

Hi Everyone. This is District Governor Noel, wishing to reach out to everyone as we get close to the end of this Rotary year. Allow me to apologize, as this is my first take at doing a video message. We'll just say, live, uncut all in one take. Lots of info so please be patient till the end. And here we go.

What a year it has been, eh?

First off, on behalf of the District, my wife Karen and I, a huge THANK YOU to each and everyone of you for all of your work that you and your clubs have done in your communities and for your hospitality when we came to visit.

Being honest, the governors visit is just one day of the many things that goes on during each Rotary year. To maybe refresh from our visit, we did chat about a date, a date in time and the significance of that date in history. Inclusive of the significant events of that date, was the chartering of your Rotary club. That in itself is significant in history, be it recent history or further ago in history. We compared some events and advancements that were revolutionary in their day, but no where near the same today. Things had changed! What was is not what is today. And what is today is not what will be tomorrow.

Because of a brave group of passionate people, all leaders in your community, they chose to come together to create positive change, to form a Rotary club. Each and everyone of you are amazing for continuing that idea. Whether you realize it, let alone accept it, each of you are leaders and change makers in the lives of so many. We also chatted about just asking good people to join our organization. And so many of you did that. The result of all of your efforts we accomplished two huge milestones.... Your efforts increased District membership by over 100 new members. Realizing we lose a few through the year, we have netted out over 30 new members. This is HUGE. Within our Zone, Zone 28 we are made up of 3 countries, 21 districts 1067 clubs with just over 37000 members. Your efforts this year was the largest in all the Zone. Actually, our District was approximately 1/3 of the zones total membership growth. Yes... that huge. THANK YOU, especially our District membership chair, Nigel Bayless.

Including all that, we also have chartered a new club. The first in 5 years. Past District Governor Wayne Wornes was the last Governor to have done so, chartering the RC of Hanwell. This new club is called the Rotary Club of the Atlantic International Passport - **Club Rotary de l'Atlantique International Passeport** with Charter President Richard Lemay. Merci tous la monde, Thank you all.

On top of this, District 7810 is also a Charter member in the formation of Rotaract Canada. A huge step forward in recognizing Rotaractors as true partners of Rotary.

In trying to speak the speak about change, we changed up the District conference. We were truly fortunate to have our very own Rotary Director participate. Thank you to Jeffry Cadorette. From the 200 participants representing 33 clubs to the Maritime kitchen party and the breakout secessions to the Polio Tulip campaign contribution (thank you Pam Harrison for engaging so many of us) the conference was educational, informative, and fun!

Back to the history conversation. We as a District have also the huge honour of recognizing clubs who have achieved 100 years of service. Not just one, not two, but three. WOW! That is a lot of service. To the Rotary Clubs of St Stephen, Houlton, and Moncton, Thank you for all you have done for the past 100 years and for what you will do for the next 100 years. Please know, none of this would not have happen if not for the sponsor club, the Rotary Club of Saint John, now 106 years old.... My, my my. In honour of this, a plan was started over 3 years ago by reaching out to then RI President Nominee Mark Maloney. We had a grand celebration planned to recognize each of the 3 centennial clubs PLUS one from our neighbouring 7820 who had 1 club celebrating their centennial too. A very special shout out to the Rotary Club of Moncton who had planned a massive gala event of 500 people (that was sold out almost immediately) and to the Rotary Club of Moncton West and Riverview for being the District co-ordinators for the for the overall event of President Marks visit to our area including a Rotary luncheon of over 250 people and club and project visits all over the Greater Moncton area.

So, with all our chatting about change, the unbelievable happened! The global pandemic! Our families, our friends, our businesses our jobs, our clubs even our organization has been turned upside down, twisted, shaken, rattled, anything you can think of. Everything stopped and I mean everything. BUT, that does not mean we stopped thinking and being creative. Creative on how we can help our families & friends, our businesses and our communities and our Rotary. Yes, things changed with Rotary, an understatement of the year, but WOW, did each of you ever step up. No matter the personal challenges and sacrifices we have all had to face, each of you as Rotarians have sure stepped up. The shared stories of community support have been nothing short of amazing and inspiring! THANK YOU. Please keep this up. Your engagement in the community does make a HUGE difference for so many. Staying connected with each other, with the District and with Rotary international is also important. Please continue to have online meetings, be creative, have special events, anything for any reason to stay connected is as much important to each of us as it is to our clubs, our organization and most importantly, our communities.

That being said normally these last few months of the Rotary year is made up of special events, charter nights, Paul Harris Nights, community recognition events, etc. all leading to supporting the Rotary Foundation. With all that has stopped, please do not forget about our Foundation. It is events such as we are all experiencing today is why the foundation does what it does... helping those that need it. Now it is right outside our front doors. Our District has applied for a Rotary Foundation Global Relief Grant for Covid 19. Needless to say, the demand was huge and the current fund has been depleted. We have been told that grant applications will be held in order and with the new Rotary year, new funds will be allocated and grants filled.

The overall point is, please do not forget about OUR Foundation. If your clubs were planning on doing Foundation events this year, please follow through as soon as possible within the next couple of weeks. Our foundation needs our support more than ever.

Needless to say change is always challenging, some would say scary, even difficult and stressful. Notwithstanding current events, our district has been under a spotlight. During our visit, many of you have asked about our overall membership, the district and what all this means. Well, during all of this, a lot has happened. Starting 3 years ago, the Governor line of our district has been meeting with our counterparts in other Districts. Culminating this year with our request for a meeting with all governors of District 7790 to our west, District 7820 to our east and their successors plus our Director Jeffry and Director Elect Valarie during the Zone Conference in Niagara Falls last fall. We recognized we wanted to be in control of our fate and not leave it to others.

From this meeting, we decided to establish a committee as a whole with equal representation from all 3 districts. Chaired by our own Governor Elect John, we met face to face in Fredericton. From here we identified the best possible future for our districts. Believe it or not, this means we are going back to what we used to be, all one District once again. Originally within the Rotary world, there was a time we were known as District #1. New Brunswick grew so much, we were able to form our own District in 1958. Like we chatted during our visit, change is inevitable. So we, as an overall area are going to be changing. Rotary as an organisation is changing, so we hope to be progressive within this world of change.

As all three Districts, we had sent a joint proposal to be approved by the Board of Directors of Rotary International. At their last meeting, they approved our request for the model and timelines we had presented.

Effective on July 1st, 2022 Rotary International will form a new District, District 7815 that will include all of Atlantic Canada and St. Pierre Miquelon, France. The 10 Rotary clubs within the State of Maine, will become a part of District 7790. This means we have two years to transition and to get to know each other better. Part of this process is we have established two separate organizing committees, one for the transition for the 10 clubs to District 7790 and one for the formation of District 7815. We have solid representation on both committees. For District 7790, we have Floyd Rockholt and Marc Ouellette. For District 7815, we have soon to be Governor Elect Darren Hansen, Governor Nominee Harvey Bass and Past District Governor Silvana Bosca.

Want to know the funny part... as governor I had signed these documents during a leap year... on February 29th

What does all this mean.... Simple. My name is Noel and I am a member of the Rotary Club of Fredericton North and I will continue to serve my club and my community to the best of my professional, vocational and personal abilities. Nothing more, nothing less.

This close to the end of this Rotary year, and all the changes we all have experienced and made, the finances of the district have also been a key focus. As of our last Board meeting just last week, the operating budget tentatively shows a significant surplus since no in person training and travel costs have been incurred as originally budgeted. Once the fiscal period is complete and the final surplus is known, the board has approved a motion and District will be reaching out with three options;

- 1) Issue a credit to members in the form of a credit for membership dues
- 2) Providing a cumulative credit, based on membership, to the club to spend as you see fit
- 3) Provide an inter District matching grant program to support clubs who support Covid 19 specific projects within your own communities (this is to build on the Rotary International Global Grant Program we hope to receive in the next Rotary year)

Governor Elect John has committed to personally following up with each club President early in the new Rotary year to get each of your clubs' feedback.

Last but certainly not least, many of us were to be representing our District at the International Convention in Honolulu, right now.... This week. We all know it was cancelled, but the good news is there is going to be a virtual convention, June 20 – 26, 2020. Links are on the RI website. The positive in all of this... we all have an opportunity to be a part of such a first, the first virtual convention, complete with keynote speakers and break out secessions. To be a part of an RI convention, all without leaving your home or office. Still lots to see and learn. Please consider registering, it is quite a program.

Overall, it has been an amazing year. Utterly amazing. Together as Rotarians, as clubs and as a District, we have accomplished so much as a whole. Karen and I are truly blessed to have met so many passionate Rotarians. We are in awe of all the good things each of you and your clubs are doing. Going forward please know we are here to support you in anyway we can. On a personal note, I wish to say thank you the Governor line and everyone in the District leadership team for all their passion, drive, leadership and support through out the year. We look forward to supporting the District and Governor Elect John, the Governor line and the District leadership team during the next Rotary year and hope each of you will continue to do the same.

Thank you all. Dare to be the difference.

And remember... Rotary connects the world.

Be well. Be safe.

Yours In Rotary,

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