



Newsletter

January 2012

New Executive Elected for 2012

At their Annual General Meeting on December 17, 2011, the OBAC members elected their Executive Committee. Mayor Stephanie Killam, District of Mackenzie was elected Chair of the Coalition and Mayor Gerry Thiessen, District of Vanderhoof as Vice Chair. Art Kaehn, Chair, Regional District of Fraser Fort George; Mayor Rob MacDougall, District of Fort St. James; and Councillor Rimas Zitkauskas, Village of Telkwa were elected as additional members of the Executive Committee.

The Board of Directors wishes to thank former chair Don Bassermann for his excellent leadership and commitment to the Coalition for the last three years. Don has retired from politics, but will continue to support OBAC as a Transition Advisor.

"The Board would like to thank all previous Board Members for their dedication and support which has led to the achievements of the Coalition. I wish to welcome the new Board and look forward to continued success." Stephanie Killam, OBAC Chair

Transition Toolkit Online Database Developed

The need for a "Transition Toolkit" was first identified by OBAC Directors in the wake of the economic upheaval caused by the sharp increase in mill closures and curtailments in several communities in 2007. The Transition Toolkit: Working framework for a more resilient community was designed in the late spring of 2007 as the Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC worked with the District of Mackenzie on a plan to respond effectively to industrial closures. The framework was then revised and expanded as part of a Community Transition Project undertaken by the CDI at UNBC, OBAC and the former Ministry of Community Development. The OBAC Action Plan for the implementation of the Community Social Services and Supports Strategy included encouraging use of the Community Transition Toolkit throughout the region and the development of an online database. The new online database can be found at www.communitytoolkit.ca



Air Traffic and Airport Improvement Strategy Completed

On December 17, 2011 the Board of Directors approved the Air Traffic and Airport Improvement Strategy. This air industry strategy will enable the OBAC region to target investments and provide recommendations aimed at attracting investment, enhancing existing business opportunities, and preparing for growth in this sector that are within realistic budgets/funding, community resources, and consistent with community plans. The strategy focuses on the needs, opportunities, and constraints of the smaller airports, while being inclusive of the larger airports within a regional framework. It identifies opportunities, possible options for action and a direction for the OABC region airport communities to move forward as a whole and provides community leaders with a platform to address pressing issues with senior government and to conduct benchmarking of their operations.

Communications with the province and stakeholders have begun and the Coalition will continue to engage Working Group members on the implementation of regional and local priorities identified within the Strategy.



Projects Approved August - December 2011

Organization and Project	Amount	Strategy Linkage
Town of Smithers <i>Smithers Regional Airport Water Systems Expansion</i>	\$50,000	Integrated Regional Infrastructure; Minerals and Mining Strategies
Bulkley Valley and Historical Museum Society <i>Five Rivers Culture Crawl</i>	\$50,000	Tourism Strategy
The City of Prince George <i>Barkerville's Travelling Exhibit: Who am I? Bridging the Pacific - From Guangdong to Barkerville and Back</i>	\$50,000	Tourism Strategy
Regional District of Bulkley Nechako <i>Digital Media Image Bank</i>	\$20,000	Tourism Strategy Attraction and Retention Strategy
United Way of Northern BC <i>Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Project</i>	\$11,475	Attraction and Retention Community Social Services and Support Strategies
United Way of BC <i>Mentor Me: A Youth Networking Initiative</i>	\$50,000	Attraction and Retention Community Social Services and Support Strategies
Resources North Association <i>Agroforestry Capacity Building in Northern BC</i>	\$5,000	Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy, Agriculture Strategy
Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society Application <i>to Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund</i>	\$15,000	Agriculture Strategy

Northern Agriculture Research Initiative Request for Proposals

The goal of the Northern Agriculture Research Initiative is to improve the capacity and profitability of the agriculture and agri-food sector of northern British Columbia. It seeks to do so by supporting agricultural research, development and training in northern BC. Participants in the Northern Agriculture Research Initiative include producers such as regional farmers, market gardeners and ranchers, the University of Northern BC (UNBC), College of New Caledonia (CNC), Northern Health (NH), the Ministry of Agriculture, Community Futures, and OBAC. On November 4, 2011, the Northern Agriculture Research Initiative released a RFP (\$60,000 provided by OBAC) to conduct research within three broad themes: Forage, Pasture and Local Foods.

The following proposals were approved:

- *Business Plan for a Regional Food Hub: A Plan to Build the Capacity of Our Local Food System*
- *Enhancing Northern Grain Production through Applied Research and Community Engagement.*

Community Highlight

Mackenzie In Motion - Participate in Planning Our Community's Future!

Mackenzie is facing a period of change. Mayor and Council for the District of Mackenzie would like you to participate in creating a solid plan for the future, including clear strategies of what we can achieve over the next three years. The plan needs to reflect the vision and views of the community . . . so tell us what you think! The Mayor and Council want to hear your thoughts!

Complete our survey on the District of Mackenzie website (www.district.mackenzie.bc.ca) Click on the *Mackenzie in Motion* logo to complete the brief survey (paper copies are available at the District Office or the Rec Centre). Enter to win an iPod!

Our future depends on taking a smart, strategic look at what we want as a community and then deciding what we need to do to be successful. There will be many opportunities for community participation and community review of the plan as it develops.

Mayor and Council want to hear:

1. From residents and organizations already in Mackenzie: what your vision and goals are for the future of the community, and;
2. From residents and businesses considering Mackenzie (or currently commuting to a job in Mackenzie): what they want in Mackenzie in order to move their business or family here.

THE PROJECT

- Is Council-led and community-driven. This process is led by Mayor and Council, driven by the community's participation.
- Will develop a long-term vision coupled with short-term strategy. Our focus on the long-term future of the District is balanced by a commitment to implement the plan and get started on strategic actions immediately.
- Focuses on District action, reflecting the ability of the District to take action. Actions that others could take will be included, while the focus will keep our attention on District leadership.
- Will be run transparently and accountably - the District will communicate clearly and regularly throughout the process, and then beyond through monitoring and reporting of our progress. We will ask how the District can effectively communicate and engage with Mackenzie residents.
- Builds on our history of working together - through the hard times, Mackenzie has learned to come together to solve problems and pursue our goals. This project is a chance to keep working together effectively now and into the future. This is what Mackenzie does best.
- Will measure progress against our long-term vision and goals, and celebrate success.



THIS PROJECT WILL:

- 1) develop a highly-supported **community vision**;
- 2) **align District strategies, plans, policies, and bylaws** behind this vision;
- 3) **increase transparency** through monitoring and reporting;
- 4) **build strong relationships**;
- 5) **promote Mackenzie**; and
- 6) **enhance the quality of life** for residents.

THE PROCESS

Your participation is key to this project, from December 2011 to the Fall of 2012.



1. Starting December 2011 we will ask for your concerns, your goals for the future of the community, and how you would like to be involved in the project.
To get involved . . . sign up for our email list; complete a survey before January 31, 2012; come to the January 19 visioning event; encourage others to participate.
2. The next is to develop strategies to achieve the community's vision and goal through a series of workshops.
To help develop strategies . . . participate in workshops.
3. The results of the workshops will form the draft plan for the community to review.
To review the plan . . . comment on-line or at an open house.
4. Priorities from the new plan will require updates to the Official Community Plan (OCP) and other bylaws. Which priorities are most important?
To help decide . . . participate in community events or review the priorities on-line.
5. The Official Community Plan (OCP) guides land use in the District of Mackenzie. We will revise it to support the new strategic plan and priorities.
To participate in revising the OCP . . . comment on the draft on-line or at an open house.
6. Other bylaws, especially business related, and a new brand are the other priorities for implementation. We will update these along with the OCP before the end of 2012.
To get involved . . . comment on the drafts on-line or at an open house or attend public hearings.

For more information: click on the *Mackenzie in Motion* logo on the District of Mackenzie website. You can also email us at MiM@district.mackenzie.bc.ca or call 250 997 3221, visit the District of Mackenzie office, and also sign-up for our email updates.



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