



NOVA SCOTIA ROAD BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



Vehicles travel under the newly constructed overpass at Exit 4 on Highway 103. Started in August, 2003, the \$42-million state-of-the-art project to twin 15 km of Highway 103 from Exit 3 at Otter Lake to Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon is nearing completion.

Bonnie Bobryk Photography

A vision for better roads

NSRBA's focus set on efficient, quality products

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

Founded in 1947 at the Lord Nelson Hotel in Halifax, the Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association (NSRBA) today represents the majority of the province's road and bridge construction

contractors, referred to by the NSRBA as "ordinary" members.

Heavy, marine, sewer and water main contractors also come under that classification, while suppliers of vital industry materials and services are also represented by the NSRBA through associate membership.

The NSRBA now has several purposes:

- To build a cooperative working relationship among private contractors, engineers, the Department of Transportation and Public Works and other levels of government;

See **BETTER ROADS** / H6



Contributed / Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association

The Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association board of directors are shown here at the association's 57th Annual Meeting at Halifax's Westin Hotel in January. Board members are: (left to right) Wally Caldwell, president; Ron Christian, director; Carl Baillie, vice president; Don Maillet, director; John Flemming, immediate past president; Ron Legere, Canadian Construction Association representative; Bob Bernier, director; Barry Hunter, past president; A.G. MacDonald, director; Andrew Lake, director; Brian Meahan, director; Paul White, director; and Steve Williams, managing director. Missing from photo are: Matt Brunt, Ken Thomas and Fred Benere.

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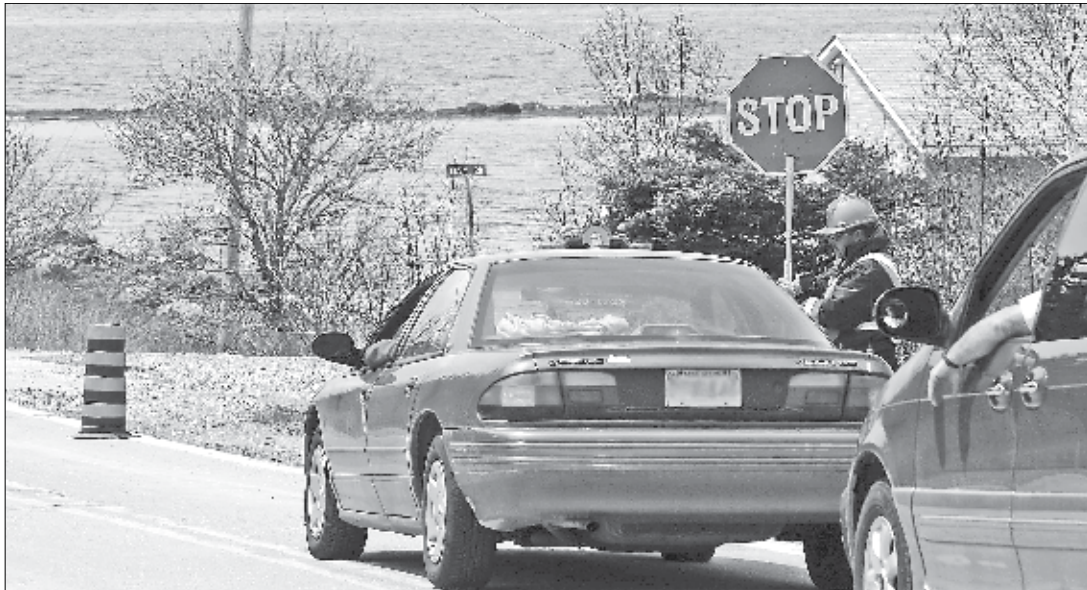
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For NSRBA Membership and other information, please call 450-1433 www.nsrba.ca



Bonnie Bobryk Photography

With the huge number of highway projects that will be launched over the next few years, motorists will have to be especially mindful of safety when approaching construction sites.

Work zone safety campaign started

Program strives to keep N.S.'s 'good road construction safety record intact'

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

With the huge number of highway projects that will be launched over the next few years, motorists will have to be especially mindful of safety when approaching construction sites.

This is why the provincial Department of Transportation and Public Works has launched the Work Zone Safety Campaign, which is aimed at keeping Nova Scotia's good road construction safety record intact.

The campaign has one simple message: drivers need to be cautious when approaching a work zone.

Firstly, they must condition themselves to automatically recognize the colour orange as their cue to slow down because all modern construction zone caution signs are painted in a deep orange colour.

Many of those diamond-shaped signs are made to capture and reflect headlights at night, so they're pretty hard to miss.

Secondly, having seen the signs, drivers should proceed through the work zone carefully, keeping their mind on the task of operating their vehicle and not on the construction work that's underway.

The results of not paying attention

when passing a construction zone are severe. When drivers don't obey the road signs, they put highway workers who build and repair roads and bridges at risk of serious injury or even death.

They also endanger the lives of other drivers, who might also allow their attention to lapse for the few seconds needed to set off a tragedy.

"We've been fortunate in Nova Scotia," says Bernie Clancey, acting manager, Traffic Engineering Services at the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works.

"It's been 16 years since a motorist killed a worker in a construction zone, and it's been more than 10 years since a driver killed another person in a work zone. We want to do everything we can to make sure incidents like that will never happen again."

The Work Zone Safety Campaign is a partnership between the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association.

It's a public education campaign which is aimed at informing the public about life in a work zone as well as the need to slow down and live.

The good message is being disseminated through print, radio, and TV advertising.

Enforcement, of course, is an important part of the initiative. That's why RCMP will be paying close attention to motorist behaviour in work zones and will be enforcing the rules of the road.

"It's about putting a name to those faces in our construction zones, and letting the public know that workers shouldn't have to worry about dying on the job," says Clancey.

"It's also about protecting motorists, because they are equally at risk."

"It's been 16 years since a motorist killed a worker in a construction zone."

Bernie Clancey
N.S. Dept. of Transportation and Public Works

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Working as one for better roads

Strong public, private sector relationship key to ensuring safe roads

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

Since 1948, the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) and the members of the Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association (NSRBA) have continued to develop a professional working relationship.

That relationship has resulted in the planning, design and construction of public highways by professional engineers using the highest construction standards available.

In doing so, the public and private sector are working together to build safe highways.

In the end, however, the NSRBA cannot move ahead without the leadership of the TPW, and that means it comes down to a question of allotment of provincial funds.

With a vision of Nova Scotia linked with the rest of the country through the development and improvement of modern highways as its guide, the Nova Scotia government — after accomplishing its goal of balancing its budget in 2002 — is making more money available to meet the objective.

Even though TPW budgets were tight over the last five years, the Hanu government was still able to increase the highways budget each year.

For example, in 2004 the department led the way in repairing 357 km of road, which included 100 km of 100 series highways.

Since 2000-2001, TPW's capital budget has more than tripled to \$161 million for the 2005/2006 fiscal year.

That means that over the next two years, TPW will have access to an additional \$60 million dollars to improve our highways, one of the provincial government's top priorities.

With the extra \$60 million equally split between 2005 and 2006 road budgets, the money will be targeted to repaving secondary highways around the province.

Added to the mix are funds originating from TPW's Road Improvement Money Program, commonly referred to as the



Hugh Burns is operations supervisor at the Burnside maintenance depot with the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works. Since 1948, DTPW and the members of Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association have continued to develop a professional working relationship.

RIM Program.

Over the last six years, \$70 million has been added to the road budget through RIM, which will pump \$15 million this fiscal year into major rural road maintenance.

"Much of what we are dealing with today is a result of the neglect of the 1990s," says Ron Russell, minister of Transportation and Public Works.

"But our highway infrastructure is vital. New bridges, new twinned highways and new pavement are providing new opportunities for communities and businesses across the province."

Russell points to the twinning of Highway 101 from St. Croix to Avonport, the twinning of Highway 103 from Otter

Lake to Tantallon; improvements to Highway 103 at Barrington, Shelburne County; the widening of Sydney River bridge; and the opening of the Cocleath interchange as on-schedule proof of the progress the Nova Scotia government is making to the province's infrastructure.

The planning to twin Highway 125 from Balls Creek to Sydney River is also continuing, opening Cape Breton to more tourism and business.

"This past year, the public's satisfaction levels with the department jumped to 63 per cent from 50 per cent the year previous, and from 50 per cent in each of the two previous years," he says.

"That means Nova Scotians feel safer on our roads."



The 103 is born...

This April 30, 1966 file photo shows early construction work being done on Highway 103. A \$42-million state-of-the-art project to twin 15 km of Highway 103 from Exit 3 at Otter Lake to Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon is near completion.

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Workplace signers helping save lives

Bernice O'Connor working HRM construction sites for almost 30 years

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

For drivers, the main element in road safety is knowing that a worksite is up ahead. The task of placing caution signs along the highway at the exact distances prescribed by law is carried out by people like Bernice O'Connor.

Bernice has worked at construction sites for almost 30 years and is now one of Ocean Contractors' most experienced temporary workplace signers.

Although the job of placing the orange caution signs along the road looks simple, it carries with it a great responsibility.

After all, the temporary workplace signers are responsible for the safety of the driving public.

They also coordinate the traffic control crew, which makes them the construction zone's first line of defense against fast-moving vehicles and preoccupied drivers. In other words, people like Bernice save lives.

"Every day is different. Every day is a challenge," says O'Connor.

"And all I hope for is an average day. But it never is."

That's because each road project is different.

One hundred series highways are among the most dangerous sites for road workers, as rush-hour drivers are sleepy in the early morning, tired in the evening, and moving fast.

Urban road workers face slower traf-

fic, but handicapped pedestrians, buses and traffic lights distract drivers, who sometimes take out their frustrations on the construction workers.

"A lot of drivers have screamed at me as they passed," O'Connor says. "I just smile back."

But there's humour in the job, too.

Bernice often thinks of the mother duck and nine ducklings she saved from certain death a few years ago by snatching them off the highway in front of Mic Mac Mall.

The last she saw of them, they were merely paddling away from her across Lake Banook, where she had deposited them.

Then there was the incident 20 years ago at the 107 bypass when O'Connor turned to discover she was being shadowed by two baby black bears.

"How exactly do you shoo away a couple of bear cubs?" she asks.

"Thankfully, they finally got the message and lumbered back into the woods on their own. And no, I never saw their mother."

Bernice's day usually starts at around 5:30 a.m. with the set up of the 'construction ahead' signs placed hundreds of metres ahead of the actual work site.

She knows ahead of time exactly what's going on at the job site, which dictates which and how many signs to place along the road.

She spends much of the rest of her day watching changing traffic patterns and worksite progress that calls for her to rearrange the signs.

That means temporary workplace signers are among the most observant members of the road crew.

"I love the outdoors and I expect to be on the job a lot of years yet," says O'Connor, whose grandchildren think her job is "pretty cool."

"I'm used to the heat of the summer. I know how to dress for the winter and I know my job."

"A lot of drivers have screamed at me as they passed. I just smile back."

Bernice O'Connor

Temporary workplace signer with Ocean Contractors



Bernice Bobryk Photography

Bernice O'Connor has worked at construction sites for almost 30 years and is now one of Ocean Contractors' most experienced temporary workplace signers.



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Tourism industry survives, thrives on good roads

Majority of visitors to Nova Scotia come by road

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

For generations, Nova Scotia's tourism industry has grown with the car culture, surviving and thriving on its roads.

While most people know of the economic facts and figures that prove the province's tourism industry is healthy, few realize how important the roads and highways are to that health.

Every visitor to Nova Scotia leaves with specific impressions of the province — not only from the scenery and their interaction with the people who live here but from the supporting infrastructure, and that includes the roads.

Back in 1973, the province went into high gear in developing its tourism marketing by inaugurating the Travelways System, which capitalizes on the Ocean Playground's scenic coastline by setting up six designated motor trails.

These scenic drives expanded twice to showcase areas of the province that weren't covered by the original Travelways infrastructure.

Naturally, roads were the lifelines that made the Lighthouse Route, the Evangeline Trail, the Cabot Trail and their sister routes possible.

Last year, of the 2.2 million visitors to Nova Scotia, 72 per cent of them came by road with 78,000 of them arriving in recreational vehicles (RVs).

A study conducted in 2000 indicated that traffic volumes were naturally higher on the hundred series highways, which drew more visitors to the communities along those major routes.

Highway 102 between Truro and Halifax was the most frequently tourist-travelled route with 519,500 vehicles; Highway 104 between Amherst and Truro moved 410,100 visiting vehicles; Highway 104 between Truro and Cape Breton saw 277,400 vehicles, and Highway 103 made way for 181,400 tourist vehicles.

Secondary highways received much lower levels of traffic, but Cape Breton destinations remained extremely popular, with the Cabot Trail attracting 109,400 vehicles and the Ceilidh Trail attracting 73,600 vehicles. The Bras d'Or Lakes Drive hosted 48,800 visiting vehicles, the Marine Drive hosted 42,600 vehicles, and the Sunrise Trail was traveled by 23,600 visiting automobiles.

With all this traffic, the province is always looking to improve existing roads and create new complementary highways that will make travel easier.



A study conducted in 2000 indicated that traffic volumes were naturally higher on the hundred series highways, which drew more visitors to the communities along those major routes. Highway 102 between Truro and Halifax, above, is Nova Scotia's most frequently tourist-travelled route.

"As such, government will invest \$30 million this year to improve secondary roads in Nova Scotia."

Rodney MacDonald

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage



The Cabot Trail in Cape Breton is the most traveled secondary highway in Nova Scotia.

"As more than 70 per cent of nonresident visitors come to Nova Scotia by vehicle and scenic touring is a key activity enjoyed by our visitors, the road system is of utmost importance to the tourism sector," says Rodney MacDonald, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

"As such, government will invest \$30 million this year to improve secondary roads in Nova Scotia."



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Better roads

Continued from H1

- To gather the latest technical road building information available and disseminate it among NSRBA members;
- To keep road building standards high and uniform among private contractors across the province;
- To keep contractual standards current and uniform in their interpretation;
- And to facilitate the rental and purchase of major pieces of machinery among members of the NSRBA.

Of all of its accomplishments, the NSRBA's close relationship with the provincial government is one of the most important. With the reorganization of Department of Transportation and Public Works operations and the province's increasing reliance on private contractors to carry out the job of building and upgrading roads and bridges, the NSRBA has become a vital link in the chain that keeps Nova Scotia competitive in trade and tourism.

"Our main focus is efficiency and quality, or producing the best product for the dollar spent," says Steve Williams, managing director of NSRBA. "NSRBA Committees such as the trucking, liaison and specifications committees unite all of our members and keep us up to speed on current industry standards. We make it a point to listen to each other."

Listening takes place not only at high-level, face-to-face meetings, but at traditional networking events, such as the association's annual golf tournament, curling banquets, and annual convention — all of which work as social events that keep industry and government players in contact.

Other communications opportunities include recent innovations such as the NSRBA's partial funding of the provincial government's workplace safety television commercials and road building specifications dialogue with civic units such as the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Future initiatives, including discussions with higher provincial bodies and personalities, are planned for this year. "Our communications strategy is focused on broadening our scope," says Fred Benere, president of Basin Contracting Limited and a director on the NSRBA board.

"Whether we're going after new members or working with government to standardize road building processes, the NSRBA is taking a central role in the proceedings."

For more information on the NSRBA, visit www.nsrba.ca.

Road building process always improving

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

As with all engineering jobs, road building has become an exact science that has moved ahead with the technology. Today, road building is a far cry from the steam shovels and road gangs of 50 years ago.

The Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Transportation and Public Works sets standards for road building that takes into account seasonal changes in both the road bed and paved surface through freezing and thawing, as well as environmental concerns such as erosion and wastewater drainage.

Ideally, the road bed must be stable and strong in all seasons, which means it must be unaffected by freezing and thawing. Slanting the road on curves — known to the industry as super elevation — must be completed to exacting Transportation Association of Canada standards.

Asphalt-paved surfaces must be constructed of a mixed gravel, sand and binding material that must be able to withstand temperature variations and heavy traffic loads. The material is applied to new roads at a set standard thickness of 150 to 200 mm.

While road bed construction is accomplished using common construction vehicles, the high tech end of road building takes place during the surfacing of the road, whether that surface is black asphalt or concrete.

In most cases, hot mix asphalt is used because it is flexible, hard-wearing and needs little maintenance for several years on properly constructed road beds.

Asphalt is usually dumped out of a truck directly into a state-of-the-art shuttle buggy, which follows the truck and re-mixes the asphalt to make sure the gravel used in the mixture and the tar-like adhesive that holds it all together does not separate.

That separation process is called segregation, and can leave weak spots in the road that become pot holes.

After the hot asphalt is remixed, it leaves the shuttle buggy via a conveyor belt and enters a laser-guided asphalt spreader, which follows directly behind the shuttle buggy. The spreader's grade control assures that the asphalt pad is of uniform grade and thickness.

Finally, a drum or pneumatic roller vehicle (once widely known as a steam roller) compacts the asphalt so it can't be scuffed by passing vehicles.

Three or four rollers usually follow directly behind the spreader, and the whole assembly moves along the road bed like a line of slow-moving floats in a parade.

While the process is fairly straightfor-



Bonnie Bobryk Photography

While road bed construction is accomplished using common construction vehicles, the high tech end of road building takes place during the surfacing of the road, whether that surface is black asphalt or concrete.

ward with only a few technical improvements made to road surfacing equipment every year, new recipes for asphalt and concrete have slowly changed the chemical makeup of the surfaces Nova Scotia's automobiles travel on.

Quality control consultants, quality assurance managers and material testers constantly review pavement recipes for quality.

Well-compacted asphalts that are resistant to cold cracking and wheel rutting are now in regular use throughout Nova Scotia, and rubberized asphalt is now in the experimental stage.

Dense, salt-resistant concretes have also been used in road work in recent years.

"A lot of drivers may not realize the quality control measures and science that goes into the road they're traveling on," says Wally Caldwell, construction manager at S. W. Weeks Construction Limited of New Glas-

gow and NSRBA president. "But we in the construction industry are responsible to keep quality up, so we are always looking to improve."

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Canada's road-building industry, like the greater construction industry, faces a significant, documented, shortage of skilled tradespeople that requires immediate remedial action. Workers, above, ready a section of Argyle Street in Halifax for new asphalt.

Boriana Botryk/Photography

Skilled workers wanted

Career options plentiful in road building industry

By Les Walker
Special Features Writer

Canada's road-building industry, like the greater construction industry, faces a significant, documented, shortage of skilled tradespeople that requires immediate remedial action, according to informed sources.

"Shortages date to the early 1990s and, indeed, are now several years into a second decade," says John Flemming, one of two vice-presidents, with brother Scott, of Ocean Contractors Limited, founded just over 30 years ago by their father, Jack.

"There are many reasons for current and future shortages," he says. "Lack of awareness among young people to career opportunities in the road-building industry, misconceptions about salary and advancement possibilities and societal pressures to achieve a university education.

"As well, there are the pervasive issues of declining birth rates and the expected retirement of many tradespeople within the decade. More recently, too, we have

had the addition of increased provincial funding for road and highway infrastructure, unseen since the 1980s."

The industry, the Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association (the immediate past president) and his company, are addressing the problem with vigour.

Last fall, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum — Forum Canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-PCA) and Skills/Competences Canada (S/C/C), launched a three-year, multifaceted, national campaign called Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On. Its goal is to increase awareness of skilled trades as a first-choice career option.

Keith Lancaster, CAF-PCA executive director, says the two groups "recognize the urgency of making young people, and their parents, more aware of the benefits of choosing a career in the trades."

"Deciding to enter a skilled trade can lead young people into rewarding and satisfying careers that will serve them well throughout their lives."

Career opportunities in the Canadian construction industry, Flemming says, "are huge. It employs close to one million men and women, and has a value of some \$129-billion annually. That, according to the Canadian Construction Association, is a sizable 12 per cent of Canada's gross domestic products."

The Nova Scotia Road Builders' Association, he says, is looking to future needs in conjunction with various programs initiated by CCA, Ottawa, of which he is a board member.

"The industry is also examining meth-

ods to introduce young people to opportunities in the trades through the invaluable inclusion of parents and school guidance counselors," he says.

For his company, he says, "Ocean Contractors has, as a key element of its mission, the development of a well-trained team. To this end, we encourage, and invest, in employee professional development and a rigorous in-house safety program."

It also has a standing tradition to employ students during summer, the peak period for road building.

"Hiring students serves us, and them, as an excellent avenue for demonstrating the many opportunities available for a very comfortable standard of living, following completion of their formal education. It has proven to be mutually beneficial," he says.

The bottom line is, Flemming says, "the road building industry offers so much choice for skilled tradespeople. Every mile of new highway requires the expertise of dozens of trades."

"From the alert observations of trained traffic control personnel, to the experienced judgment of project superintendents, there is literally no end to the opportunities available."

Those were the days...



This Oct. 18, 1962 file photo shows the building of an access route linking the Angus L. Macdonald bridge-head in Dartmouth to the Circumferential Highway which funnels traffic down Woodland Avenue. The reconstruction of what was once a narrow dirt road linking the main bridge approach route of Nantucket Avenue to Victoria Road is evident above.



The Bedford Highway, at Fairview, was as busy in this Sept. 22, 1942 file photo as it is today.



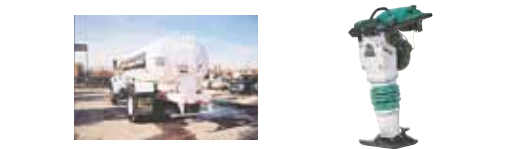
Bulldozers march across level terrain near Truro in this Mar. 7, 1969 file photo as construction crews build a by-pass highway which would link the town with access routes to Trunk 102 and the Trans Canada Highway.

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Bonnie Bobryk Photography

The largest pre-cast arch in Canada was installed at Nine Mile River last year, sporting an 80-foot span across the water. Wide swamps, heavy traffic and the difficulty of blasting granite bedrock added to the difficulties encountered during work on the twinning of Highway 103 from Exit 3 at Otter Lake to Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon which is nearing completion.



Contributed

A temporary bridge is installed at the Exit 5 overpass.



Contributed

A digger loads up a dump truck near Exit 4 on Highway 103.



Contributed

Work in progress on the Exit 5 overpass last winter.



Contributed

The old Exit 4 overpass is torn down last year.



File

Road crews work on a section of the Highway 103 twinning project.



Contributed

Workers dismantle the old Exit 4 overpass.

HWY 103 twinning project nears completion

Project dealt with environmental, engineering and building challenges

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

Began in August 2003, the \$42-million state-of-the-art project to twin 15 km of Highway 103 from Exit 3 at Otter Lake to Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon is nearing completion.

Early on, the Department of Transportation and Public Works was mindful of future development by making the project expandable with new infrastructure.

For example, the new interchange at exit 4 was built so that it could be connected to Highway 113, which will probably be built in about 10 years.

The Department of Transportation and Public Works, the Department of the Environment and Department of Fisheries and Oceans was also extremely concerned about the environmental impact of so much new construction, and this concern called for both extra completion time and extra public funds to be worked into the plan for the overall project.

For example, motorists driving through the area will notice that the new construction seems to waver from one side of the existing highway to the other. This was done by design to minimize the effect to highly developed or environmentally sensitive areas along the route.

There was, and still is, a lot of work to be done along the remaining portion of the 15 km route that has to adhere to a schedule set, in part, by wildlife. This year, for example, companies involved in the project have to wait until June 1 before they begin the project's final grading and culvert-laying.

The start date reflects the end of the fish spawning season, and the end date of September 15 conforms to the pre-winter feeding season of the fish.

The work that has to wait includes the installation of a box culvert at Exit 5 near Flat Lake and the laying of an underground pipe traversing a stream near Exit 5 on the Halifax side.

Last year, two culverts, a large arch at Nine Mile River and a smaller arch at Half Mile Stream had to wait for the fish to vacate the area.

Environmental concerns aside, the project also dealt with a number of engineering and construction challenges.

The largest precast arch in Canada was installed at Nine Mile River last year, sporting an 80-foot span across the water. Wide swamps, heavy traffic and the

difficulty of blasting granite bedrock added to the difficulties encountered along the way.

"I've been on a lot of big projects," says Ken Thomas, construction manager at Dexter Construction and past president of the Nova Scotia Road Builder's Association. "And this has been a significant project. What was great, though, was that nearby residents and travelers understood why we were there and how difficult it was. That helped a lot."

Projected completion of the Highway 103 twinning is fall 2006.

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Building better bridges

Major new bridge projects happening across Nova Scotia

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

One of the more noticeable features of Nova Scotia's roads are its 4,000 bridges which have found an almost legendary place among the province's road lore.

But as engineered features on the landscape, new bridges need to be built with longevity in mind, and old bridges sometimes need to be replaced.

The Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works and private contractors across the province are currently working on major new bridge projects in a few locations.

With the \$20-million deck replacement for the scenic Great Bras d'Or Seal Harbour bridge and the \$10-million replacement of the Margaree Harbour Bridge completed, the department is free to concentrate on interchange bridges that will have to be built to complete twinning expansions of highways 101 and 103.

The 101 twinning will soon begin with probably three or four new interchange bridges built this year, and there'll be more bridges costing between \$10 and \$20 million in the works for the 101 as the \$60 million project moves into the next four years.

The other major bridge activities center around the Nova Scotia Steel Truss Bridge Replacement Program, a five-year, \$50-million refurbishment effort aimed at replacing deteriorating steel bridges.

"The oldest of the bridges we're looking at was built in the 1890s," says Mark Pentus, a manager at the department's head office in Halifax.

"Our aim under the program is to eventually replace 66 of the 200 bridges, and we'll be replacing at least six of them in this third year of the program alone."

Those six bridges include the Black River Bridge in Richmond County, the Port Clyde Bridge in Shelburne County, the Vernon Bridge near Yviro, the Cartleton Centre Bridge near Yarmouth, and the Merrydale and Clydesdale Bridges located in the Antigonish area.

While the 2005 budget is set at \$13 million, the number of bridges actually replaced could grow to more than six depending on final contract prices.

"This program has made us proactive in guarding public safety," says Pentus. "Before we got this program underway, the only bridges replaced were those washed out by floods or seriously damaged by heavy vehicles."

The replacement program also made itself felt by private contractors who had



Renovations to the Angus L. Macdonald Bridge in 1999 cost \$55 million and added a bicycle lane and a sidewalk to either side of the bridge. Renovations also created a central third lane that changes direction at different times of day, depending on rush hour traffic flow. The bridge carries over 40,000 vehicles every day.

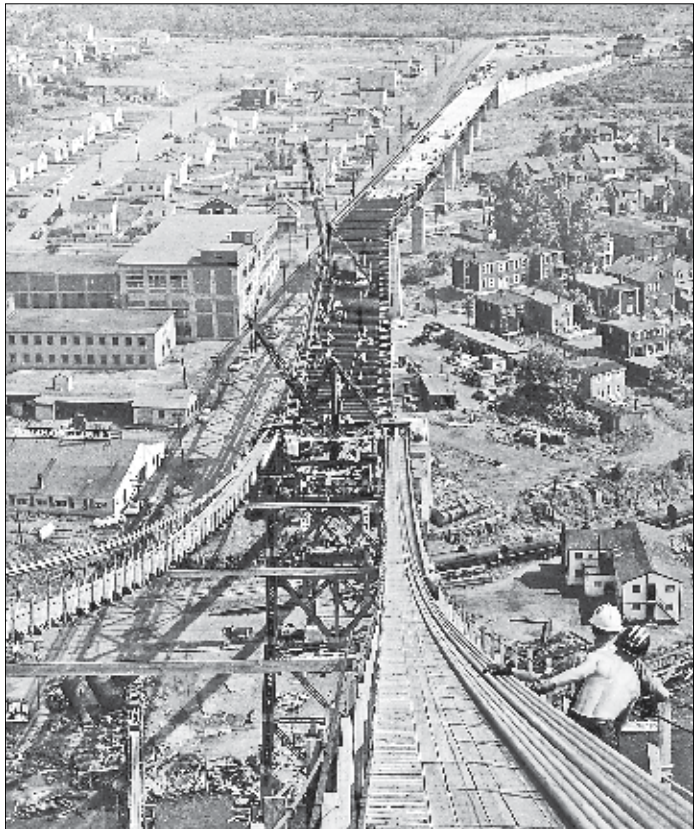
to become more efficient in bridge building. This resulted in bridge builders riding a fairly sharp expansion curve that forced them to learn new technologies and add knowledgeable staff.

"The construction industry in Nova Scotia found itself in a situation where a sudden market need had to be filled," says Dave Wilson, president of Wilcraft Concrete Services Limited.

"So, the bridge builders expanded to meet the demand and the general construction companies picked up the slack by doing as much support bridgework as possible. And it's working."

Wilson says the Department of Transportation and Public Works has also done something new and useful just by opening the replacement program.

"The department now has an excellent understanding of its bridge inventory, and it is now inspecting all 4,000 bridges," he says. "The inspectors are flagging weak bridges before a crisis takes place."



The Angus L. Macdonald Bridge is shown in this 1954 file photo from its east main tower showing the Dartmouth approach with toll collection building and bridge headquarters in the upper right hand corner. The workers pictured lower right are riding the torpedo which hauled the main cable strands across the span. The bridge is 1.3 km long, carried by two towers 103 metres tall, supports spans of 762 metres and a deck 11.5 metres wide that crosses 54 metres above the water at its highest point.

Twin Bridges engineering feats for N.S.

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

The Angus L. Macdonald and A. Murray Mackay suspension bridges are Nova Scotia's longest. Spanning Halifax Harbour at the narrows, the Twin Bridges, as they came to be called, remain as the capital city's greatest bridge engineering feats.

The Angus L. Macdonald Bridge cost \$13 million and took three years to build. Built by the Dominion Bridge Company Ltd. and designed by Dr. Phillip L. Pratley and his son Hugh of Pratley & Dorton, the Macdonald Bridge is one of the longest bridges in the British Commonwealth. It was named after former

Nova Scotia premier Angus Lewis Macdonald, and it opened for business on April 2, 1955.

The bridge is 1.3 km long, carried by two towers 103 metres tall, supports spans of 762 metres and a deck 11.5 metres wide that crosses 54 metres above the water at its highest point.

Renovations to the bridge in 1999 cost \$55 million and added a bicycle lane and a sidewalk to either side of the bridge. Renovations also created a central third lane that changes direction at different times of day, depending on rush hour traffic flow. The bridge carries over 40,000 vehicles every day.

The A. Murray Mackay Bridge cost \$29 million and took four years to build.

Engineered chiefly by Hugh Pratley, who worked on the design of the Macdonald Bridge, the Mackay Bridge was named after Dr. Alexander MacKay, a former chairman of the Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission. The bridge opened for business on July 10, 1970.

The bridge is 1.2 km long, carried by two towers 96 metres tall, supports spans of 740 metres and a deck 15.6 metres wide that crosses 55 metres above the water at its highest point.

While the Mackay Bridge has not been extensively renovated since it opened in 1970, it started out with four lanes but does not allow pedestrian or bicycle traffic as does the Macdonald.

The bridge carries over 50,000 vehicles every day. Both bridges together handle over 31.6 million crossings every year.



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Environmental concerns major focus of NSRBA members

NSRBA addresses environmental issues before problems arise

By Scott Higgins
Special Features Writer

Because road construction disturbs natural ground cover and leaves native soils open to erosion, the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association (NSRBA) has taken the lead to minimize any damage to the environment by working with its members and fisheries, environment and public works departments to identify problems and find workable solutions.

In doing so, the NSRBA addresses environmental concerns before they become problems.

"Our organization has understood for some time that if we impact the environment, we impact ourselves," says Don Mallett, chair of the NSRBA environmental committee and sub-committees.

"This organization and its members have realized for some time that environmental work will be a big part of our future business. Thanks to our long-standing environmental focus, we're ready for that today."

By far, erosion is the biggest threat to natural waterways, surrounding areas and the wild creatures that live in them. Large areas stripped of their covering vegetation can allow rain or melt water to carry unnaturally large amounts of sediment into lakes, streams and rivers.

In straightforward cases, silt can damage fish habitats by destroying the areas where fish spawn, decreasing a fish's ability to breathe, killing fish eggs in the water and allowing aquatic plants and algae to appear where it never grew before.

In extreme cases, silting can actually change the course of a river, which can cause the failure of man-made drainage systems, long-term flooding of lands and



NSRBA and its members have realized for some time that environmental work will be a big part of its future business. Road work, above, took place recently on Route 333 near Peggy's Cove.

Bonnie Bobryk Photography

eventual deforestation by drowning.

That's why NSRBA member companies have closely followed federal, provincial and municipal guidelines aimed at controlling silt-laden runoff.

"People have to understand that it costs construction companies time and money to work environmental protection

activities into construction schedules," says Mallett. "But it's important, so we have no complaints about making the extra effort."

Construction companies minimize water contamination in a number of ways. Retaining as much of the natural surrounding vegetation as possible and

covering large patches of exposed soil with mulch or even large tarps are commonly-used methods.

Silt-contaminated water can also be diverted into drainage ditches that divert runoff into sediment basins that let water slowly filter back into the surrounding environment free of silt.

"Successful environmental programs are easy to run if we approach environmental safety like personal safety on the job," says Mallett, whose points to several NSRBA members as actively involved in restoration of the land to its natural state.

"It's really no more difficult than doing the right thing."

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