



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 September 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

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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/>

RV'ers as an Economic Opportunity

One and a half years ago, the CDI supported a "Tourism and Development Foundation Project" to build a better understanding of this key economic industry. Anne Hardy of UNBC's Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management Program was part of that research. She has continued this work, and recently released a "RV Travelers Study" with Ulrike Gretzel of Texas A&M University. Focused upon the Alaska Highway, the study included 850 surveys, 50 in-depth interviews, and 2 focus groups.

Key findings include:

- It is important to RVers that destinations cater to their needs and they actively avoid those places which don't. RV friendliness means welcoming residents and businesses, high quality campgrounds with amenities, good RV-specific information and signage for large vehicles, and places with cultural, historic, and scenic assets.
- RVing is not just a form of accommodation or transportation. It is a lifestyle chosen to experience freedom, flexibility, and fellowship while enjoying the conveniences of home. It is not about money; thus RVers are less influenced by gas prices.
- A majority of RVers engage in extensive trip planning. Word of mouth, Internet, brochures such as 'Milepost', and RV-related sources are main information sources. A lot of information search also occurs during the trip. Thus, wireless Internet, visitor information centers and signage are essential.
- RVers seem to differ in terms of the degree of social interactions they seek, their commitment to RVing, as well as the degree to which they plan their trips (ie: rallies seem to attract more committed and more social RVers).
- RVing seems to be a natural progression from tent camping and backpacking as one

becomes older and needs more convenience. Most were already looking at RVs while tent camping.

- RVer's are very technology savvy. Technology provides access to travel information, a means to communicate with family, friends, and other RVer's, and a way to manage one's life. Cell phones, digital cameras, laptops, Internet, navigation systems and wireless connections are widely used and RVer's go places with where they can use this technology.
- RVer's travel in caravans for social purposes but also for some trips to increase the feeling of safety, convenience and likelihood to see everything worth seeing. Even those who travel independently regularly form ad hoc groups to travel to a specific destination. Trip lengths differ considerably among RVer's. Some travel exclusively in their RVs while others also engage in other forms of travel.

These findings illustrate that RVer's are a growing and attractive market which is currently not effectively catered to. For further information, contact Anne Hardy (hardya@unbc.ca). A summary is posted at: <http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/research.html>

Notices

Business Strategies for Heritage Sites

The Fraser Basin Council, with the University of Victoria and the BC Heritage Branch, are offering this two-day forum October 15-16, 2007 in Quesnel, BC. Registration is \$30. Information is available at:

<http://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/crmp/home.aspx>

or from Maureen LeBourdais, Coordinator BC Rural Network, 250-392-1400:
mlebourdais@fraserbasin.bc.ca

Rural Communities Summit

The 5th BC Rural Communities Summit, entitled "Building Communities Together" and jointly hosted by the BC Rural Network, the Rural Team BC, and the Cariboo Regional District, will be held at the 100 Mile House Lodge & Conference Centre in 100 Mile House, BC, from March 13 - 15, 2008. For more information:

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

Institute News

The Service Industry sector is crucial to extracting value and GDP from traditional economic activities. Service Industry sectors include:

- Goods Support (Wholesale Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, Retail Trade)
- Administrative Support (Administration, Public Administration, Management)
- Social Support (Education, Health Care, Social Assistance)
- Cultural Support (Information, Culture, Arts, Entertainment, Recreation)
- Finance Support (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Professional and Technical)
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Waste Management and Remediation

Growth in all parts of the Service Industry sector has put pressure on the need for workers. With funding assistance from Service Canada, the CDI is starting a project examining service sector needs and identifying practical responses over the short and long term. Communities and Service Industry sector representatives interested in participating in this project should contact Don Manson at manson@unbc.ca or phone (250) 960-5018

Speaker's Series

The CDI is pleased to announce that Dr Neil Hanlon from UNBC's Geography Program will join us for the fall 2007 Community Speaker's Series event. Dr Hanlon's research interests focus on health geography; primarily on rural and remote health and health care. His talk will focus upon the linkages between population aging and the changing nature of health and care services. These issues are important parts of the efforts by northern BC's communities to develop new economic opportunities by building community foundations for retaining and recruiting both residents and businesses.

Public talks will be held in Prince George on Wednesday, October 24, 2007, at UNBC and in Quesnel on Thursday, October 24, 2007 at the North Cariboo Community Campus. Talks start at 7:30 pm.

The Community Speaker's Series is co-hosted by the City of Quesnel, the Cariboo Regional District, and UNBC's South-Central Regional Office.

For information on past Community Speaker's Series presentations please visit:
http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/speakers_series.html

If your community would like to co-host our next Community Speaker's Series event, please contact: Don Manson at manson@unbc.ca or phone (250) 960-5018