

Triple G Hiway, Fort Nelson

My primary customers are from the US going to Alaska. We are not a destination but an overnight stay. Caravans from the US (groups of 20+ units) are a main contributor. We also have a couple groups from eastern Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Germany. All making the trip to Alaska. Most customers book online through the website and also through advertising in the Mile Post etc.

My revenues from camping were down 80% from pre COVID. I am totally tapped out resource wise. I have taken advantage of the wage subsidy and CEBA Funds. I also received a loan from the RRRF. I have now had to start using some of the RRRF funds, everything else has been used. The problem is that it will have to be paid back and I am still paying a mortgage on the campground so am extremely worried about the future.

There is also a restaurant on site here. I only open it for the tourism season but since there was none this past summer I decided to try and keep it open this winter to try and cover some bills. Now it is even shut down again so the expenses keep adding up. I am trying desperately to keep my main employees working but with this last shut down I had to lay off all but 1 employee. My husband and I don't take a wage so we have been doing as much as possible ourselves.

Our customers support all the local businesses from grocery stores to gas stations to the local museum. No tourists affect this small community immensely. It also affects all our suppliers for the restaurant.

The government decisions are absolutely killing us, especially keeping the border closed. Why are people with their vaccinations not even allowed entry? The government hands out a loan and then stops you from doing business. The few Americans that have made it through the border because they live and work in Alaska during the summer say they are being treated horribly at the border. Mixed messages are being sent to them.

Of course then the BC Government has to shut down the restaurants on top of it. Why not close by region? I have the same small group of local customers all the time. We have no active cases in this small community and we are all getting vaccinated at a quicker rate because of the remote community but are still getting penalized. It's OK to serve on the patio the government says. What are they thinking? Our patio still has 3' of snow on it. And it is still too cold up here to sit outside.

Our small community has been declining for years and this has taken away another avenue for small business to survive. My employees are so uncertain whether they have a job day to day and like I mentioned some no longer do because of the shutdown. They will of course be hired back if and when the lock down is over but until when. I have employees with children and single Mom's. The uncertainty is so overwhelming for them.

Personal Implications:

This pandemic and especially the handling of the pandemic has affected me in ways I could never have imagined. The stress of the uncertainty, worrying about the employees and worrying about having to start taking funds out of our retirement fund in order to keep going is devastating to us. We worked hard all our lives and the campground has been a semi-retirement for us but no more. Now it has become a full time stress factor.

I am so tired of feeling like I am no longer in control of my own destiny. Where did all the common sense go? I just feel tired. Last year at this time I was saying it will all be OK. We will pick up all the losses in 2021. The border will be open and we will be busier than ever. What does a person say this year? I keep getting told that the campgrounds will be busy this year. That will probably be totally true in the South but let's face it if you are coming this far North you are going to Alaska or the Territories. And ours is not a destination like I said before. We are not on a lake, our community does not have a lot to do, and therefore we are an overnight stop.

Glenda Simpson

Owner