



NEWS RELEASE

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Two more strategies released as OBAC maps out what will be required to build resilience in the region.

Prince George, BC – The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) today released two more of its strategies as it continues to present a vision and actions to take to build a prosperous future for the region. The two strategies released today by OBAC focus on Future Forest Products and Fibre Use and, Integrated Regional Infrastructure. The purpose of these two strategies is to identify what actions need to be taken collectively and individually by the federal, provincial and local governments, First Nations, industry leaders and other interested organizations to achieve the goals presented. These goals are: responsible and sustainable growth in the region's forest sector; and, responsive and integrated maintenance and development of the region's infrastructure to support growth across sectors, enhanced community safety, access to services and, regional cohesion.

In the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy the community leaders of the OBAC region present six objectives, four recommendations and over twenty proposed actions aimed at achieving a diverse forest sector that: builds upon our strength in the sustainable use and regeneration of forests; produces a diverse range of timber and non-timber forest products, encouraging a diverse range of business models and partners; balances the need for quick responses to changing circumstances and opportunities in the forest and in markets and, the need for business certainty; operates under a regulatory environment that cultivates innovation; and, continues to manage the forest resource for additional important forest values including ecological services and cultural values. The recommendations include:

1. Increase the benefits that communities can rely upon from forest resources and forestry.
2. Ensure that the forest sector remains a strong economic contributor to the region.
3. Recognize MPB impacted stands as a valuable asset, which should be used to its full potential before its commercial value is depleted.
4. Increase awareness and understanding of the long-term viability of the forest sector.

“This strategy could not have been developed without the input of specialists and the commitment of local leaders throughout the region who contributed immensely to the plan's development,” says Don Bassermann, OBAC Chair. “Local government and First Nations leaders, forestry professionals and practitioners and, many others contributed to the strategy development. We know the critical link between the well being of our communities and, the health and productivity of our forests. Community leaders are now much better prepared to contribute to decisions on forestry that affect our communities' future”.

OBAC's Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy was also released today and presents six objectives, three recommendations and over thirty action items aimed at supporting the development and diversification of a wide range of industries; positioning the region take advantage of the pivotal Asia-Pacific gateway; and, makes the region an attractive place to live, work, learn, play and invest. The recommendations include:

1. Ensure that the region's new and existing transportation infrastructure provides for the safe, cost effective and expeditious movement of people, goods and services.
2. Establish energy and communications infrastructure elements that will attract new businesses to the region and allow existing businesses to expand.
3. Establish collaborative planning approaches and innovative funding mechanisms to expedite the delivery of integrated infrastructure development solutions.

"This work will play an important role in ensuring the future prosperity of the region," says OBAC Director Bernice Magee. The Mayor of Burns Lake also added, "We realize that this strategy will likely evolve as other needs and opportunities come to light during the development of our other strategies."

The 'next steps' for OBAC include bringing together senior staff from relevant government agencies and the private sector to work with OBAC to quickly develop two Action Plans that work out the details on the "how to and how much" for implementation of these two strategies. OBAC will also be working with senior governments and other partner organizations to enable implementation of the Action Plans.

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