

### Industry Investment: Are Communities Ready?

Across northern BC, the topic on everyone's minds is resource sector investment. How many projects? When? What will it mean? Are communities ready?

This past spring, the CDI was invited to speak to audiences across the province and beyond about our research on community readiness for economic change. From conferences and workshops to webinars and meetings with provincial ministers, we have spoken with industry, government, community, and First Nations leaders about what we have learned.

What we have found is that most of the stake-holders involved in resource sector investment are focused on what will happen during the construction phase of any potential projects. Whether it is a mine, a pipeline, or an LNG plant, this phase would create a large number of jobs, but only for a short period of time, usually about 3-5 years for each project.

The construction phase can be expected to create pressures on community services and infrastructure. Even with workforce camps being constructed, not all workers who come to town will have access to these facilities.

As people move into the community, vacancy rates go down, rents go up, costs go up, social service needs increase, staff are hard to find, traffic on the road increases – these are but a few of the pressures that communities can anticipate. The key to coping with the construction phase is to be prepared. Communities need to develop strategies to deal with these pressures. But they need support to do so.

The upside is that, if communities are prepared, they can leverage lasting benefit from the construction phase investment. Some of the many possible options:

- Converting camp hotels to tourist hotels.
- Repurposing workforce camp housing as a senior's housing project.
- Building a high-end RV park on the camp site using the installed water, sewer, and electrical connections.
- Converting a camp recreation facility to community use.
- Relocating a commercial camp kitchen for use in culinary training courses.

The CDI's message is that northern BC is on the cusp of the most significant transformation of economies and communities since the 1950s. There will be tremendous opportunities, not unlike those that emerged during the province's "long boom" from 1950-1980. Communities need to be prepared. They must plan for what happens if projects go ahead. By the same token, they must also be ready for what will happen if these projects do not proceed. They need support to do this.

The CDI will soon be releasing the reports from the first phase of the **Dialogues on Readiness** project. Watch for the notice. Following this, the summer edition of the CDI's Community Connections newsletter will feature a discussion on readiness for the operations phase of these projects. While the operations phase will employ fewer people, the jobs will provide well-paid, lasting career opportunities for individuals, and the opportunity for economic diversification and stabilization for communities. But we must start now if we are going to take advantage of these opportunities. Be sure to watch for our next newsletter. The key to coping with the construction phase is to be prepared. Communities need to develop strategies to deal with these pressures. But they need support to do so.

### Tara Bogh Joins the CDI Team

The CDI is pleased to welcome Tara Bogh to the position of Research Associate. Tara is well-known to many, having served eight years with Initiatives Prince George, five of which were spent leading its economic development unit. Tara brings to the CDI a comprehensive background in research and project management, as well as a strong network of contacts across northern BC. Tara was born and raised in Prince George and is a UNBC graduate. Tara also serves in a volunteer capacity as Chair of the YMCA Board of Directors.

### *New Realities, New Relationships:*

#### **2014 Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation National Conference**

The CDI will be hosting the 2014 CRRF National Conference in Prince George from September 25-27. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Keith Storey from Memorial University will be a keynote speaker. Dr. Storey's research focuses on social and economic impact assessment around resource development and on long-distance labour commuting. The conference website is now live. Go to [crrf.ca](http://crrf.ca) to register.

#### **Sunrise Ridge Seniors Housing Society Needs Assessment**

The CDI recently completed a housing needs survey of seniors and older adults living in the communities of Blackburn, Pineview, Hixon, and the surrounding areas. The survey explored seniors housing needs over the next 10 years. It found that while the current need for seniors housing is relatively low, it increases rapidly over the next five years and steadily in the following five years.

Also on the rise is the need for support services that will enable seniors to remain in their own homes. The number one support service identified was help with winter yard work, followed by help with home repair/ maintenance and help with summer yard work.

### **New CDI Logo**

The CDI has a new logo. The design, a product of IQCreative and its director, Peter Robinson (who developed the logo "pro bono"), captures both the inclusiveness and action orientation of the CDI.

Visit his website to view more of his work:

[iqcreativestudios.com](http://iqcreativestudios.com)

### **FREE EVENTS**

#### **LNG Cumulative Impacts: 16/97 Economic Alliance Spring Forum**

This event will explore issues related to cumulative impacts on communities and the environment associated with the proposed LNG projects in BC. The event is scheduled for June 16 from 6:00-9:00 pm at the Prince George Civic Centre. Speakers will include Trish Balcaen, BC Environmental Assessment Office; Kevin Kriese, Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations; and James O'Hanley, BC Oil and Gas Commission, and is moderated by Greg Halseth, Co-Director, Community Development Institute.

#### **Citizen Series Webinar: Social Retrofit: Equipping our Communities to Support Aging in Place**

##### ***BC Healthy Communities and Northern Health***

Research is showing that many older adults want to remain in their 'home' communities because they enjoy the quality of life and have developed strong social networks. This webinar will focus on strategies that communities can employ to support seniors to age in place. Marleen Morris, Co-Director, Community Development Institute will join Dr. Verena Menec, University of Manitoba and Sharon Smith and Brenda Andersson, the Village of Granisle. The webinar will take place June 17 from 1:30-3:30 pm. To register, visit: [bchealthycommunities.ca/event/4129/view](http://bchealthycommunities.ca/event/4129/view)

#### **The Community Development Institute at UNBC**

The Community Development Institute at UNBC is dedicated to understanding and realizing the potential of BC's non-metropolitan communities in a changing global economy, preparing students and practitioners for leadership roles in economic and community development, and creating a body of knowledge, information, and research that enhances our understanding and our ability to deal with the impacts of ongoing transformation.

In keeping with the vision of the University of Northern British Columbia, the Community Development Institute is committed to working with all communities – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to help them further their community and regional development aspirations.

#### **For more information contact:**

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