



# NEWS RELEASE

June 19, 2007

## OBAC to Host Bioenergy Speaker Series

### For immediate release

Prince George, BC – The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) Directors are pleased to announce that a Bioenergy Speakers Series Communities Tour will be held June 26-28, 2007. This Series will contribute to the on-going effort to develop an Alternative Energy Strategy for the OBAC region. Information-Dialogue Sessions will be held in:

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|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| – <b>Houston</b>    | Tuesday, June 26   | Noon – 2 pm |
| – <b>Smithers</b>   | Tuesday, June 26   | 5 – 7 pm    |
| – <b>Burns Lake</b> | Wednesday, June 27 | Noon – 2 pm |
| – <b>Vanderhoof</b> | Wednesday, June 27 | 7 – 9 pm    |

A focus session will also be held in Mackenzie on Thursday, June 28. Details for each session including session locations and speakers can be found on the OBAC website at [www.ominecacoalition.ca](http://www.ominecacoalition.ca).

Speakers on the panel will include:

- **Ray Greene**, Sustainable Energy Systems
- **Michael Wilson**, Community Energy Association <http://www.communityenergy.bc.ca/>
- **Martin Tampier**, ENVINT Consulting and BIOCAP Foundation Canada <http://www.biocap.ca/>

Alternative Energy is one of the eleven priority topics brought to OBAC's attention through the community dialogue sessions held in 2006. In particular, the bioenergy part of the alternative energy discussion has attracted a lot of attention as one possible economic diversification opportunity in our region. Forestry analysts, economists and energy specialists point to the glut of beetle killed wood as a ripe opportunity ready for picking. But as many will attest, a number of challenges are emerging as efforts to expand our wood products sector to include bioenergy intensify.

As part of its 2007-2008 workplan OBAC has committed to begin strategy work on five of its eleven priority topics and largely complete three priority topic strategies. OBAC has also committed to enabling communities' access to credible information on the challenges and opportunities ahead by hosting public speaker series on priority topics of interest.

Responding to the immediate interest in growing the bioenergy sector in the OBAC region and consistent with OBAC's commitments mentioned above, OBAC will host a speaker series and dialogue sessions focused on the bioenergy portion of the Alternative Energy topic across the OBAC region June 26-28.

How can communities determine what their needs and expectations are and assess whether any particular bioenergy development can meet these? What can communities do singly and collectively to attract and grow bioenergy developments where real opportunities exist?

OBAC has assembled a panel of speakers who will present information and perspectives on different aspects of bioenergy development including: enabling communities to assess bioenergy development as an economic diversification opportunity; developing community level energy plans and energy systems; understanding public and private sector interests; and, the current status of provincial policies and programs relating to bioenergy development. Additional industry, government and sector representatives will be invited to attend and be on hand as a resource to assist in answering questions. Each session will invite the panelists to share their insight and then questions and input will be invited from the audience in a dialogue session.

These sessions will be structured to achieve a number of objectives including:

- Get credible information out to community leaders and residents to answer people's questions and enable and encourage informed discussion, exploration and assessment of bioenergy opportunities
- Support OBAC communities in their efforts to assess and take action on bioenergy opportunities at the local level.
- Identify who has an interest in this topic and rally interest amongst people from within and external to our region to share knowledge and contribute to helping us find and act upon concrete diversification solutions in this topic area
- Kick off the development of the OBAC Alternative Energy Strategy, beginning with the bioenergy portion. Begin to understand the elements of the topic and the elements of the strategy.

This discussion and input will help develop the bioenergy portion of the larger OBAC Alternative Energy strategy, a strategy that will outline the range of viable possibilities for alternative energy development in the OBAC region and identify what actions need to be undertaken to enable further development of this sector here.

The development of this strategy will follow the OBAC 11 step strategy development process as outlined on the OBAC website. This speaker series and the dialogue sessions and the subsequent follow up will contribute to the first four steps of the 11-step strategy process. As follow up to scoping the priority topics, the coalition anticipates convening Strategy Groups to advise and work on the strategies and recommendations. More information about the strategy process and the OBAC initiative is available at [www.ominaccoalition.ca](http://www.ominaccoalition.ca)

**For more information visit the OBAC website at [www.ominaccoalition.ca](http://www.ominaccoalition.ca)  
Or contact OBAC General Manager Elizabeth Andersen  
Phone 250-563-7005  
[eandersen@ominaccoalition.ca](mailto:eandersen@ominaccoalition.ca)**