

## **Accelerated Tendering and Procurement**

Alberta Transportation will be expediting the procurement process by shortening the advertising period. Most tenders currently close after 4 weeks of notice. Please note closing dates closely as they will be advertised on average for only 2 to 3 weeks.

Extensions will be issued if requested by bidders.

To expedite contract award and execution AT is planning to:

1. Move all pre-contract award requirements to the pre-construction stage. This change will expedite the award process and provide the contractors with more time to manage the requirements while they are getting ready for the work (e.g., insurance and contract bonds, gravel source information and fuel adjustment decision).
2. AT will be also requesting contractors to send signed agreement forms with their bid. AT will sign off on the lowest bidder contract and send it back to contractor immediately after approval. The rest of the signed agreement forms (other bidders) will be shredded or returned.

ARHCA has requested—and AT has agreed—to find a practical electronic bid submission process. The Department has been planning to move to an electronic tendering platform; however, given the current Public Health Order situation they need to move more quickly. We are suggesting that bids by email be accepted. AT will be providing clarification soon on email bidding, email bid bonds and bid adjustment by fax.

ARHCA advised AT that the new “single point of contact” for bidders’ questions could become a bottleneck. As a result we requested that bidders be permitted to send their questions to both the procurement officer and the consulting engineer simultaneously. Bidders’ meetings will still occur by virtual meeting or conference call.

ARHCA suggested that AT open more days for tender closings and to ensure similar jobs are not closing same day in same region. This to ensure the greatest opportunity for members to participate on jobs.

### **Bidding Risk and Force Majeure**

The Department has recognized that the Public Health Orders will impact business. ARHCA has made several suggestions to reduce the risk profile in these unprecedented circumstances so that contractors have more certainty as to what they can expect should changes on government policy to fight COVID-19 cause delays and costs beyond the control of contractors. ARHCA has proposed wording that could be included in tender documents to clarify COVID-19 remedies. We have recommended eliminating site occupancy, indexing asphalt pricing for carry over projects, and are exploring other ways to provide fairness in treatment of contractors.

### **Stimulus Funding**

We are still waiting to hear definitive plans regarding stimulus funding, but I can assure you that we've been hard at work in preparation for an announcement that could come at any time. We have been collecting information to support a government decision to invest in roads. Thank you to those who replied to our **Member Employment Survey** as this information when cross-referenced with other sources will provide job creation numbers the government can rely on.

The key messages to the government and the public are:

1. There is tremendous capacity in the industry to deliver on any work in a stimulus funding package
2. Industry can put thousands of Albertans to work and this will create economic spin-offs to both rural and urban Alberta
3. This is a financially-wise investment as the highway system needs work; deferring rehabilitation only creates a financial liability

4. Our industry takes Public Health Orders seriously and is working hard to protect workers. ARHCA is providing information and resources for contractors to help in adopting best practice health protocols. (See below)

### **COVID-19 Safety Guidelines**

ARHCA staff have compiled feedback from the Safety Committee and have finalized the COVID-19 Safety Precautions document. These are meant as very general guidelines and include links to both the Alberta Construction Association's guidelines and the Canadian Construction Association's. However, it is always recommended to check Alberta's COVID-19 page for up-to-date information here:

[alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx). To view the ARHCA document, click here: [arhca.ab.ca/health-safety](http://arhca.ab.ca/health-safety)

### **Federal Government Essential Services List**

Yesterday, the federal government released its critical infrastructure guidance document. The highways in Alberta affected by this list would be those that pass through national parks. More information can be found here: [Guidance on Essential Services and Functions in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

As always, I will continue to share information as it becomes available.

Thank you,

Ron Glen, CEO

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