



# Community Contacts Newsletter

University of Northern British Columbia

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"Northern  
Strength  
to  
Northern  
Strength."

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## Welcome

We are pleased to present the March 2007 newsletter of the Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC. We hope that this quarterly newsletter will help to keep you informed about developments at the CDI. 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/>

## Economic Development

From October 2005 to May 2006, the CDI worked with economic development actors in the Terrace – Kitimat – Hazelton area of northwest BC to examine a persistent barrier in economic development strategies: the gap between planning and implementation.

### Problem: Stuck in the Middle

People told us that too often our economic strategy processes are 'stuck in the middle'. While such processes and reports often identify possible development options (the middle); what is missing is a thoughtful and participatory grounding in the community (the beginning), and a deeper level of analysis necessary for real decision-making and implementation (the end).

### Way Forward:

The *From Planning to Action* project report summarizes what people told us into four themes. These themes tell us that we need to:

**Re-orient to readiness** by understanding the role of the **region in the world** while also **grounding our strategies** in a real, in-depth analysis of our local and regional **assets and aspirations**.

Too often, these missing elements limit the usefulness of proposed strategy documents to the point where they may become simply generic lists of opportunities.

The arguments by those we spoke with are powerful since they are rooted in years of practical experience with what works and what does not work. They describe a quite different approach to thinking about economic development strategies. They argue that governments, communities, and regions must re-orient economic strategy processes to be

more generally ready to engage with emerging opportunities. We need to:

- 1) build from a solid understanding of the community's/region's social and economic foundations,
- 2) identify and understand opportunities and possibilities within our framework of local/regional assets and aspirations (visions and values), and
- 3) follow-through the process with a manageable and accountable implementation framework.

Given the context of new regional economies, *doing things matters and good choices matter*. The input provides insights so that actions and decisions will have their most productive and effective impact.

This project was carried out with assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada. Project partners included the 16/37 Community Futures Development Corporation and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

The project report can be found under the "From Planning to Action: Reconciling Community Development Strategies with Regional Assets and Infrastructure" heading in the RESEARCH section of the CDI website: <http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/research.html>

## Notices

A paper from **the Connected North project** can be found in the Journal of Rural and Community Development – online at:  
<http://www.jrcd.ca/index.php>

### **Northern Development Initiative (Northern Trust)**

<http://www.nditrust.ca/ndit/index.php>

### **Omineca Beetle Action Coalition**

<http://www.ominacacoalition.ca/>

### **Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition**

<http://www.c-cbac.com/>

### **The Canada Aboriginal Portal**

The Canada Aboriginal Portal has a new funding tool where you can search for programs by location and the type of support you are seeking.

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/apps/fundingtool.nsf/>

## Institute News

### **Speaker's Series**

The CDI is pleased to announce that Blair Lekstrom, MLA for Peace River South, will join us for the spring 2007 Community Speaker's Series event. On February 14, 2007, Mr. Lekstrom was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development. Reporting directly to the Premier, Mr. Lekstrom is responsible for working with rural communities and relevant ministries/agencies to ensure the development priorities of communities are advanced through various available funding programs. Mr. Lekstrom has served as a councillor and Mayor of Dawson Creek, a Peace River Regional District member, and served on the North Central Municipal Association executive.

These public talks will be held in Prince George on Monday, April 02, 2007, room 7-150 UNBC and in Burns Lake on Tuesday, April 03, 2007 room 007 at the CNC Campus. Talks start at 7:30 pm.

For past Speaker's Series presentations please visit:

[http://www.unbc.cdi/speakers\\_series.html](http://www.unbc.cdi/speakers_series.html)

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