

Lack of Good Communications Can be Costly

McCann's Building Movers, Ltd., of Canada Shares "The Other Side of the Story"

Quite often this editor receives email communications from individuals, with attachment of various newspaper articles, about a mover who has had an embarrassing incident occur while moving a structure. Some are members of IASM. Others are not. In many cases the mover rightly deserves the negative publicity. In other cases, however, the bad publicity and or citations are not warranted. Government officials are usually quoted extensively at the time of such incidents and the mover is asked to respond immediately to any accusations. Most choose not to until sufficient facts can be accumulated. By that time, however, the story is no longer front-page news and the mover has been labeled, rightly or wrongly, as another greedy company that has violated the law, causing damage to public property. There is usually always another side of the story but seldom does the mover get his/her day in the court of public opinion. This article is about such an incident.

In late July, IASM Canadian member **McCann's Building Movers, Ltd.**, of Calgary, Alberta, was transporting a new Nelson Ready-to-Move (RTM) 2,100-square-foot house to a location East of Conrich, AB. The route took it over a bridge on Township Road 250, located just west of Highway 9. Unfortunately, the concrete deck and timber support bridge buckled and collapsed.

Why would a company like McCann's Building Movers, Ltd., that has been moving structures for 40 years...many over all types of bridge structures...travel a road with a deficient bridge without having been authorized to do so? The answer is simple. They wouldn't. Then how or why did this incident occur? Primarily it was because of inadequate communication procedures between the government permitting agencies and their client.

Township Road 250 is within the Rocky View Municipal District (RVMD). In the Province of Alberta the governance structure is composed of counties and municipal districts. Movers submit requests for permits to transport oversize/overweight loads to the governing agency. In this case it was the Rocky View Municipal District. A Mr. Ted McCauley is manager of protective services for the district. RDMV employs the services of a company called Roadata, of Red Deer, AB, located about halfway between Calgary and Edmonton to determine the feasibility of routes and issue permits.

McCann's requested a permit from RVMD to transport the RTM to a specified location. (At 10:30 a.m. on a Friday, McCann's personnel received verbal authorization to use Township Road 250 by issuing a permit. The RTM was already loaded at a separate location from McCann's office and ready for a Monday morning delivery. After McCann's office closed for the day and week at 5:00 p.m. Roadata sent a facsimile to McCann's office. The facsimile contained no "Notice" or "Urgent" or "Change of Permit" or "Route Change" notation on the document. McCann's received no phone call from Roadata informing them of the change in route. The facsimile simply changed the route that had been approved three hours earlier but had been transmitted after McCann's personnel had left the office for the weekend.

On Monday morning McCann's pulled out of the staging area on a route that had been approved earlier by all parties involved. Shortly after 9:00 a.m., after the power unit pulling the load had crossed the bridge in question, the structure buckled and collapsed.

Pat McCann, owner of the company said, "Even though we had received approval from Roadata we were a little embarrassed that it happened. (We're



The dollies under the main part of the house were still on the bridge when it fell. The 90-foot beams saved the structure from going into the canal.

thankful or We were)We we're thankful nobody was injured." (Roadate's) Mr. McCauley, however, has (or had) a different viewpoint. "The entire bridge is destroyed, so it will need replacing," he said. Ms. Chapman of the *Calgary Herald* reported, "While the company held provincial permits, Township Road 250 is a municipal road and the movers were told not to use it" stated Mr. McCauley. Enrique Massot of the *Rocky Review Weekly* reported McCauley as saying the trucker had permits allowing the oversized convoy to circulate on provincial roads; however, a municipal permit to drive on Township Road 250 could not be produced.

According to the *Rocky Review Weekly*, McCann's was issued a ticket for damaging the bridge, another for being overweight on the bridge, and a third for contravening his permit. In the meantime, the bridge will be replaced with a culvert, with work keeping the road closed for up to four months.

McCauley is quoted in the *Weekly* as saying that truckers should understand the difference between a provincial and a municipal permit when deciding the route they take. "On provincial roads, of course, the province is the authority," reported the *Rocky View Weekly*.

One would have to believe a mover that has been obtaining permits for 40 years would certainly know the difference between various governing agency permits but Mr. McCauley's comment (if quoted correctly) implies otherwise.

Herein lies the problem not only for this specific incident, but also for all structural movers. The news reports in both publications fail to report any possible reason why such an incident occurred. They simply leave the impression, through innuendo, that McCann's never received permission to travel the specific roadway and



The move had slowed to four kilometers per hour as side rails to the bridge had to be cleared.

in flagrant violation of the law had damaged the people's property for which McCann's should pay, according to a district official.

A request to McCann's for "their side of the story" produced the following information....

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Pilings pulled from the canal after the incident showed the timbers had completely rotted below the water level.