

Press Release – 75h Anniversary of the Alaska Highway Theme Song Contest – submitted by Donna Kane

Jody Peck's "Alaska Highway" has won the Judges' Choice Award in the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council's 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway Theme Song Contest. Roy Forbes, who served as co-judge along with Caroline Woodward, said Peck's song was a "gritty yet melodic work, evoking the twists and turns of that storied ribbon of road that is so much a part of everyday Peace Country life."

Woodward agreed, saying, "Jody Peck has a true gift for evocative lyrics that create a flow of visual and auditory images in the listener's mind. Her beautiful and powerful alto voice delivers the Alcan's twists and turns, its grinding gears and straight stretches. I think this will become another classic driving song."

With 23 submissions, the task of choosing a Judges' Choice was no easy feat. "We listened to folk ballads, classic country, alt country, rockabilly, rhythm and blues, purely instrumental... so many musical tributes to this legendary highway," said Woodward.

"The passion, skill, research and plain hard work made for an impressive group of songs," said Forbes, who called all of the submissions "winners for contributing to this creative pool of music celebrating the Alaska Highway."

The call for submissions to the contest began in early January 2015.

"When we saw how many strong submissions we were getting," said Donna Kane, executive director of the PLRAC, "we wanted our community members to have a chance to pick their favorites too."

The People's Choice contest, born from that idea, began in late January 2016, after the judges had made their selection (which was kept confidential until voting ended for the People's Choice contest at midnight February 28th). With thousands of community members casting their votes, a winner emerged. Chris Gale's "That's Where I Was Raised" took the lead with 5,039 votes. This top spot was strongly contended for much of the month by Iyan Bruvold's "Road Bound by Road."

As the winner of the Judges' Choice award, Peck (who hails from the banks of the Peace River and fronts the well-known band, Miss Quincy) will receive \$1,000. Fort Nelson's Chris Gale, as winner of the People's Choice contest, takes home \$200.

The PLRAC will be producing a CD comprised of the Judges' Choice, the People's Choice, and a number of other songs made up of the judges' recommendations and People's Choice votes. The CD will be available all along the Alaska Highway Corridor throughout 2017.

Sanctioned by the Alaska Highway Community Society, the theme song contest is just one of many initiatives being carried out by the PLRAC to help celebrate the Alaska Highway's 75th Anniversary in 2017.

The PLRAC wishes to acknowledge the hard work of the judges as well as those who submitted their songs and the community members who voted for the songs they loved. Thanks also to CBC Daybreak North for airing the songs throughout the month of February and for announcing the winners on February 29th. Peace FM, New Harvest Media, the Peace River Regional District, the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality and the BC Arts Council also generously supported the project.