

A busy fall to come for the Gaspésie Railway Society

Gilles Gagné

RISTIGOUCHE SOUTH EAST: – Independently from the upcoming projects that will stem from the Quebec government's May announcement of \$100 million, a considerable work rush awaits the staff of the Gaspésie Railway Society, as 20,400 ties will be changed between Matapédia and Caplan, in addition to the laying out of 20,000 tons of ballast and the replacement of a bridge in Ristigouche South East.

That bridge will be replaced between September 16 and 21, over the Kempt River. Preparation work started in July. Initially, the bridge was supposed to be replaced in 2016.

"A lot of work was scheduled in 2017 but I am not sure we would have benefitted from the same budget without the May announcement," points out Luc Lévesque of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

Traffic-wise, some devel-



Photo: G. Gagné

The Ristigouche South East bridge spanning over the Kempt River will be replaced between September 16 and September 21.

opment will take place over the fall. The Saint-Elzéar Association coopérative forestière sawmill will start

shipping lumber out of New Richmond at some point in September or October. The 25 refurbished woodchip cars

leased by the Gaspésie Railway Society will be integrated to the Temrex operation around mid-September.

The Gaspésie Railway Society is working on securing other transportation deals but Luc Lévesque prefers announcing them once they are signed.

Moreover, the windmill blade traffic is about to surpass in less than 10 months the level of traffic expected in a year. The initial contract was calling for the shipment of 600 blades in 2017, including December 2016 and that mark will be surpassed before the end of September.

Other cement hauling agreements could also be reached before long. As of now, the first contract signed between McInnis Cement and the Gaspésie Railway Society calls for the shipment of 300 cars carrying 28,000 tons during the first year. It is a part of a five year agreement to haul 140,000 tons.

In 2008, the Gaspésie Railway Society was hauling between 400 and 500 carloads,

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mainly lumber coming out of the Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle. In 2015, the transporter shipped a record 1,624 cars, surpassed in 2016 with 1,741 cars. That number will reach about 3,000 carloads in 2017 and probably 4,000 or more in 2018.