

BC Mayors’ Caucus Conference in Fort St. John

I am often asked “do you enjoy being the Mayor?” The answer is always a resounding YES. The challenges of the role are many, but the ability to serve my community in this capacity is truly one of the most rewarding, (as well as one of the most memorable), things I’ve taken on in my professional career. One of the features I love most about serving as Mayor for the Town of Creston is that you never know what new adventure or challenge is lying just around the corner.

My recent trip to attend the BC Mayors’ Caucus meetings in Fort St. John, BC last month was no exception. The devastation in Fort McMurray was top of mind for everyone, and fires around Fort St. John reminded us that everyone is susceptible to this kind of tragedy. Originally, part of our agenda for the Caucus was a flight to Fort McMurray to tour the Oil Sands projects – a tour that was cancelled for obvious reasons. Our thoughts and prayers remain with all those impacted by the devastating fires.

With an amended agenda, 30 Mayors toured 9 facilities in and around Fort St John, including the BC Hydro “Site C” project. It was a long day that kept us busy touring for 12 hours. Highlights included the following:

	Facility	Additional Info
1.	BC Oil & Gas Commission (BC-OGC) Facility	Created in 1947, they monitor over 40,000 kms of pipelines in BC and catalogue and document every well drilling permit.
2.	Encana Water Resource Hub Facility	Built in 2013 to extract saline water (not surface or aquifer water) for hydraulic fracturing and continual re-cycling – an impressive facility costing \$100 million.
3.	Enbridge Tupper West Gas Plant	Produces natural gas with 22 employees.
4.	Tourmaline Oil Corp Active Hydraulic Fracturing Site	5 wells drilled and being prepared to deliver natural gas and rich liquids. Point of interest: Northern Mat & Bridge in Erickson may provide “wood mats” to this project.
5.	Encana Sunset Prairie Lodge	Accommodates up to 1250 employees.
6.	Encana Tower Sweet Natural Gas Plant	Under construction -- \$860 million project.
7.	Pump jack wells in production	16 wells built in 2013 and 2015.
8.	Tervita South Taylor Facility	Built to handle contaminated drill muds and completion fluids for proper environmental decommissioning.
9.	BC Hydro “Site C” tour	An \$8.3 billion project by BC Hydro for a large-scale earth fill hydroelectric dam on the Peace River. The site is downstream from the existing W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams.

After spending 3 days in the Fort St. John area, I have a much better understanding and appreciation of how the Province of British Columbia is providing for our FUTURE, while mitigating environmental impacts. Major corporations are investing in our natural resources to maintain economic prosperity for themselves and all British Columbians. Being able to tour Fort St John and surrounding area in person has allowed me to expand my personal understanding of development in the north and reaffirms why I am so proud of being a citizen of British Columbia and Canada. For me, my participation in the BC Mayor’s Caucus has shed light on both mainstream media and social media reports on happenings in the north.

Visiting me at my office in Town Hall (238 - 10th Avenue North)

Emailing me at ron.toyota@creston.ca , or

Calling me at (250) 428-2214 (extension 227).