

Brokers push for Alberta auto action soon

ALBERTA'S government would be wise to tackle reforms for the province's auto insurance system sooner rather than later, the CEO of the province's brokers association says.

The Insurance Brokers Association of Alberta's George Hodgson says that's because the public is likely to react strongly to any changes that seem unfavourable to consumers.

"From a government perspective, there's no winning with insurance," he told *Thompson's* late last month.

"They'd like to get it sorted and if it's bad news from the consumer's perspective — and I don't think it will be — you want to have that dealt with well before the next (provincial) election."

An expert advisory committee is currently reviewing the system for the province's Ministry of Treasury and Finance and is expected to release a report on its findings this month.

Among the information it is considering is a proposal from the Insurance Bureau of Canada and a white paper from the IBAA.

Each organization has taken a slightly different approach to the changes they would like to see, but they had productive conversations throughout the process of putting

together their reports, Mr. Hodgson said.

"We have a very good working relationship with the IBC, which is not necessarily the same across the country. Throughout the process of putting our papers together, we were in constant contact.

"We have a slightly different perspective at the end of the day," he said.

"The IBC's clientele is the insurance companies and their primary concern is maintaining a sustainable system. For us, sustainability is important, but so is accessibility and so is affordability — and so is making sure that people that have accidents are properly compensated. We're a little bit more focused on the consumer."

The government's advisory committee has continued its work through the COVID-19 pandemic, including holding Zoom meetings to discuss the proposals they received.

If its recommendations are similar to those of the IBAA white paper, the brokers association will encourage MLAs to support it.

Mr. Hodgson said that if the committee report is materially different, the IBAA will reiterate its position and encourage legislation that aligns more closely with its vision.

Gradual automation approach questioned

INSTEAD OF gradually increasing the degree of automation in cars, it might be best to just remove the human element entirely, a pair of automotive experts said during a recent online seminar held by the Insurance Institute of Northern Alberta.

"Rather than try to drive through the different levels of automation, it might be easier to implement fully automated vehicles that don't require human drivers," said Jude Groves, director of safety and training at Edmonton-based Rosenau Transport.

Vehicle automation is measured from Level 0, with no automation at all, to Level 5, which is fully automated and has no human driver input.

"With the technology in today's vehicle we're already at Level 2 automation. The jump from Level 2 to Level 3 is substantial from a technological perspective, but subtle, if not negligible from a human perspective in terms of their use of the vehicle," Mr. Groves said.

More than 90% of collisions are caused by human error and so driver assistance technology makes roads safer for people in cars and other road users, Andrew Happer, senior forensic engineer at Montreal-based CEP Forensic, said during the seminar.

Fully autonomous vehicles will eliminate human error altogether, Mr. Happer noted.

Fatalities per kilometre driven have dropped consistently over the past 40 years as driver assistance technology has been implemented. That technology ranges from the introduction of seat belts to radar-based collision warning systems.

Level 3 automation is starting to be seen in a few vehicles. It will cause debate in the insurance industry as the responsibility for the control of a vehicle will be shared between the human driver and the vehicle's technology.

Hundreds of properties evacuated in B.C.

HUNDREDS of properties in southeastern B.C. and dozens more in the Fraser Valley were under evacuation orders or alerts last week after rising rivers created serious flooding concerns.

Rivers flooded their banks after a weekend of continued snowmelt and thunderstorms.

Officials from several regional districts believed the worst of the turbulent weather had passed Monday, with Environment Canada forecasting dry conditions, but they still warned residents should be on alert should conditions change.

The Fraser Valley Regional District issued an evacuation alert for lands not protected by dikes along the Harrison River due to flooding in the region. And the B.C. River Forecast Centre issued a flood warning for the Boundary area of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary.

The RDKB emergency operations centre said residents were warned that the river levels had exceeded bank-full or would exceed bank-full imminently, and that flooding of areas adjacent to the rivers affected would result.

The RDKB said the warning was based on rain that fell in the region May 31 increasing flows in the Kettle River system to 20-year return level, or a high flood risk for low-lying properties in the region.

The RDKB including area municipalities warned everyone to stay away from the edges of watercourses and report any erosion or flooding to the Provincial Emergency Co-ord-

ination Centre at 1-800-663-3456.

The RDKB said it would continue to update the public as new information is available.

The largest number of evacuation orders were in the West Kootenay, where the entire watershed was under flood warning. Such a warning means river levels have exceeded their banks or will do so imminently, according to the B.C. River Forecast Centre. The entire Regional District of Central Kootenay, with the exception of Castlegar and Nelson, was under an "unprecedented" evacuation alert.

The THOMPSON'S TSX TICKER

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COMPANY	SYM.	MARKET VALUE	MAY 12	MAY 19	MAY 26	JUNE 2	YR. HIGH	YR. LOW
Co-operators Gen.	CCS.PR.C	86m	21.34	21.49	22.02	21.55	25.11	16.19
Echelon Financial	EFH	69m	5.99	5.92	5.99	5.75	14.11	5.02
Fairfax Financial	FFH	10,906m	343.50	340.05	373.09	397.74	662.29	319.37
Genworth MI Can.	MIC	2,781m	30.22	29.31	31.46	32.23	61.39	24.03
Intact Financial	IFC	18,895m	137.18	132.96	127.72	132.12	157.65	104.81
Trisura Group	TSU	554m	50.41	47.80	49.76	54.00	54.50	26.53
Westaim Corp.	WED	250m	1.67	1.61	1.69	1.75	2.85	1.37

All figures in Canadian dollars. Market value is approximate, in millions, as of June 2, 2020.