



DIRECTOR REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: DR-BRD-002

From: Karen Goodings, Electoral Area B Director

Date: May 19, 2020

Subject: Don Nearhood Museum

PURPOSE / ISSUE:

To discuss display options for the Don Nearhood Museum.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION: *[Corporate Unweighted]*

That the Regional Board receive the May 19, 2020 report titled "Don Nearhood Museum" for discussion.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

I met Don Nearhood, soon after I was elected, during a meeting in Buick. Don had retired and his passion was to build a museum that commemorated many projects. He had a workshop set up in a garage on his property in Buick and spent countless hours working on all aspects.

The museum contains an agriculture collection, a logging collection, and a miscellaneous collection. The agricultural collection contains an exact replica of the original wagon team with 10 green wagons filled with 200 sacks each. Don hand sewed the small replica grain bags for the wagon train and filled them with grain. The agricultural display also features barns, trees, and agriculture equipment that worked the fields. The logging collection display consists of miniature displays for log hauling, log skidding and a logging bob sleigh.

In 1996, Don Nearhood decided that he needed to sell the museum. During a Grant-in-Aid meeting in Buick, the various community members present wanted the PRRD to purchase the museum in order to keep it as local as possible. The museum was purchased later that year by the PRRD for \$20,000 using Grant-in-Aid funds.

I approached the FSJ North Peace Museum about being able to display it, as I thought it would be a definite attraction to the travelers and locals. While the Museum agreed with me, they felt the museum did not fit with their primary focus, which is to collect, preserve and display artifacts and archives which illustrate themes connected with the human history of Fort St. John and the specified area of the North Peace. They were very helpful and spent a lot of time documenting many of the components. I appreciate the time they took and the expertise they have on how to document everything. I think there may have been some that were simply put into a box and are, I think, stored in the back rooms of the Peace Canyon reservoir.

BC Hydro was very quick to come to our rescue. BC Hydro confirmed that they were interested in storing the ceramic horse and work animal displays of the Don Nearhood Museum for the purpose of a public display at the Peace Canyon Dam, and that a warehouse was available for the remainder of the collection.

They had the perfect place to house it in a controlled atmosphere, they were kind enough to build glass protection and mount parts of the museum where all visitors to Peace Canyon could view it. Don was very proud to see it displayed. They have also stated that the glass that protects the museum will stay with it when the time comes.

Now we are in a different situation. Peace Canyon visitor center is closed. While the building is heated and there are people there, it is no longer viewed by the public. BC Hydro has agreed to keep it there until we can find new homes for the components. Not likely, that we will be able to keep it all in one place but the possibilities are there for doing some type of circle tour where tourism will benefit.

I ask you all to consider the possibilities and to remember that we need to discuss this with the family members who, I know, are interested. Public dollars have been spent and it needs to be where public can enjoy it.

Attachments:

1. Don Nearhood Collection Purchase Letter
2. Don Nearhood Collection Purchase Memo
3. Don Nearhood Collection Inventory
4. Don Nearhood Museum Pictures