25th we shut off water. Hoping that next year is better locally and with covid. All in all, this year hasn’t been bad. We love it up here and we love spending the summer here. Being what it is, we’ve done as good as we possibly could.

**Kathleen Derusha:** big shout out to Pat and Diane.

**Mark Mather:** I agree. Big shout out for coming up and doing the job that you have and it shows that if you were full disco days weekend with covid, we need to try and see if we can get the parameters of what happened in the spring changed. This needs to be rectified so that the campground can continue in dawson city.

**Pat Brooks:** thank you for that, thank you to Brooke. We miss you guys.

**Kathleen Derusha:** on that note on the campground, we will be continuing our member visits, we are making our way through the list of members. Sit down visits to see how business is going and also have a survey . I’m actually going to be out of the office for a couple of weeks. Noemy, our admin, will be coming to visit you guys as well and she will also be taking photos of your business so that we can feature them on shop dawson. Pat did you have something to say?

**Pat Brooks:** I need to recognize the efforts of Arctic Inland for starting a petition. This information just came to us and we were not aware that this was happening. I would be wrong if I did not recognize the effort that has been shown by them. Thank you.

**Mark Mather:** I do know that there are copies of the petition set out at other businesses to support Arctic Inlands efforts. The chamber is making sure to go through the list of all of the members and we are also doing a survey here to put into the City’s lap with a date.

**Kathleen Derusha:** thank you to everyone for your involvement in this. Next up, any other chamber updates:

* Noemy will be stopping by for member visits
* Renewals are up- new systems this year everything has been digitized. You may notice that renewal is a bit different and that you can now do it online;
* We also have the shop local contest that we have partnered up with the KVA. Take a photo and #shopdawson to enter in our weekly contest to win $100 gift certificate to use at the shop where you won with your entry;
* While I am out of the office, the office will still be open and our hours will be 10-4. If you have any questions just email us and we will do our best to answer your questions.

Once again, thank you so much to CFYT for hosting us since COVID started every Thursday at noon, big thanks to Peter Menzies for making this happen. Big thanks cfyt. Is there anything else? Oh reminder, everyone listening in, please feel free to take this time to make any announcements for your businesses.

Mark: again, thank you. This has been great and is absolutely a great benefit for the community of dawson. Thank you to all the businesses working out there to keep us safe.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.