

NEW CHAPTER PENNED IN KINSOL TRESTLE'S HISTORY BOOK

**Media Tips + Leads from the B.C. Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Investment
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VICTORIA - Workers have installed the last set of steel trusses on the historic Kinsol Trestle in the Cowichan Valley, putting one of the largest wooden bridges on the planet "on track" to be crossed by walkers, bikers and equestrians by the end of March.

The crossing will be the first since 1979 when the bridge was closed, and it will mark the completion of the rehabilitation portion of the Kinsol Trestle, one of the largest wooden bridges in the world and the highest wood trestle remaining in the Commonwealth.

The installation of the trusses is a critical milestone in the trestle's rehabilitation, enabling a missing link in the 22,000-kilometre Trans Canada Trail to be used again, said Gord Macdonald, managing director of Macdonald and Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd., a world-renowned heritage restoration firm headquartered in Mill Bay on Vancouver Island.

Restoration work on the non-working portion of the bridge will continue into the summer. Visitors can learn first-hand about the project from crew specially stationed on the top of the 38-metre-long structure to help the public learn more about it.

As many as 35 crew members from Macdonald and Lawrence have worked on the bridge, and 15 new jobs came from the company's \$4.4-million contract. Other firms benefiting from the work include Knappett Projects Inc., Stantec and MMM Group. A functioning bridge is also expected to increase tourism activity in the region.

More than 288,000 board feet of new timber is being used in the project, all of it second growth B.C.-grown Douglas fir and cypress, which is being custom-cut at Andersen Pacific Forest Products Ltd. in Maple Ridge.

Macdonald and Lawrence is one of nine finalists in two award categories - Best Company and Best Employer - in Small Business BC's Successful You Awards, to be presented March 29. Accolades for their work stretch well outside the province's borders. Queen Elizabeth sent a personal letter of thanks for work done in 1997 to a fire-damaged area of Windsor Castle. Macdonald has just returned from the Antarctic where M&L has a \$30-million piece of the restoration of the 'Nimrod' hut at Cape Royds, the expedition base for Ernest Shackleton's British Antarctic expedition in 1907 to 1909.

Macdonald ranks the Kinsol project alongside their international projects, noting it is easy for British Columbians to take the bridge for granted even though it is an important structure both nationally and internationally.

Why It Matters:

Heritage Week is a time to celebrate important historic sites like the Kinsol Trestle in the province. Its rehabilitation, one of the largest heritage projects in B.C., is creating jobs for British Columbians and will increase tourism activity in the Cowichan Valley. An estimated 114,000 tourists annually visit the region.

Quotes:

Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Tourism, Trade and Investment -

"Heritage tourism is a growing economic generator, and many visitors rank heritage activities among their favourites. By supporting the rehabilitation of the Kinsol Trestle, the B.C. government is helping Vancouver Island communities to maximize the tourism economic opportunities of its heritage places."

Shirley Bond, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure -

"By replacing this structure, we're completing a vital link in a trail that will stretch from Victoria to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories to St. John's, Newfoundland. It's been more than a quarter century since trains have used

this track, but we're breathing new life into this trail, providing an important tourist attraction and recreational route linking major population centres on southern Vancouver Island through to the Cowichan Valley."

Gord Macdonald, Managing Director of Macdonald and Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd. -

"This project is a demonstration of how local people are tackling world- class heritage projects using local skills, local contractors and local materials."

Dan Petryk, President and CEO of Tourism Vancouver Island -

"Well over 70 per cent of visitors to Vancouver Island come for the natural beauty and are looking for a range of things to do and see. We know from surveys that they like hiking and walking, and opening the Kinsol Trestle will expand the trail system for them."

Quick Facts:

* Heritage Week 2011 runs from Feb. 21 to 27. Its theme is BC Parks in honour of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the British Columbia's first provincial park, Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island.

* The Province has provided over \$3.4 million for rehabilitating the Kinsol Trestle. Other funding partners include: the federal government at \$1.885 million, the Cowichan Valley Regional District at \$600,000, and the Island Coastal Economic Trust at \$1 million for the project.

* The Kinsol Trestle was completed in 1920 and is one of the largest wooden bridges in the world and the highest wood trestle remaining in the Commonwealth. It is 44 metres high and 188 metres long (that's 145 feet high and 614 feet long).

* A camera, sponsored by the B.C. Ministry of Transportation, records the restoration of the Kinsol Trestle and pictures are updated on the web every 15 minutes and are archived. View at: www.th.gov.bc.ca/highwayprojects/kinsol_trestle/index.htm