



Drivers urged to remain patient at grade crossings

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Drivers passing on railroad grade crossings located east of the New Richmond station will have to be patient for several more weeks, and in some cases, a few months, before seeing freight trains pass at normal speed instead of 10 miles per hour.

Since traffic resumed on January 7 between New Richmond and the Port Daniel cement plant, trains hauling cement between those two points have been operating at reduced speed for safety reasons, explains Éric Dubé, president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG).

“People are no longer used to seeing trains at grade crossings. Along most roads, it is not so bad because there are light signals but it is not the case everywhere, notable at farm crossings,” he explains.

Some light signals have not been put back into operation, particularly in the Paspébiac area. In several cases they must be replaced, and updated safety standards will



Trains are also travelling slowly on several sections, including bridges.

Photo: Anthony Bernard Prince

sometimes require reconfiguration of certain grade crossings.

“We even have to make trains stop at some grade crossings because the light signals don’t work,” adds Éric Dubé.

SCFG management has also received complaints from Paspébiac residents concerned about malfunctioning crossing signals.

“They complain because they fear colliding with the train. But our trains stop in those cases. We even have employees protecting some

grade crossings through their presence along the train. We respect the safety norms,” he points out.

Trains are also travelling slowly because several sections of track between New Richmond and Port-Daniel-Gascons were completely rebuilt, including bridges.

“The ballast has to be compacted before we go back to normal track speed,” concludes Éric Dubé.

Normal freight train speeds in the Gaspé Peninsula generally range between 30 and 35 miles per hour.