

Some perspective on ring road vote

'Sincere goodwill' to make a deal



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Given current relations between the city and the Tsuu T'ina, it's important to clear up some of the misunderstandings about the ring road agreement.

Hopefully, this article will provide some insight into the failure of the ring road vote and assist the city and Tsuu T'ina to re-forge the good working relations of the past.

The agreement is available from the provincial government website and is 100000ong. Rather than reiterating the tiring details, let's use an analogy.

Imagine we collectively own, say, 30,000 acres of land. Suppose the government says it wants 1,000 of them.

We say "alright, but what are you going to give us?"

The government's response is: "Money and 5,000 acres of adjacent land."

Sounds terrific!

However, we have some special privileges guaranteed to First Nations. These are the "treaty rights" negotiated by their ancestors and ours (the Crown).

Why did our ancestors opt for treaties? To avoid bloodshed! It's the Canadian Way.

For almost all privately held land, minerals are the property of the government.

First Nations, however, own the minerals, including oil, gas and more often gravel. And there's no personal income tax, provided we work and reside on our land.

How do these two important elements relate to the defeated ring road agreement?

Mineral and tax rights first question: "We'll get the same rights and privileges on the new land — right?"

Government response: "No, we can't guarantee that — a different level of government (federal) is responsible. But we'll help you get them."

Land exchange second question: "We'll definitely get the promised 5,000 acres? Right? The 1,000 acres given up we can never get back?"

Government response: "We can't guarantee to give you the land but if not, we'll give you more money." (In addition to the huge amount already promised.) Unfortunately as we all know, money devalues over time. Land however, is like principal in

the bank. Leave it in and get continued returns. Take it out and it gets spent.

Money does not replace land.

Our reaction: "Hmmmm, we're getting a great deal of money, but should we give up our land and treaty rights if we are not guaranteed either on the potential exchange?"

It's difficult to trust government. Even though individual politicians and bureaucrats can be trusted, governing parties and policies change. Circumstances change.

So we say: "We need you, the government, to provide these things guaranteed. If circumstances change, we'll have an enforceable contract.

"Unrl then, we can't agree to give up those 1,000 acres, even though the promised money would be terrific."

Those guarantees were not provided.

The ring road issue is certainly more complex and the Tsuu T'ina members had other concerns. Nevertheless, there was sincere goodwill, hard slogging and very hard negotiations for many years, — actually decades — on their part and that of the province and Calgary.

The Tsuu T'ina wanted the ring road transaction for commercial development and other initiatives. The city and province need a vital transportation corridor.

Having lived in Redwood Meadows since 1980, I feel for the many Tsuu T'ina councillors and members I have come to know and call friends over the years.

Some were devastated by the vote results as they had put heart and soul into bringing this initiative forward.

I hope this puts a better perspective on some of the possible reasons behind the Tsuu T'ina members' rejection of the ring road agreement, as they and the city work through their issues at this time.

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Time to fight dirty

We are in a war and our way of life depends on it

Well about freaking time.

As the Dec. 7 climate change conference in Copenhagen approaches — *Kyoto II: The Bad Idea That Wouldn't Die* — the oil industry and our government finally started to grow a pair.

Nearly two dozen Greenpeace whackos entered the Muskeg River mine in September and chained themselves to equipment, disrupting production.

A few weeks later, another bunch of them trespassed at a Suncor Energy oil sands site. And then they snuck into a Shell refinery in Fort Saskatchewan, climbed a tower and were arrested.

Suncor Energy reacted by filing a \$1.5 million lawsuit against these spoiled, neo-pagan morons and asked for a permanent injunction against Greenpeace, and every Albertan should stand up and applaud the company.

While Premier Ed Stelmach has come in for his fair share of criticism lately, he showed real leadership in saying, "We're coddling people who are breaking the law."

Predictably, the lawyer for these spoiled, attention-seeking brats whined about how Stelmach shouldn't be



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allowed to talk trash about Greenpeace and he was violating their right to protest, blah blah blah.

It's one thing for a batch of tree-huggers to wave their environmentally friendly signboard while scarfing down tofu snacks in front of the legislature in a legal protest.

It's quite another for them to trespass into a working mine or refinery, disrupting production, and placing the lives of workers and emergency responders — or as I like to call them, "decent people" — at risk.

Personally, I wouldn't mind if one of these morons took himself out of the gene pool during one of these stunts, but you can be sure that if a Greenpeace'er is ever injured whose property it occurred will find themselves sued because their security was inadequate.

So our premier should do more than just talk a little

trash. He should direct that legislation be crafted to criminalize the actions of those waging economic warfare against Alberta.

We are in a war and our future prosperity and way of life depend on it.

The Greenpeace stunts are designed to further malign Alberta's energy industry as producing "dirty oil" in advance of Copenhagen.

The hope for those bent on destroying Alberta's economy is that various nations can be convinced to ban so-called dirty oil because extraction from the oil sands is energy intensive, producing lots of carbon dioxide.

You may remember carbon dioxide from high school science, where it was also known by the name "plant food."

Even if you're a sales clerk at the local hemp clothing collective and think the energy industry is icky, your health care, social and emergency services, not to mention the provision of clean water and sewage treatment are all funded by an economy that depends on energy extraction.

And it's not like we're a huge part of the imaginary problem of global warming anyway. If

every Canadian walked out of their house tomorrow and killed themselves, global carbon dioxide emissions would drop by less than 2%.

But nothing we do will ever satisfy the environmental lobby.

They're as unforgiving and inflexible as a cartload of ex-girlfriends ... even if you set yourself on fire in front of them, they wouldn't be happy ... because you'd be releasing carbon into the air.

We should quit trying to placate them on any level, and go on the offensive.

We should prosecute their shock troops, Greenpeace, to the fullest extent of the law whenever they break it.

Any company targeted by these groups should follow Suncor's example and bring suit against their tormentors. Even the province could sue them to recover the costs incurred by emergency services that have to respond to their stunts.

And most of all, we should quit pandering to these people and quit apologizing for who we are and what we do. It's time to fight back and to fight dirty.

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