

Gaspésie Railway Society president concerned about bridge situation

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Éric Dubé, president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, expresses an increasing worry about the time taken by Transports Québec to issue calls for tenders pertaining to the repairs or reconstruction of the bridges located between Caplan and Port Daniel.

He admits that the Gaspésie Railway Society, as former owner of the Matapédia to Gaspé line, a status that was abandoned due to financial reasons in late 2014 and early 2015, is sometimes ill-placed to comment on such a delicate situation, considering that Transports Québec has agreed to repair the railway, a



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Gaspésie Railway president Éric Dubé says that if there is no new call for tenders issued by the end of September, he will be very worried.

costly endeavour.

“Honestly, about every public infrastructure under-

taken recently is late in delivering. That’s what we see at the municipal level. The pan-

demically complicates everything, and there is a shortage of manpower in many fields,” he first explains.

“Considering the fact that it takes weeks before the publication of a call for tenders and the beginning of work itself, I am starting to wonder how the four bridges that need to be upgraded, including the one that has to be replaced, will be ready before the end of 2022. Let’s say that by the end of September, I’ll be very worried if there is no call for tenders out yet,” adds Éric Dubé.

It took six weeks for Transports Québec to close the Port Daniel Centre railway bridge call for tenders, issued on May 29, 2020. That contract is currently underway but it was

awarded weeks after the bidding closure of July 10, 2020. Work started in September, more than three months after the issuance of the call for bids.

Five weeks were required to close the Caplan’s Ruisselet bridge call for tenders, which was out on June 12, 2020. Bidding was closed on July 17. Work started in September and the bridge was delivered in May, 2021, four months ahead of schedule. However, a construction halt was compulsory over the summer because of the nearby campground and the contractor, Hamel Construction, accelerated the pace to avoid coming back after the hot season.

Cont’d on page 12

GASPESIE RAILWAY:

Cont’d from page 11

“Based on that efficiency of the contractors, the four bridges can be delivered before the end of 2022, but things have to move now,” concludes Éric Dubé.

The Cascapédia-Saint Jules bridges were also delivered in advance. The contract was awarded over the spring of 2019 after four

weeks of a call for tenders that closed on April 29 of that year. Work started at the end of June 2019 and the two bridges, valued close to \$23 million, were open to train traffic in an emergency context, on December 23-24, 2020, as the two old previous structures had been decommissioned 18 days before. A flood led to their closure.