



Photo: G. Gagné

*The Cascapedia-St-Jules bridges date back to the 1890s. They are regularly inspected.*

## CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES RAILWAY BRIDGES: Transport Quebec launches call for tenders

Gilles Gagné

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES – Quebec’s Department of Transport has now issued the call for tenders related to the construction of two railway bridges in Cascapedia-St-Jules. The suggested value of the contract is between \$20 million and \$25 million.

Interested contractors must submit their bid before 3 p.m., on April 29. The call for tenders was published on March 29. It was following another call for tenders related to the supervision of the bridges’ construction work.

The two new bridges will replace the two old bridges which limit to ten the number of fully loaded freight cars circulating between New Richmond and Matapedia. Cement cars loaded at two-thirds of their capacity can circulate on the old bridges which were built in the 1890s.

Transport Quebec stipulates that the contract related to the two new bridges must be carried out in 35 months, which is three years less a month.

Luc Lévesque, director

general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, the company under municipal control operating the freight trains on the line, admits that such a period is longer than the time frame most people had in mind.

“The 35 month-period includes the demolition of the old bridges. Because it is a salmon river, the contractor can only work on one of the two legs of the river at a time. The pillars on the first leg will likely be in place this year, and the pillars on the second leg will be installed in 2020. After that, the spans will be installed. That’s why we can talk about two addi-

tional years, and maybe 30 months for the construction part,” explains Mr. Lévesque.

The new bridges will be located just south of the old ones, which will still be used until the new structures are up and running.

Will traffic be restored between Caplan and Port Daniel once the two Cascapedia-St-Jules bridges are rebuilt?

“I certainly hope so but I have no control over that. The line belongs to Transport Québec and there is a process determined by the ministry to repair the other bridges situated between Caplan and Port Daniel,” says Mr. Lévesque.

