

Reprint **Island Tides**

Visit www.islandtides.com to read the current edition and more find more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics in our extensive archive of newspapers and articles.

Reprint from Volume 20 Number 8

May 1, 2008

Ups and Downs of the New Ferry Math

FACC (Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs)

Since March 31, users of BC Ferries' non-major routes are brushing up on their math, to try to keep track of what they're going to be paying for travel, and to try to figure out where it can end. The fare increases which commenced on April 1 are the second round of hikes within five months. Together the two hikes have boosted minor route fares by 11% this year.

This is keeping fares on the trajectory that started shooting upward after 2003. By 2011 the cumulative increases are expected to hit triple-digit percentages.

There's more math to come. As ferry fares are heading skyward, ferry traffic is steadily slumping. Through 2007, traffic on the minor routes fell by more than 45-thousand passengers and 28-thousand vehicles.

This unintended consequence of fares hikes is creating complications for BC Ferries and stress on communities.

For BC Ferries, traffic declines run counter to projections, and mean lost revenue that must be made up elsewhere, from even greater fare increases in the long run.

For communities, this magnifies the challenges they face. 'The people needed to keep the communities running are having trouble getting by, and visitor dollars are declining,' says Ian Ralston, Ferry Advisory Committee chair for Thetis/Kuper.

Other jurisdictions with ferry-dependent regions have faced similar problems and recognized the need to take action. The Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs (FACC) are looking at examples of how this unsustainable trend has been addressed elsewhere.

The FACC is composed of chairs of all 12 Ferry Advisory Committees, representing BC's ferry-dependent communities along the length of BC's coast.

For traffic and fare trend graphs, fare increases and other information: <http://facc.gabriola.org> 

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with this attribution, in its entirety, with notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

'This article was published (May 1, 2008) in 'Island Tides'. 'Island Tides' is an independent, regional newspaper distributing 17,500 print copies in throughout the Gulf Islands and the Canadian Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Campbell River, BC.'

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.
Email: islandtides@islandtides.com. Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>
