



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2014JTST0009-000235
Feb. 27, 2014

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
City of Quesnel

Collaboration supports economic development in Quesnel

QUESNEL – The Government of British Columbia, the City of Quesnel and local and regional service providers continue to work collaboratively to offer a number of programs and services to minimize the impacts of the Canfor mill closure expected the week of March 17, 2014.

The province and the city are working with partner agencies including Quesnel Community Economic Development Corporation (QCEDC), WorkBC (Quesnel Employment Services), Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) and the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC) to support worker transition and skills retraining, by:

- Connecting workers with other opportunities in the community and region;
- Providing workers with skills training and retraining through the Northern Skills Training Pilot Program;
- Sponsoring the city and QCEDC to help prioritize and action economic development projects;
- Hosting an economic development for local leaders workshop on March 27, 2014, and a land development workshop later in the spring in Quesnel;
- Organizing a job fair on April 3, 2014;
- Organizing a business walk on March 26, 2014, to support small business; and,
- Other initiatives (see *Backgrounder* for more).

Supports already provided to help workers and the community include:

- Established a worker transition team to co-ordinate support for the impacted workers and the community.
- Produced a Community Resource Guide providing key information on employment, community and social services, job skills and retraining, and financial services available in Quesnel. Led by the City of Quesnel and funded by the province, this guide is available on the City's website:
http://www.quesnel.ca/DocumentBank/CityEvents/13_12_Community_Resource_Guide.pdf
- Hosted an Open House on Nov. 27, 2013, led by the City of Quesnel, to provide an opportunity for impacted employees and community members to obtain information on training and education opportunities, economic development and entrepreneurship as well as available community services.

- Hosted on-site information sessions in December 2013 through Quesnel Employment Services and Service Canada, with additional sessions taking place this week.

Quotes:

Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour –

“The City of Quesnel has shown leadership and determination in guiding the community through this challenge. The province sent in its support team as soon as we learned of the pending mill closure to work side by side with the city to explore ways to mitigate impacts on workers, their families, contractors and the community.”

Coralee Oakes, MLA for Cariboo North –

“I am incredibly impressed by the resilience and determination of Quesnel; setting actions in motion immediately following the closure announcement based on planning completed by the municipality, regional district, economic development corporation and many community partners. Our government is committed to continuing our work with the Regional Economic Collaborative to determine new economic priorities for the region and provide support and tools for the impacted workers both on and off site. We are working hard to find a new path for economic growth and development in the Cariboo ensuring Quesnel and surrounding communities will have a bright and prosperous future.”

Mary Sjostrom, mayor of the City of Quesnel –

“The City of Quesnel is committed to providing a healthy and sustainable community for our residents, both economically and socially. It is vital that we continue to seek out opportunities to grow in order to enhance the wellbeing of our community as a whole. We value the partnership that we have formed with the Province as it is key to Quesnel’s future.”

Learn More:

Quesnel Community Resource Guide:

http://www.quesnel.ca/DocumentBank/CityEvents/13_12_Community_Resource_Guide.pdf

More information on economic development tools and resources:

http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/economic_development/index.htm

BC Jobs Plan: <http://www.bcjobsplan.ca/>

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BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release
2014JTST0009-000235
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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
City of Quesnel

Collaboration supports economic development, transition in Quesnel

QUESNEL – The Government of British Columbia, the City of Quesnel and local and regional service providers continue to work collaboratively to offer a number of programs and services to minimize the impacts of the Canfor mill closure expected on March 21, 2014.

Below is a list of initiatives aimed at helping impacted workers and the City of Quesnel:

- Following the October 2013 mill closure announcement by Canfor, the province and the city continued their collaborative work to help support the community through the mill closure period and beyond. The Regional Economic Collaborative (REC) Forum then took on an additional focus of brainstorming key actions that could be part of a collaborative response to mitigate community impacts from the mill closure.
- Northern Development Initiative Trust facilitated grant writing workshops in late October 2013 and business development workshops in October 2013 and January 2014 to support diversification of the local economy. Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation (QCEDC) and Community Futures North Cariboo partnered on sponsoring the workshops.
- The City of Quesnel hosted a Community Information Open House on Nov. 27, 2013, bringing together employment and training, economic development, and community service organizations from Quesnel to share information on programs and services. Over 120 people attended and received a copy of the Quesnel Community Resource Guide, a document funded by the province and created collaboratively, providing key information on employment, community and social services, job skills and retraining, and financial services available in Quesnel. This guide is available on the city's website: http://www.quesnel.ca/DocumentBank/CityEvents/13_12_Community_Resource_Guide.pdf
- As part of efforts to provide information to mill workers and other impacted contractors, information sessions in collaboration with Service Canada were provided at the mill on Dec. 19 and 20, 2013.
- An economic development and business transition task force was created, led by the Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation (QCEDC) with support from the province. The task force revitalized the promotional and marketing efforts for a Shop Quesnel campaign during the Christmas shopping season.
- Co-led by Northern Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, enhanced outreach of community services is being co-ordinated to ensure the needs of impacted workers and their families are supported and addressed, with numerous community organizations involved.

- Information sessions hosted by WorkBC Quesnel Employment Services and Service Canada in December 2013 were attended by approximately 46 people. Since January 2014, WorkBC and Service Canada have been offering weekly information sessions at the WorkBC office, and these will continue through to the end of February 2014. Additional sessions are also being planned at the Canfor mill site.
- United Steelworkers (USW) is offering the Northern Skills Training Pilot program which is funded by the Labour Market Agreement between the province and the Government of Canada. Services provided by Northern Skills Training are also being made available to impacted contractors and their employees.
 - 46 calls were logged in the past two weeks from Canfor employees;
 - 35 Canfor employees have received a wide range of training or certification (eg. First Aid, transportation endorsement, computer training, math upgrades, ITA red-seal challenge for loader/grader, challenge for ITA trades certification, essential skills assessment, etc.)
- On Feb. 14, 2014, CCBAC provided \$50,000 in funding for unanticipated community transition expenses associated with the mill closure. Since 2001, the provincial and federal government have committed more than \$1 billion to respond to the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, with \$884 million coming from the province. This funding is targeted to help communities with economic development and diversification.
- The business walks to support small business are being scheduled for March 26 and 28, 2014. A business walk is an informal way for community leaders to get in touch with the pulse of the business community, to begin to build relationships over time, and to gather the business intelligence needed to stimulate the economy. For more information, please visit: http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/BusinessAttractionToolkit/section5/business_walks_toolkit.html
- The immediate response built on the work already underway as part of the REC Forum which has been underway since the spring of 2013 and was organized through regional collaboration between the City of Quesnel, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training (JTST), First Nations, and local organizations.
- An Economic Development Essentials for Local Leaders workshop is tentatively scheduled for March 27, 2014, in Quesnel, and a Land Development workshop will be scheduled in the spring.
 - Building on the success of 15 previously offered Economic Development Essentials for Local Leaders workshops and three economic development webinars offered last fall, a new series of workshops is planned for 2014 including the 15 land development workshops and six economic development essentials for local leaders workshops.
 - The newly created land development workshop will be offered in 15 communities by the province in 2014, focussing on land development for investment attraction and/or business development purposes. The workshop will walk participants through the development process, including:
 - Conducting a land readiness assessment;
 - Navigating the site selection process;
 - Developing a land development prospectus;
 - Identifying relevant provincial government supports, resources, processes and contacts; and,
 - How to create a high quality investment profile for the OpportunitiesBC website and other marketing vehicles.

- Tips and strategies for creating a viable and attractive land development opportunity and real-world application will be emphasized. Strategies to overcome common barriers to investment attraction will be discussed, and success stories from communities will be shared.
- All workshops are provincially funded and offered at no cost to the community. They provide rural and urban communities access to expert advice on economic development topics. British Columbians can exchange ideas, good practices and innovative solutions to problems faced by communities.
- Skills upgrading and training needs assessment is underway for impacted workers, and a Job Fair is scheduled for April 3, 2014.

Learn More:

Quesnel Community Resource Guide:

http://www.quesnel.ca/DocumentBank/CityEvents/13_12_Community_Resource_Guide.pdf

More information on economic development tools and resources:

http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/economic_development/index.htm

BC Jobs Plan: <http://www.bcjobsplan.ca/>

Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation: <http://www.quesnelinfo.com/>

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