



PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY

# EVERYTHING EVENTUALLY MOVES BY TRUCK

## – UNLESS THE ROAD CRUMBLES

BY TERRY SHAW



Terry Shaw is the executive director of the Manitoba Trucking Association.

**L**ook at any map – historical or contemporary – and you will see that the transportation routes are the lifeblood of communities and regions.

From broad main arteries that transport significant traffic flow to the small, single-lane routes that keep our rural communities supplied and connected, the transportation network is vital to the success of any region, not only for the movement of goods, but also for ensuring we are all healthy, housed and educated. Without this movement, nothing is possible.

That's why it's so important that investment in those routes be maintained and even increased, rather than cut.

Cutting off investment in infrastructure is cutting off investment in our communities and rural areas.

In recent provincial budgets, this government continues to show that investments in strategic trade infrastructure are not a priority. In a province that already has crumbling roads, highways and other infrastructure, a lack of investment in those areas is backward thinking.

This ignores the fact our province is growing, especially Winnipeg, the province's biggest municipality and economic heart. Foregoing maintenance is questionable but in combination with a disregard for the coming population growth, these decisions are outright regressive.

We pride ourselves on being the centre of the content, in the middle of everything. Manitoba is a main north-south trade route, and Winnipeg sits as a hub in Canada's primary east-west route. Winnipeg IS the crossroads of North America, and as trade routes to the north become more viable, our role is only going to increase in prominence. We will not meet that need without the proper infrastructure.

However, the continued clobbering the trucking industry takes from various levels of government, from reduced infrastructure investment to increased taxes, makes it harder for us to safely, efficiently, and cost-effectively fulfill that vital service network we provide.

Those are our trucks moving food, clothing, books and other resources to rural and northern communities. Those are our drivers on the ice roads and gravel roads, ensuring goods reach their final destinations.

We have seen the impact a severed rail network has had on life in Churchill; do we want to do that to other northern communities by allowing our highway networks to crumble and wash away like the rail lines did through lack of investment?

We ask a lot of the drivers in our industry. They work long hours, sometimes in harsh conditions, and spend a lot of time away from their families. Their workplace is in the public domain, and therefore

they, and we as an industry, rely on the government to ensure that we have efficient, safe working conditions for Manitobans who choose to work in the trucking industry.

Our drivers put in the time to ensure that grocery store shelves are stocked, that schools and hospitals are delivered critical equipment and supplies, and that our natural resources make it to market to keep so many of us employed and our economy growing.

The trucking industry literally keeps the provincial economy moving.

Yet, what does this government give in return? Successive, severe cuts to the highways budget, thereby making it harder for our industry to do its part in ensuring the economy grows.

Crumbling roads, flooded highways and deteriorating networks. Highways, roads and streets are vital not only to our economy but to our lifestyles and to our community connections.

Our roads need to be reliable – maintained in good condition. But they must also be made ready through increased investment and planning, so our trucking industry can deliver the goods – the resources, commodities, supplies, equipment and merchandise – to ensure our towns and cities get from “here” to “tomorrow”. ””

**WE HAVE SEEN THE IMPACT A SEVERED RAIL NETWORK HAS HAD ON LIFE IN CHURCHILL; DO WE WANT TO DO THAT TO OTHER NORTHERN COMMUNITIES BY ALLOWING OUR HIGHWAY NETWORKS TO CRUMBLE AND WASH AWAY LIKE THE RAIL LINES DID THROUGH LACK OF INVESTMENT?**



**SERVICES**

- Sand and Gravel
- Aggregate Crushing
- Excavation and Earthwork
- Road Construction
- Flood Protection, Riverbank and Shoreline Restoration
- Site Remediation
- Trucking and Heavy Equipment Rentals
- Commercial Snow Removal
- Site Preparation and Land Development



204.224.1565

www.chabotenterprises.ca



**MANITOBA CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL**



Our mission is to promote and coordinate the development of a *diverse, inclusive, well educated* workforce in support of careers in a dynamic and evolving construction industry.

Carol Paul Executive Director, MCCSC | T: 204.272.5092 | E: cpaul@mbcsc.com