



# REBUILDING COMMUNITY HEALTH, WEALTH AND SPIRIT

## Village of Burns Lake

### FACTS



**Category:** Community Economic Development  
**Location:** Northwestern, B.C.  
**Economic Base:** Forestry

### SYNOPSIS

#### Making the Recovery

In 2012, the Village of Burns Lake, with financial assistance from Northern Development Initiative Trust, and others undertook a significant expansion of the Lakes District arena and curling rink structures, known as the Lakeside Multiplex. The project was part of the recovery efforts to stimulate economic activity in the Burns Lake area following the tragic Babine Forest Products explosion in January 2012.

### THE CHALLENGE

#### An Economic Reboot

The Babine Forest Products explosion resulted in the loss of two workers and the injury of 19 others. The mill had been the town's major employer, and the loss of jobs and related economic activities resulted in financial hardship for many families and the community. There was a need to reboot and diversify the local economy, and provide a positive direction in moving forward.

### THE SOLUTION

#### Health, Wealth and Spirit

The project connected and upgraded the Village's existing arena and curling rink facilities in an effort to promote and improve community health, economy, recreation and spirit. The expansion included a squash court, climbing wall, children's indoor play area, workout facility, equipment rental space, multi-use area and business space. Approximately 10,000 square feet of space was added to the existing curling rink and arena structures. It also connected the arena and curling rink to the beautiful spirit square with the outdoor exercise equipment, walking trail, band shelter and more.

Northern Development Initiative Trust assisted with a grant of \$60,000. Total project cost was just over \$3 million. Other funding partners included the Province at \$2.4 million, Regional District of Bulkley Nechako at \$76,000, NKDF at \$40,000, Village of Burns Lake at \$280,126 and the gas tax at \$278,000.



For more information: [gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment](http://gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment)

## BENEFITS

### Community Gatherings

- The expansion created an indoor space for winter activities such as rock climbing, the work-out gym, squash courts, the children's indoor play area and the Village of Burns Lake Recreation Department programs and activities.
- Residents can rent equipment, providing a low cost option for families and residents to access the many recreation opportunities available.
- The added amenities are marketed to attract new residents to Burns Lake as the place to work, live and play.
- The Multiplex is the place to host events, special gatherings, sport development opportunities and conferences and is now the recreation hub of the Lakes District. Residents and visitors have access to affordable activities, recreation equipment and recreation information all year round.
- Burns Lake is a small and rural community with six First Nation Bands that access the Village for services.
- The Lakeside Multiplex also addresses public health issues such as depression, hypertension and obesity - chronic diseases that benefit from physical activity.

## OUTCOMES

### New Programs, New Jobs

- The creation of the Bruins Den (concession) and 10 new program instructors for yoga, exercise, weight training etc.
- 22 full and part-time positions during the two-year construction phase
- 624 memberships last year, plus approximately 600 additional one day user memberships
- 4 full time jobs and 5 part time, 2 seasonal jobs



## LESSONS LEARNED

### Self-Management

The project encountered some difficulties. The construction management group had trouble recruiting and maintaining local contractors due to the high volume of construction in the particular time period.

There were supply issues due to weather events in Calgary, and the remote location made it difficult to obtain supplies.

If Burns Lake was to undertake a project of this magnitude again, it would consider managing the project within their staff rather than contracting it out through a design/build program.



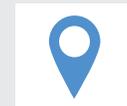
## TESTIMONIALS

*"The Lakeside Multiplex is a wonderful addition to Burns Lake. Not only does it help support active and healthy living in our community, but it provides a gathering place that can be used by residents all year long. It will also have a great economic benefit to Burns Lake as we are able to promote more recreational and leisure amenities which will help attract new residents and visitors to our area."*

Acting Mayor John Illes

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Village of Burns Lake



Email:

Village@burnslake.ca

Web:

[www.burnslake.ca](http://www.burnslake.ca)



For more information: [gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment](http://gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment)