

2019 Armstrong Regional Coop AGM President Update

Welcome to the 2019 Annual General Meeting! We had good news to share with our members so we were sorry when we had to postpone our earlier AGM date because of COVID 19.

We published our presentations in advance so our meeting this evening can be as brief as possible. Minimizing the amount of time each of us will spend inside with a group outside our normal “bubble” is one of the many ways that ARC seeks to protect our most valuable company assets – our staff, our members, and our Board. We are certainly glad to see so many hardy souls committing to attend the delayed AGM. Thank you for following the social distancing and facemask requirements that have to be implemented.

2019 was a banner year for ARC. We were #1 in gas-bar liters sold in all three locations -- Vernon, Armstrong, and Salmon Arm. This is a testament to our front line staff.

This along with Federated having a great year as well we were able to return a 7% patronage for 2019. Since fossil fuel consumption is declining, your Board spent a lot of time in 2019 looking for alternate business opportunities. We know we need to diversify to be viable for the next decades.

At the end of 2019, we purchased two adjacent 2 ½ acre parcels on 25th Avenue in Vernon. We plan to build a second gas bar on the southwest quadrant of the property with access from 25th, and we are currently trying to subdivide the properties so we will have 4 separate properties – two having access from 25th Avenue and two from 27th Avenue. We have formalized a ten-year lease of the southeast portion (with 25th Avenue access), and we are seeking leases for the northeast and northwest parcels on 27th Avenue. We have already applied for subdivision and drawings for the gas bar.

In light of COVID 19, we will have to see what happens this fall before committing to building the gas bar at this time.

Our second diversification project will be a storage business on the Canoe Cardlock property specializing in RV and boat storage. The property has already been cleared, and we hope to have fenced and video-monitored storage available by the end of September 2020.

We are more than half-way through our 2020 year. Of course, the past six months have been challenging in numerous ways, including our “bottom line”. Hopefully, we will not see a second COVID 19 wave in BC, and ARC will be able to salvage a “reasonable year” rather than just a “poor year”.

I certainly want to give kudos to our wonderful staff and their support during the issues we encountered due to Covid 19. Their dedication and enthusiasm enabled us to be #1 in more than just gas sales. We have heard many positive comments about their warm and helpful personalities.

Kudos as well to my fellow directors for their hard work digging into several options to diversify.

Finally, we are sorry to advise that Nairn Von Hahn, our longest-standing director has decided to retire. Nairn after 21 years on the board in various positions she followed her father, Pat Hibbert who was on the board for 16 years. Her contributions, experience, and leadership will be sorely missed. I certainly appreciated Nairn’s advice and support during my time on the board. However, Nairn and Patti Patterson, another former Board member, have agreed to work on ARC’s celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2022, so both are still extremely dedicated Co-op members.

Hugh Chalmers President/Chair
Armstrong Regional Coop