



# Community Contacts Newsletter

University of Northern British Columbia

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*"Northern  
Strength  
to  
Northern  
Strength."*

Contact us at:

**Greg Halseth, acting**

**Institute Director**

University of Northern

British Columbia

3333 University Way

Prince George, BC

V2N 4Z9

**Office:** New Lab 8-141  
**Phone:** (250) 960-5826  
**Email:** [halsseth@unbc.ca](mailto:halsseth@unbc.ca)

## Welcome

We are pleased to present the June 2006 newsletter of the Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC. We hope that this newsletter will help to keep you informed about developments at the CDI. Our plan is to send these e-newsletters out to our community contacts quarterly. If you have any comments on how we can improve the newsletter, or if you have news that you would like us to include in our next edition, feel free to contact our coordinator at [manson@unbc.ca](mailto:manson@unbc.ca)

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## The CDI at UNBC

The Community Development Institute at UNBC is interested in two fundamental issues for communities in northern BC: community capacity and community development. By undertaking research, sharing information, and supporting education outreach, the Institute is becoming an important partner to communities interested in making informed decisions about their own futures.

The Institute emphasizes the importance of capacity-building, collaboration, learning, and complementarity. Research that is undertaken balances academic credibility with practical relevance. Beyond research, the Institute is involved in outreach activities and serves as a conduit to expand local educational opportunities related to community development.

For more information please visit: <http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/>

## Services

During the past two decades, rural/small town social and economic change has been accompanied by changes in the availability of local services. Such changes often occur at the same time as the demand for these services increases. For the past 9 years, the CDI's researchers have been part of a cross-Canada project looking at *Building Rural Capacity in the New Economy* (<http://nre.concordia.ca>). Our focus has been on changes to local services.

Services play two key functions in building rural/small town capacity:

- 1) Services help places cope with the transitions from economic upswings or downturns. Given that public policy increasingly calls for "bottom-up" community development, services provide the foundations for these local actions.
- 2) Services also provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust – something that can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist.

In 1998, 2000, 2003, and 2005 we surveyed available services in 24 rural/small town sites (6 in Atlantic Canada, 4 in Québec, 5 in Ontario, and 9 in Western Canada). Included were education, health, protection, legal, financial, communication, elderly/childcare, government, community, transportation, recreation, shopping, economic development, and housing services. The general messages included local service reductions, a maintenance of regional service availability, and that public sector services were being closed faster than private sector services (see "New Rural Economy" [http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg/print\\_research.shtml](http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg/print_research.shtml)).

Such trends have significant implications for supporting rural/small town adjustment to economic and social change. The successful story of Tumbler Ridge highlights the critical importance of keeping basic services available as a way to support community transition. Local, band, tribal council, provincial, and federal governments must find innovative ways to deliver rural/small town services across a region whose resources power the economy.

## Notices

Service Canada (HRSDC) is pleased to report that the "New Horizons for Seniors Program" is accepting applications from May 16 to July 14, 2006 for community-based projects that encourage seniors to participate in their communities through volunteerism, mentorship, and civic leadership. Details about "New Horizons for Seniors", including eligibility, funding priorities, and application guidelines are available at: [www.sdc.gc.ca](http://www.sdc.gc.ca) or call 604-666-3208 or toll-free at 1-866-850-6719

The Town of Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies Regional District have forwarded their website information: <http://www.northernrockies.org>

The following item was circulated by Brandon Hughes through the Rural Team BC e-mail list but it speaks to a topic in which many are interested:

A new B.C. Centre for Social Responsibility has been established by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in partnership with the ministries of Children and Family Development, Health, and Community Services to promote prevention and awareness of problems related to addictive behaviours. A new parent's guide on alcohol misuse prevention will be available online at <http://www.bccsr.ca/home/index.html>

## Institute News

### Community Connections / Summer Travel

This summer is the fourth one in a row that the CDI has been involved in furthering dialogue with many community representatives throughout UNBC's service region. Both formal and informal discussions are taking place with government, industry, labour, small business, First Nations, economic development organizations, and community groups. The purpose is to add to our knowledge of what has gone on in the past, what is going on presently, and what people feel needs to be the focus for the future. The CDI is already beginning to develop research projects based on community needs and is continually acquiring information for its intended resource library. This summer the CDI will enter into discussions with First Nations, local governments, economic development organizations, and community groups to formalize some of these relationships through memorandums of understanding (MOU). For more information on MOUs with the CDI please contact Don Manson at [manson@unbc.ca](mailto:manson@unbc.ca)

### Speaker's Series

The Speaker's Series invites experts to talk on important and relevant topics for northern BC. The Speaker's Series consists of classroom lectures at UNBC, a public lecture in Prince George, and a public talk in another northern BC community. One event is held in the fall and another in the spring of each year.

The CDI is pleased to announce that Manley McLachlan will join us for the Fall 2006 Speaker's Series event. Manley McLachlan is the President and CEO of the BC Construction Association (BCCA), the largest construction organization in the province. Prior to taking the position at BCCA, Manley managed the Saskatchewan Construction Association. He has significant experience dealing with construction safety, aboriginal involvement within the industry, and education & training for construction trades. Mr. McLachlan is the co-chair of the Vancouver Aboriginal Strategic Employment Partnership (Van ASEP) Training Society as well as a member of the National Steering Committee of the Construction Sector Council's Ironworkers Aboriginal Awareness Project.

Mr. McLachlan's talk will focus on the identification of international, national, and provincial trends that are impacting the construction industry in BC. He will identify 5 cross cutting drivers that impact every facet of the business and will describe both the impacts of those drivers as well as steps that have been undertaken to mitigate their impact. These public talks will be held in Prince George and Fort St. John.

For further information, please contact: Don Manson at [manson@unbc.ca](mailto:manson@unbc.ca) or phone (250) 960-5018