



The last sailing of the Albion ferry Klatawa, happened on July 31, 2009. Last week, TransLink sold the two vessels to Tidal Towing for \$400,000.

submitted photo

Albion ferries finally sold

After traveling 'to the moon and back' 20 times, TransLink's boats have new owners

MONISHA MARTINS
Black Press

The ferries made obsolete by the Golden Ears Bridge which have been languishing at a dock in Maple Ridge for more than two years have finally been sold.

The MV Kulleet and the MV Klatawa criss-crossed the Fraser River for 50

years, carrying motorists between Maple Ridge and Langley. They were towed from their slip in Albion on Wednesday.

The vessels were purchased for \$400,000 by Tidal Towing, a Port Coquitlam-based marine transport company.

TransLink spokesperson said Tidal made a firm "as-is-where-is" offer just before Christmas, through Harlow Marine International, Inc. The deal closed on Friday.

Tidal Towing has not disclosed the future use for the two boats, but it noted that the price is considerably higher than scrap value, Snider added.

The Albion ferry service ended with the opening of the Golden Ears Bridge on June 16, 2009.

The ships were initially priced at \$1.1

million each and were even advertised on Craigslist in 2009.

In the 52 years of service, TransLink estimated the Albion ferries made three million runs, covering a distance that's the equivalent of going to the moon and back 20 times.

While waiting for a buyer, staff periodically fired up the engines to keep them in good working shape.

Although TransLink received numerous tentative bids and inquiries from prospective buyers, none turned into a firm offer until Christmas.

TransLink had considered selling the boats as scrap if they were threatening to become an environmental or economic liability; however, that point had not yet been reached.

B.C. public health officers back legalized marijuana

JEFF NAGEL
Black Press

A group of B.C. public health officers has joined a growing coalition of policy leaders urging the legalization and taxation of marijuana.

The Health Officers Council of B.C. voted to endorse Stop the Violence B.C. and called for regulation of illegal substances like marijuana to reduce the harm from substance use and the unintended consequences of government policies.

"The Health Officer's Council and other experts are not saying that marijuana should be legalized and taxed because it is safe," said Dr. Paul Hasselback, a Vancouver Island medical health officer who chairs the council.

"We are saying that proven

public health approaches should be used to constrain its use.

"There is now more danger to the public's health in perpetuating a market driven by criminal activity."

The coalition argues prohibition has failed and enforcement has little impact on drug use, merely fueling the \$7-billion illegal pot industry that experts say is directly linked to the spike in gang-related killings since 1997.

A report released by Stop the Violence says teens find it easy to buy marijuana and pot

"By every metric, this policy is failing to meet its objectives."

Dr. Evan Wood
coalition founder

failing to meet its objectives," said Dr. Evan Wood, a Vancouver doctor and founder of the coalition.

By regulating the market, he said, the distribution and use of marijuana would be more controlled and would also eliminate organized crime from the equation.

It would also provide a source of tax revenue in the hundreds of millions, he

use among them is up considerably since the 1990s, despite heavy spending on drug enforcement.

"By every metric, this policy is

added.

B.C. provincial health officer Dr. Perry Kendall said he generally agrees with the public health officers' statement on marijuana reform although he was not formally part of their endorsement.

"I support their call for a review of the effectiveness of current prohibition and criminalization and discussion of a more effective public health-based approach," Kendall said.

Cannabis arrests in Canada climbed from 39,000 in 1990 to more than 65,000 in 2009, according to the coalition.

An estimated 27 per cent of young B.C. residents aged 15-24 used pot at least once in 2008, according to one poll.

Four former Vancouver mayors have also backed the coalition.

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