



B.C. Rural Development Progress Report

# Accelerating Success for **British Columbia's Rural Communities**



Ministry of  
Forests, Lands and  
Natural Resource Operations

SUPPORT  
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VALUE-ADDED FORESTRY  
RURAL DIVIDEND  
INNOVATION  
YOUTH  
PROSPERITY CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY  
OPPORTUNITIES LIFESTYLE  
REVITALIZATION  
DOWNTOWN  
INVEST  
PASSION

CITIZENS CULTURAL LOCAL TRADITION  
BRITISH  
COOPERATION SUSTAINABILITY  
BUILDING ON  
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DIVERSITY

FARM MARKET RURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL GROWTH  
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THE PRESENT  
AQUACULTURE LEADERSHIP NEXT-GENERATION

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SOLUTIONS CAPACITY FARMING  
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# Message from Minister Steve Thomson



Rural communities have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to our province, our economy and our way of life.

Three years ago, I was honoured when the Premier asked me to take on the responsibility of Minister for Rural Development, with Donna Barnett as my Parliamentary Secretary. We consulted with rural communities to identify economic opportunities and barriers, and articulated our commitment to addressing these issues through *Supporting Rural Development: Creating a Voice for British Columbia*.

We met our first key commitment in 2015 with the creation of the Rural Advisory Council. I am impressed with the performance of Council members to date. They have diverse experience, and offer a thoughtful perspective so our government can better understand the impact of our policies on rural B.C. and pursue actions that will help rural communities succeed.

The Council was instrumental in helping us achieve our second commitment – the BC Rural Dividend to support community capacity building. The first application intake earlier this year was a great success – with projects that are poised to make a difference across British Columbia.

I've lived in the Okanagan all my life, and worked alongside rural leaders as general manager of the BC Fruit Growers Association and the BC Milk Producers Association, and executive director of the BC Agriculture Council. I understand and appreciate the immense social benefits of the rural lifestyle.

As Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, I also know that resource industries continue to make a major contribution to rural economies, and beyond.

Every day, I meet rural people who share my optimism for the future. We know that together we can work toward a secure future for our rural communities.

My sincere thanks to the many individuals who have taken the time to support this work, especially Donna Barnett and her excellent team on the Rural Advisory Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Thomson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

**Minister of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations**  
**Minister Responsible for Rural Development**

# Message from Parliamentary Secretary



I have spent 35 years in public life, including 16 years as mayor of 100 Mile House and seven as Cariboo-Chilcotin MLA. It is gratifying to be part of a process that has the potential to do so much to strengthen the voice of rural B.C. and give us confidence in our future.

Thanks to Minister Steve Thomson, we have a front-row seat at Cabinet. He is a strong, and proud, advocate for our communities and our lifestyle. He listens to us, and he ensures rural positions are considered in the development of government policies and programs.

Through the Rural Advisory Council, we have capable guidance from knowledgeable and dedicated people representing every region of B.C.

Council members offer the right balance of vision and pragmatism. They helped government shape the BC Rural Dividend, and the early results show it has hit the mark. The first intake of applications included a wide array of projects – proving that the best way to support rural communities is to help them shape their own future.

I want to thank the Minister and my government colleagues for making this rural focus possible. And I especially want to thank members of the Rural Advisory Council for their steadfast support and invaluable advice.

I look forward to continuing the dialogue that will lead us to strong, thriving rural communities across our province.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Donna Barnett MLA'.

**Donna Barnett,**  
**Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development**



# Delivering the promise to rural B.C.

## COMMITMENT:

The Province will have ongoing accountability to rural B.C. on its rural development mandate.



## ACCOMPLISHMENT:

This progress report outlines the B.C. government's accomplishments in meeting its rural development mandate.

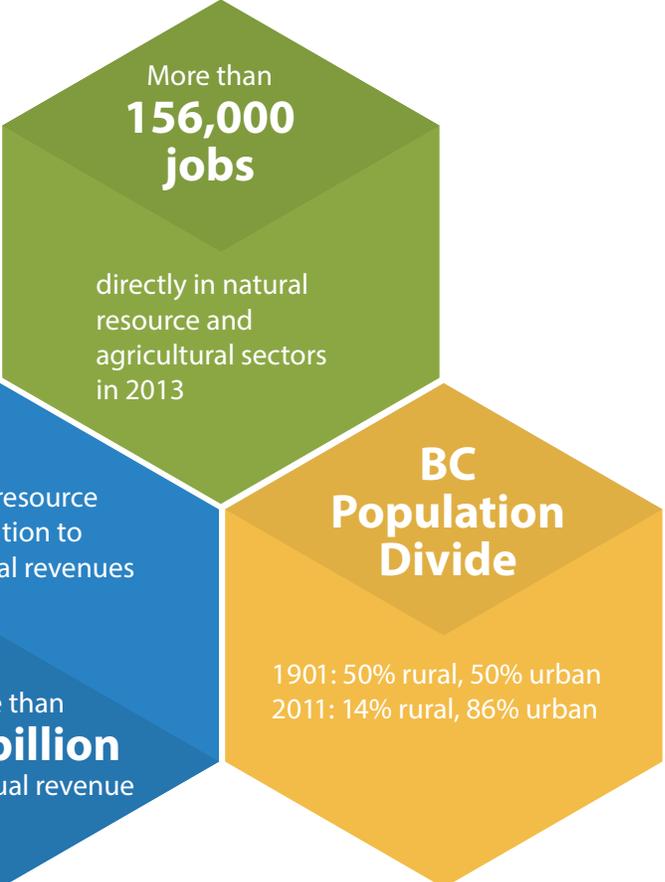
B.C.'s rural communities have long played a vital role in building the province's prosperity. They fostered natural resource sectors such as forestry and mining, which helped shape the province and form the bedrock of its economy. These sectors directly support well-paying jobs in thriving rural communities, and deliver benefits to all British Columbians by providing the revenue that has resulted in strong infrastructure and quality services across the province.

But this dependence meant that those in rural B.C. were hardest hit by downturns in the natural resource economy. Communities were forced to look for ways to diversify and strengthen their economies. Led by forest-dependent communities impacted by the mountain pine beetle infestation, rural leaders made the case to the Province that after years of generating wealth from resources and sharing with the rest of the province, it was time for the rest of B.C. to support rural economic growth.

The B.C. government was receptive to this message. At the 2014 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention, it released *Supporting Rural Development: Creating a Voice for Rural British Columbia*. This report articulated government's commitment to rural B.C., including establishment of a Rural Advisory Council to provide advice to government to support rural community capacity building.

*Accelerating Success for British Columbia's Rural Communities* shows how the province is meeting the commitments of its rural development mandate. It sets out the many ways in which the Province is inviting rural communities to identify opportunities that will reinvigorate and diversify their economic base, and how it is supporting these actions.

The B.C. government is committed to supporting rural communities across the province so they can grow and prosper. This will be done in a manner that respects their many past contributions and sets the stage for the strategic change needed to assure their future success.



“While the majority of the province’s population is in urban centres, the majority of wealth is generated by resource development in rural areas. We need to ensure that rural British Columbians have an equitable share in the economic benefits generated.”

— STEVE THOMSON, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

# Rural Advisory Council:

## A strong and effective rural voice

### COMMITMENT:

The Province will establish a Rural Advisory Council that provides advice to government on behalf of rural citizens.



### ACCOMPLISHMENT:

The Rural Advisory Council was created in April 2015 to offer a strong new voice for rural British Columbians.

Rural communities in B.C. have long sought a stronger voice so government can better understand their challenges. The Rural Advisory Council represents this voice. It provides independent and impartial input and advice to the Government of B.C. on matters related to rural development, which can strengthen rural economies and support rural prosperity and thriving rural communities across B.C.

Government announced plans for the Council in 2014, and rural B.C. was given the opportunity to submit nominations. From the 87 nominations received, individuals from across the province, representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives, were appointed to an initial one-year term. In March 2016, the 13 members were reappointed for another two years. The Council meets on a quarterly basis, and is chaired by Parliamentary Secretary Donna Barnett.



## THE COUNCIL'S MAIN OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

1

Make recommendations to government that will lead to new ideas, opportunities, actions, policies and legislation to further support rural business owners, leaders, workers and families.

2

Advise government on ways to work more collaboratively with rural organizations to create more rural growth and opportunities.

3

Seek feedback on key government initiatives by consulting with organizations, business owners, First Nations and local governments throughout rural B.C.



# Rural Advisory Council: Advancing priority actions

## COMMITMENT:

The Rural Advisory Council will advise the Province on priority actions, including moving forward with the Rural Dividend.



## ACCOMPLISHMENT:

The Rural Advisory Council provided significant input and advice into the creation of the Rural Dividend.

The Council's initial focus has been on rural capacity building priorities previously identified by rural stakeholders, including establishment of a rural dividend.

In their first year of operation, Council members used their broad range of knowledge and expertise to provide a detailed set of design principles for the Rural Dividend. These included flexibility in project eligibility so applicants can pursue activities that best reflect the needs and the priorities of their communities. The Council also called for inclusiveness for rural communities with populations under 25,000, including unincorporated communities and First Nations.

Following the first intake, the Council recommended changes to make the Rural Dividend program more effective and efficient. Members will continue to provide advice to support continuous improvement to the program.

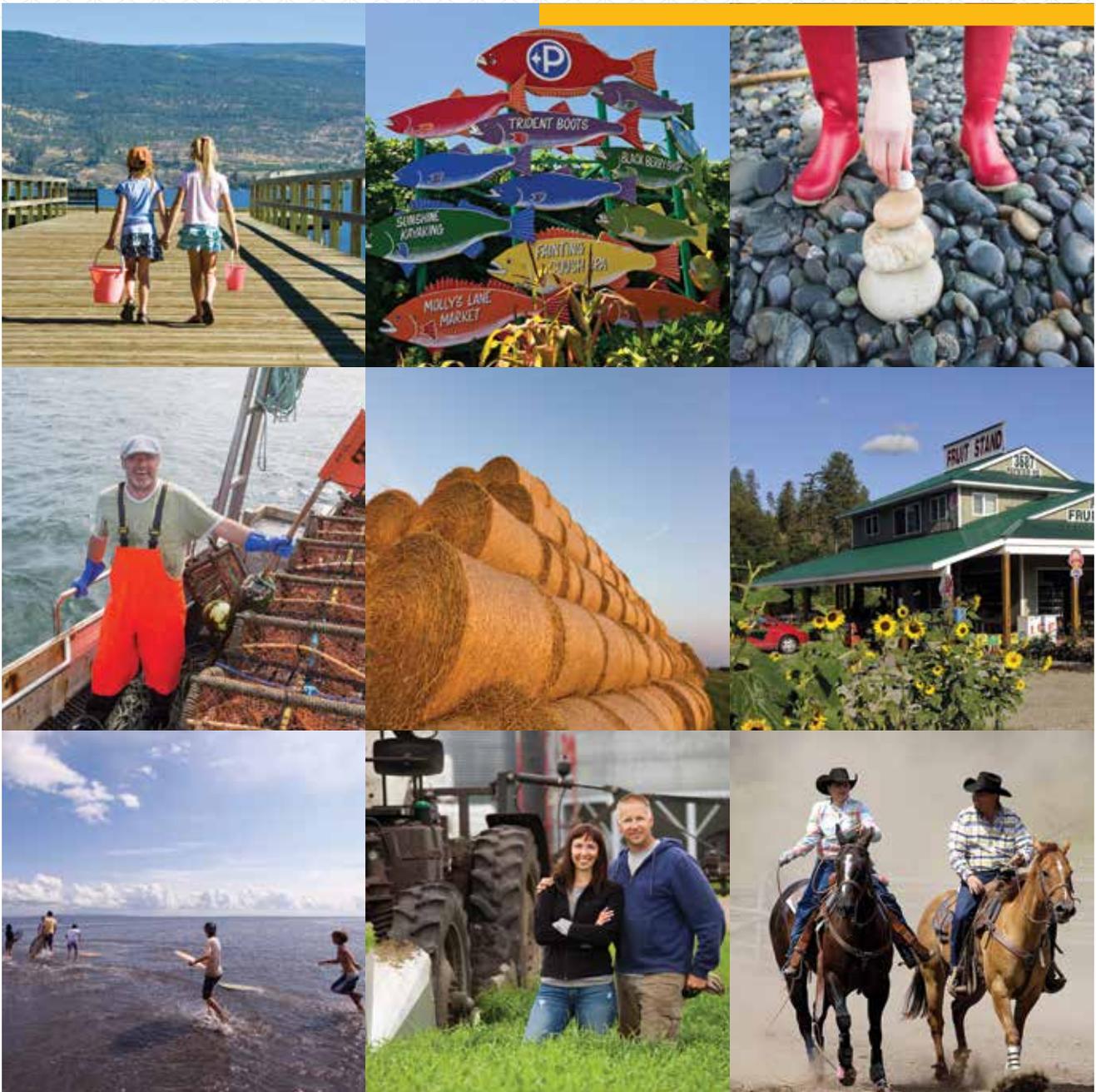
The Council is now looking beyond the Rural Dividend, considering the best strategies for government to adopt to support rural communities. Members will continue to identify ways to make provincial policies and tools more relevant to rural communities.

## SUPPORTING RURAL EDUCATION

In June 2016, Premier Christy Clark announced the Rural Education Enhancement Fund which provides ongoing funding to help communities keep schools open when their closure would eliminate specific grades within the community.

The Premier also tasked Linda Larson, parliamentary secretary for rural education, and Donna Barnett, parliamentary secretary for rural development, to conduct a full study of rural education funding in the province to seek a long-term solution. The Rural Advisory Council will help by providing input on the impacts of school closures on rural communities.





“I am proud of what the Rural Advisory Council has accomplished by providing the principles that are the basis of the Rural Dividend. These are the people that understand what their communities need the most.” — DONNA BARNETT, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development and Chair, Rural Advisory Council

# Members of the Rural Advisory Council

## Debra Arnott CACHE CREEK

is general manager of Community Futures Sun Country and has co-owned and operated a logging company with her husband for the last nine years. She has experience working with local government and has a strong passion for enhancing economic development in rural communities.

## Susan Clovechok, FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS,

is executive director of the Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce. With more than 25 years in business, she has a wide range of experience in sales, customer service, and quality and operational management. She wants rural communities to be economically diverse and sustainable, while providing residents the lifestyle that attracted them to their chosen community in the first place.

## Geri Collins, KAMLOOPS,

is director of operations for the Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations. She and her husband owned and operated a successful construction business, and also raise cattle as a family venture. Geri has been a member of the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition since its inception, and is a member of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops) Band.

## Tom Hoffman, WILLIAMS LAKE,

is a registered professional forester and a board member of Community Futures Cariboo-Chilcotin and the Northern Development Initiative Trust. He believes that rural B.C. has a long and proud tradition in resource development, including innovation to expand economic benefits.



**Bill Holmberg,**  
**HOUSTON,**

has more than 20 years of experience in business, and is currently a manager of a heavy-duty equipment business in Houston. Having spent two terms as the mayor of Houston, he is able to bring a local government perspective (from a rural standpoint) to the committee.

**Chief Roy Jones Jr.,**  
**SKIDEGATE,**

is a commercial fisherman and has interacted with almost all of B.C.'s coastal communities. He has been on the Native Brotherhood of B.C. general executive for 23 years. A hereditary chief of the Council of the Haida Nation, he spends his time encouraging young people to continue their education and pursue business opportunities.

**Sue Kenny,**  
**DAWSON CREEK,**

is the general manager of Community Futures Peace Liard and executive director of the Northeast Regional Community Foundation. Living in northern B.C. makes her well aware of the challenges that are faced by rural communities. As a former city councillor in Dawson Creek, she has had an opportunity to build relationships with businesses and stakeholders alike.



GERI COLLINS believes Aboriginal and rural communities are best equipped to plan, develop and implement services such as business

development and training. "Government's role should be one of partnership, and contributing resources and expertise."

Geri says the BC Rural Dividend should begin to level the playing field, allowing communities with fewer opportunities to move forward economically and socially. "I believe the Rural Dividend will make a difference in the long run."

She's especially pleased that rural secretariat staff made sure First Nations communities knew about the program, and offered clear advice through the application process.

Geri hopes there will be more partnership projects in the next application intake, especially involving First Nations and non-First Nations communities. "Through partnerships, we can create understanding and shared prosperity. It's an eye opener for many people."

Being named to the Council was both welcome and unexpected, Geri says. "We have diverse background and knowledge, and have come together with a sense of common need and purpose. That's awesome."

She acknowledges that budgets are tight but says that in the long run investments like the Rural Dividend benefit government, the people of the province and, in particular, rural communities.

**Photo at left, left to right:** Sue Kenny, Geri Collins, Steve Thomson, Donna Barnett, Rick Thompson, Jonathan Lok, Debra Arnott, Bill Holmberg, Premier Christy Clark, Susan Clovechok, Gerry Theissen, Grace McGregor, Chris Pieper, Sylvia Pranger, Tom Hoffman, Chief Roy Jones Jr.



JONATHAN LOK has spent most of his life in remote communities. He wants the Rural Dividend to be “a strategic catalyst to foster ideas that are sustainable so rural communities can put themselves in a better spot for the long term.”

He’s keen to enshrine the value of rural communities, and sustain the strong sense of community they deliver. He says his company could never have started in a big city. “Our business is crew and clients and community. It’s about relationships, not contracts. I can’t do this from downtown Vancouver. I need to be ankle deep in the mud.”

It may cost more to attract and train people in Port McNeill, but Jonathan views this as an investment in the community. “If we attract the right people, they will come for the right reasons and stay for the right reasons. Give them opportunities and they will appreciate it.”

## Members of the Rural Advisory Council

### Jonathan Lok, PORT MCNEILL,

is a registered forest technician and a managing partner in a consulting firm. He has more than 20 years of experience in the forest sector. He brings his experience in facilitation, project management, communications and leadership to the Rural Advisory Council.

### Grace McGregor, CHRISTINA LAKE,

was previously the owner of a small business and is now chair of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, vice-chair of the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition and engaged in many other community organizations. Her keen interest in rural B.C. began seven years ago when she attended the Reversing the Tide Conference in Prince George. Following subsequent meetings, Grace and others put together a paper entitled *What rural B.C. needs to survive*.

### Chris Pieper, ARMSTRONG

is currently mayor and has been in local government for more than 20 years. Previously, he worked in the forest sector and as a consultant. He believes strongly in the value of rural communities and feels that support and opportunities must be enhanced to allow for maximum growth.

**Sylvia Pranger,**  
**AGASSIZ,**

has local government experience as mayor and as a councillor. She is an active volunteer in her community, and appreciates the contributions that rural communities make to B.C. She wants to be a voice at the table to make sure that rural issues are heard.

**Gerry Thiessen**  
**VANDERHOOF,**

is currently mayor of the district municipality, vice-chair of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and vice-chair of the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition. He also owned a cattle operation. His vision for rural B.C. is to make sure the residents are healthy and educated and stay in their community to make it economically sustainable.

**Eric (Rick) Thompson,**  
**MCBRIDE,**

is a retired district administrator for School District 57 and a former school principal. He is currently the successful owner/operator of three small businesses in McBride. He has vast experience working in education and regional government. Having seen success with small businesses in a rural setting, he is sure that the Council will be able to increase those opportunities in other communities.



GERRY THIESSEN was born and raised in Vanderhoof, and most of his children and grandchildren live in the area.

He says that's because they were given the opportunity to be educated in the north.

"If rural communities want to attract and keep youth, education needs to be a priority," he says. "It may be cheaper to train a tradesperson in Surrey, but the resource jobs are not in Surrey, they are in rural B.C. Young people who go to the city for education most often settle down, they may not come back."

That's just one of many common concerns the Council is tackling, Gerry says. "It's good for us to have a full discussion, and to understand that issues are not just circled around our communities; they are rural issues. The biggest issue we have in rural B.C. is the inability to make decisions on a local basis."

B.C. is unique geographically, he says. It's a big province with most of the population in the southwest corner – and that's where so many decisions are made. "Rural communities are closest to where a lot of the economic activity is happening. We're best suited to find our own solutions, which in turn will be best for the province."

He expects that as the Council presents ideas, government will be more willing to embrace local decision-making. "We want our communities to be viable thriving places where people want to live."

# BC Rural Dividend: Supporting greater success for rural communities

<p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>The Province will establish the Rural Dividend in order to strengthen community resilience and support thriving rural communities.</p>		<p><b>ACCOMPLISHMENT:</b></p> <p>Government launched the BC Rural Dividend in April 2016, providing \$75 million over three years to help rural communities.</p>
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At UBCM in 2015, Premier Christy Clark announced the Province was delivering on its commitment to create a Rural Dividend, with a three-year \$75-million program to support the wellness, sustainability and livability of small rural communities across B.C.

The first intake to the Rural Dividend opened in April 2015, with resounding success. The program received more than 700 inquiries from First Nations,

local governments and non-profits. The two-month intake period closed with 180 applications submitted. After a thorough review process, funding was awarded to 120 projects, for a total of \$8.62 million.

The capacity of rural applicants to develop exciting new projects to diversify and strengthen their economies is demonstrated in the calibre of the applications received, some of which are showcased in this report.



PROJECT PROFILE:

# Bioenergy Plant Strengthens Kwadacha Nation Economy

Kwadacha Nation’s remote community of Fort Ware is about 570 kilometres northeast of Prince George. Kwadacha Nation will gain economic, environmental and social benefits by installing a new bioenergy system with \$500,000 from the Rural Dividend.

The new system uses local wood biomass instead of diesel to produce electricity; residual heat from the system, via a district energy system, will displace the use of propane at Aatse Davie School as well as heat the community’s new commercial greenhouses. “We will go green while supporting existing businesses and increasing our economic diversity,” says Kwadacha Nation Chief Donald Van Somer.

As well as earning revenue through a 20-year Electricity Purchasing Agreement with BC Hydro, Kwadacha Nation will create much-needed jobs for youth and skilled workers through enhanced economic activities and support for local wood harvesting and sawmill operations.

“Our community wants to return to self-sufficiency and build a stronger sense of community ownership and responsibility,” says Chief Van Somer. “In today’s world, taking responsibility for our electricity and heat needs is a key step toward this goal.”



The \$4-million combined heat and power system, a key component of the Kwadacha Nation’s community planning, will produce electricity from wood chips by means of a wood gasifier. Partners contributing to the project include the Fraser Basin Council, Northern Development Initiative Trust, All Nations Trust, and the Canadian and B.C. governments.

In its letter of support, BC Hydro says the project has the potential to change the renewable energy landscape for off-grid applications across B.C. and Canada. “The project’s biomass gasification technology for electricity production would be a first of its kind and scale in North America in any commercial application, and its use in an off-grid community would also be unique anywhere in the world.”

<p><b>PROJECT:</b> Kwadacha Bioenergy System</p>	<p><b>APPLICANT:</b> Kwadacha Nation</p>	<p><b>LOCATION:</b> Fort Ware</p>	<p><b>PARTNERS:</b> Fraser Basin Trust, All Nations Trust, Community Energy Leadership Program, First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Small Communities Fund, New Building Canada Fund, Natural Resources Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada</p>	<p><b>RURAL DIVIDEND:</b> Program contribution \$500,000</p>
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## PROJECT PROFILE:

# Cranbrook advances job security and food security



In Cranbrook, the not-for-profit Community Connections Society of Southeast BC (CCS) is acting as a catalyst to build a growing value-added agricultural sector with \$84,992 from the Rural Dividend.

“The project will strengthen our region’s economy by offering more security for local farmers and producers as well as creating new jobs and business opportunities,” says Sophie Larsen, CCS kitchen coordinator. “This is especially important because of recent mine and sawmill closures.”

The project includes four elements:

- An approved, modern kitchen space that local entrepreneurs and caterers can rent to test products or arrange cooking classes and workshops.
- Rentable cold storage so small-scale farmers and producers can increase their capacity by harvesting more produce.
- Upgrades to a food trailer so it can be used as a rentable food truck, allowing entrepreneurs to test drive business ideas before investing in their own equipment.
- Workshops led by industrial leaders on topics such as entrepreneurial skills, food manufacturing and food truck start-up training.

CCS is a multi-service agency managing 16 diverse projects serving Cranbrook and the East Kootenay Region, including a community kitchen.

Larsen says the existing kitchen is modern and approved by the Interior Health Authority, and only needs minor upgrades to be a useful and desirable rental facility. There is space to add the cold storage unit, and the society owns a food trailer that could be upgraded for use as a food truck.

Larsen says the CCS will work with the College of the Rockies to find ways to help culinary program graduates pursue food-related careers or start their own businesses without having to leave the region.

The incubator project has solid backing from many local groups including the Cranbrook Farmers Market and the College of the Rockies. The local Grow It, Eat It task force, which is committed to establishing a local food hub and sustainable food action plan for Cranbrook, says the project will increase access to local food through support to entrepreneurs, start-ups and small-scale farmers.

## PROJECT:

Small Scale Food Production and Food Service Incubator

## APPLICANT:

Community Connections Society of Southeast BC

## LOCATION:

Cranbrook

## RURAL DIVIDEND:

Program contribution  
\$84,992

# BC Rural Dividend: Project Categories

The Rural Dividend's four broadly defined project categories offer communities the flexibility they need to develop local solutions to meet their needs.

## COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Projects that build the resources, capabilities and capacities of communities to deal with their key economic challenges and support new economic opportunities, such as building new trails, installing last-mile fibre optics and establishing innovation hubs, restoring cultural buildings for multi-purpose community use.



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Provide training and education for locally based jobs, such as forestry training, youth entrepreneurship, leadership/management training to build local capacity and environmental monitoring training.



## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Projects that help rural communities plan to build a foundation for economic growth such as marketing, investment or economic development strategies and action plans to attract new residents, build new sectors of the local economy, improve sustainability.



## BUSINESS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Assess business opportunities and build businesses based on an identified opportunity such as a community-owned bioenergy system or preliminary work to support a commercial greenhouse.



# BC Rural Dividend: Advancing projects with great potential



The Rural Dividend encourages a broad range of project applications. In particular, projects with a focus on the three areas below offer great potential for positive outcomes and benefits to rural B.C.

## Youth

Youth are the lifeblood of rural communities, and too often they are forced to leave rural communities for career or training opportunities. The Rural Advisory Council has highlighted the need to find ways to encourage youth to stay in rural communities or return if they have left. This can be achieved through projects that, among other things, create jobs for youth, train them for local opportunities, or support them so they can start their own businesses.

## Innovation

An explicit focus on innovation will push growth in new sectors, create jobs and enhance productivity. B.C.'s future economy relies on innovation – including new technology, new ways to deliver services and new products. Projects that help rural communities diversify and strengthen their economies position them to attract new businesses that can improve products, processes and technology and add value to existing resource industries.

## Partnerships

It takes time and effort to develop effective partnership projects, but they offer immense potential to yield far-reaching benefits across a region and attract new investment. For these reasons, the Rural Advisory Council recommended a funding category for partnerships, with a higher maximum value. This provides an incentive to encourage communities, especially First Nations and non-First Nations, to look for ways to work together.



PROJECT PROFILE:

# Community Theatre Leads to Business Opportunities in Merritt

With support from the Rural Dividend, the Nicola Valley Community Theatre Society’s planned multiplex community theatre will open up new business opportunities in Merritt’s historic downtown. The \$100,000 in funding will help create local jobs in theatre management, technology, maintenance and sales.

“The theatre will offer a lively central place where people can engage in healthy family-friendly activities and businesses can thrive,” says Society Chair Kurt Christopherson. “It will generate pedestrian and automobile traffic on the streets of Merritt’s all-but-deserted downtown, and significantly contribute to our transition from a forest-driven economy to a sustainable education, heritage, cultural, and tourist industry.”

The Nicola Valley is highly dependent on the forest industry, and families and businesses across the region were impacted when two sawmills recently closed. This led a team of business professionals to form the Nicola Valley Community Theatre Society.

Its goal was to create, support, and provide new businesses and jobs – slowing the flow of young families leaving the community and providing a vibrant social/cultural space.

The society surveyed residents, and found strong support for a community-owned movie theatre so it bought property downtown, and began planning a new structure with four theatres, stadium seating and the latest digital equipment. Many local businesses have pledged financial and in-kind donations, and financial analysis shows the not-for-profit enterprise could have a sustainable revenue within three years of opening.

“The community theatre will be a valuable asset throughout the Nicola Valley,” says Christopherson. “It will open up the village centre to new and innovative activities that attract residents and tourists, and encourage other commercial uses. It will support youth programs and activities beneficial to seniors, attract film festivals, conferences and touring theatre groups, and provide space for cultural and educational programs.”



**PROJECT:**  
Nicola Valley  
Community Theatre

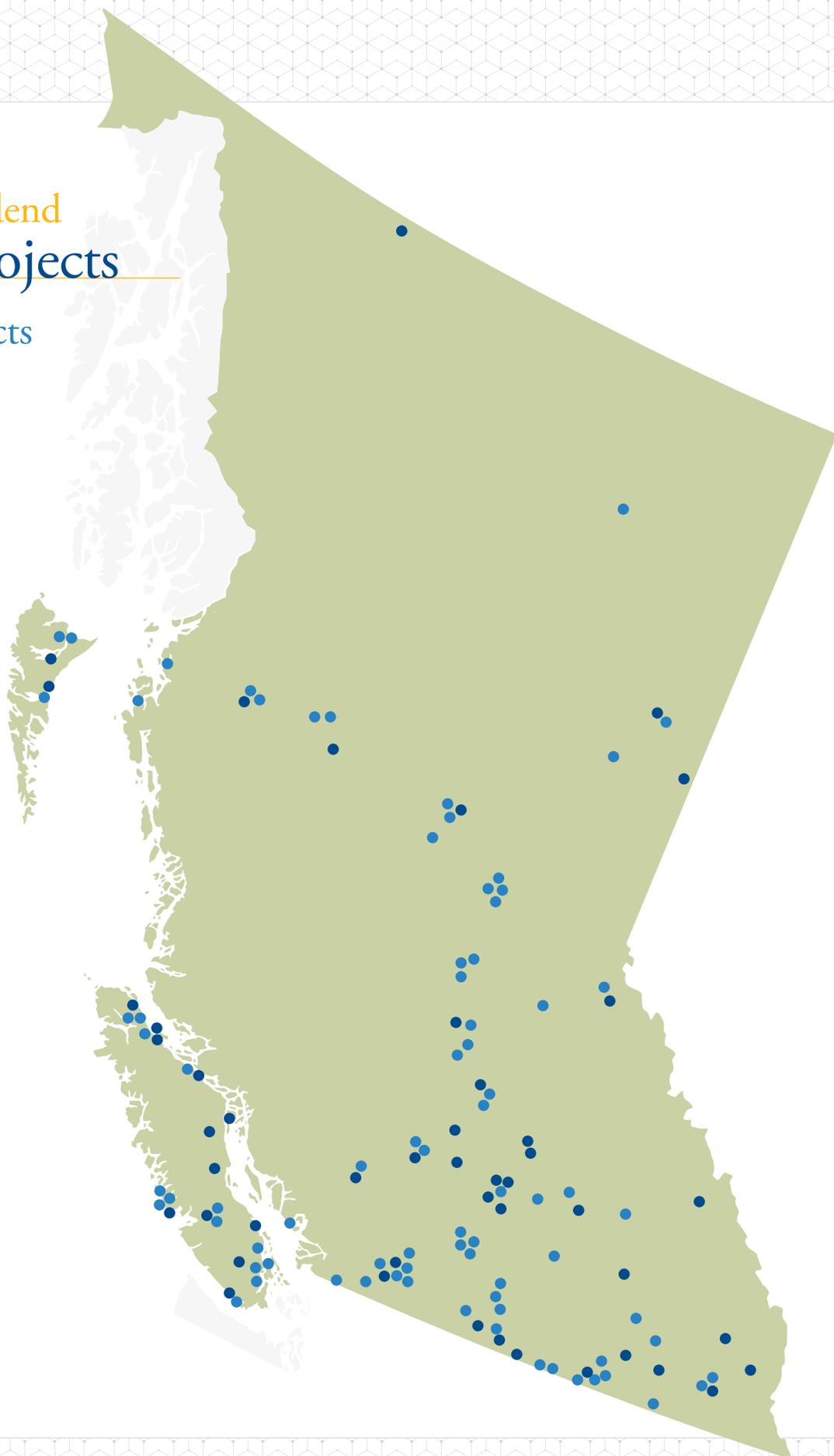
**APPLICANT:**  
Nicola Valley  
Community Theatre Society

**LOCATION:**  
Nicola Valley

**RURAL DIVIDEND:**  
Program contribution  
\$100,000

## BC Rural Dividend Funded Projects

The 120 projects funded in the first intake are located in communities across B.C.



## • Single Applicant/Partnerships

ʔaq'am Community Enterprises	City of Cranbrook	Lhtako Dene Nation	District of Port Hardy
100 Mile House/Area G, H, L	Doig River First Nation	Lower Nicola Indian Band	City of Prince Rupert
Adams Lake	District of Fort St. James	Lower Similkameen Indian Band	City of Quesnel
Ahousaht First Nation	Town of Gibsons	Village of Lumby	City of Revelstoke
Village of Alert Bay	City of Grand Forks	District of Mackenzie	Village of Sayward
Ashcroft Indian Band	Gitxaala Nation	Malahat Nation	Shackan Indian Band
Barkerville Historic Town and Park	Gitxsan Development Corporation	Village of Masset	Shxw'owhamel First Nation
Boston Bar	Gitanyow Economic Development Corporation / Gitanyow Band Council	Village of McBride	Skidegate Band Council
Bridge River Indian Band	Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation	Village of Midway	District of Summerland
Canim Lake	Village of Harrison Hot Springs	N'Quatqua First Nation	City of Terrace
Capital Regional District (Salt Spring Island)	Hope & Area Transition Society	Nadleh Whut'en First Nation	Tl'azt'en Nation Education
Cariboo Regional District	Hupacasath First Nation	Village of New Denver	Tl'etingox Government
Castlegar & District Community Services Society	District of Invermere	Nicola Valley Community Theatre Society (Merritt)	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations
District of Chetwynd	Village of Kaslo	Northern Shuswap Tribal Council Society (Williams Lake)	City of Trail
Coast Salish Development Corporation	Kitsumkalum Fish & Wildlife Department	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation
Columbia Shuswap Regional District	Kootenay Employment Services Society	Old Masset	Tsay Keh Dene Band
Community Connections Society of Southeast BC (Cranbrook)	Kwadacha Nation	Osoyoos Indian Band	City of Williams Lake
	Leq'a:mel First Nation	Pacheedaht	Yale First Nation
		District of Peachland	Yekooche First Nation
		City of Port Alberni	

## • Project Development

Adams Lake Indian Band	District of Elkford	Nak'azdli Whuten	District of Sicamous
Village of Ashcroft	Town of Golden	Village of Nakusp	Simpcw First Nation
District of Barriere	District of Houston	'Namgis First Nation	Skeetchestn Natural Resources L.L.P.
Village of Cache Creek	Village of Keremeos	City of Nelson	Strathcona Regional District
Village of Canal Flats	Regional District of Kootenay	Nicomen Natural Resources Management Department	Strathcona Regional District (Quadra Island)
Capital Regional District (Port Renfrew)	Town of Lake Cowichan	Town of Oliver	Tobacco Plains Indian Band
Cariboo Regional District	Haida Gwaii Museum (Skidegate)	The Port Alberni Shelter Society	Thompson-Nicola Regional District
Village of Chase	Kalum Quarry Ltd	Village of Port Clements	Treaty 8 Tribal Association
Village of Clinton	Lytton Indian Band	Qualicum First Nation	District of Ucluelet
Village of Cumberland	Village of McBride	Quatsino First Nation	Xa-xtsa - Douglas First Nation
City of Dawson Creek	Village of Midway	City of Rosland	Yunesit'in Government
Dease River Development Corporation	Regional District Of Mount Waddington	Village of Sayward	

PROJECT PROFILE:

# Williams Lake Supports Entrepreneurs



The Rural Dividend is providing \$64,062 to Williams Lake’s Seeding Start-ups project, which will support entrepreneurs in two important demographics in rural communities – youth and seniors.

It’s a sound match – young entrepreneurs are energetic, enthusiastic, resourceful and resilient, while senior entrepreneurs are knowledgeable, financially articulate and have strong networks. Both will benefit from guidance, training, monitoring and a sounding board.

The partnership project will invite youth and seniors to submit business plans, then work with them to develop the enterprise through ongoing mentorship, training, networking and regular workshops. It is expected to lead to as many as 30 new businesses in the city. Seeding Start-Up offers a unique growth opportunity, creates jobs and new businesses, and will attract new investment.

“We will provide workshops, training and networking in a single cohort so there is a new understanding of the knowledge and expertise of both the senior entrepreneurs and the youth entrepreneurs,” says Williams Lake Economic Development Officer Susan Fournier. “This will create a vibrant and strong network where both seniors and youth share knowledge with each other.”

Fournier says the project is expected to rejuvenate the city’s downtown, which has experienced minimal growth recently. “Seeding Start-ups will help us propagate a new image and brand for our community as a place of entrepreneurial spirit and community vibrancy,” she says. “It will give us a new tool to support home-grown entrepreneurs and attract new residents, new businesses and new innovation.”

The project will be managed by a steering committee, and delivered by a project coordinator under the direction of the local Community Futures and Central Cariboo Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC). Thompson Rivers University will provide technical training and learning opportunities for participants. This is the first time the program, which began in Australia, has been piloted in Canada.

<p><b>PROJECT:</b> Seeding Start-ups Pilot Project</p>	<p><b>APPLICANT:</b> City of Williams Lake</p>	<p><b>LOCATION:</b> Williams Lake</p>	<p><b>PARTNERS:</b> Central Cariboo Economic Development Corporation, Williams Lake Central Business Improvement Association, Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin, Thompson Rivers University</p>	<p><b>RURAL DIVIDEND:</b> Program contribution \$64,062</p>
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PROJECT PROFILE:

# Nelson explores economic potential of innovation hub

With \$9,000 for project development from the Rural Dividend, Nelson will determine the feasibility of using an innovation hub to advance its economic goals, strengthen its position as regional leader of digital technology, and attract, promote and retain technology companies and workers.

“We’re responding to the demand in our community for a digital technology-focused business development centre,” says Nelson City Manager Kevin Cormack. “We’ll assess the feasibility and sustainability of the StreamLabs concept so we can meet complex, diverse and complementary stakeholder interests.”

StreamLabs offers a fully outfitted space where people interested in film, technology, science, and digital art can work solo on enterprises or collaborate using shared tools and equipment. It also supports a business incubation/innovation centre where new and existing information and communications technology (ICT) and digital technology businesses can develop products and ideas with access to coaching, equipment, space and expertise.

The proposed centre would be designed to attract talented workers and high-profile ICT sector companies to the region, increasing the vitality of existing technology sector businesses and attracting new enterprises.

In a letter of support, the Kootenay Association for Science & Technology says StreamLabs “could provide Nelson with enhanced economic diversity and a proud and clear role in the global knowledge economy.”



<p><b>PROJECT:</b> Nelson StreamLabs</p>	<p><b>APPLICANT:</b> City of Nelson</p>	<p><b>LOCATION:</b> Nelson</p>	<p><b>PARTNERS:</b> Kootenay Association for Science &amp; Technology, Nelson Tech Club, Nelson and Area Economic Development Partnership</p>	<p><b>RURAL DIVIDEND:</b> Program contribution \$9,000</p>
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# Supporting Rural Communities: Focus on the Future

## BC Rural Dividend — Continuous Improvement

The BC Rural Dividend was developed with a commitment to continuous improvement. Government listened to feedback from rural communities on their experience with the program through the first application intake. The Rural Advisory Council, as key advocates for rural British Columbia, also provided feedback.

The program has implemented a number of key improvements for the second application intake that will serve applicants better, including a quicker and easier online application process, greater accessibility for more applicants, and less restrictive application requirements.

The B.C. government will continue to improve the Rural Dividend, expanding the program's focus on helping rural communities identify available resources to support strong project applications, as well as celebrating success stories where projects have helped create thriving rural communities.

### BC RURAL DIVIDEND SECOND INTAKE

**The second BC Rural Dividend intake for 2016/17 opens October 3, 2016, and closes October 31, 2016. Decisions are expected within four months after the intake deadline.**

**The online application form is posted at [www.gov.bc.ca/ruraldividend](http://www.gov.bc.ca/ruraldividend).**

## Rural Advisory Council — Future Priorities

Members of the Rural Advisory Council will continue to serve as advocates for rural B.C., working with government to shape policies and actions that support rural communities.

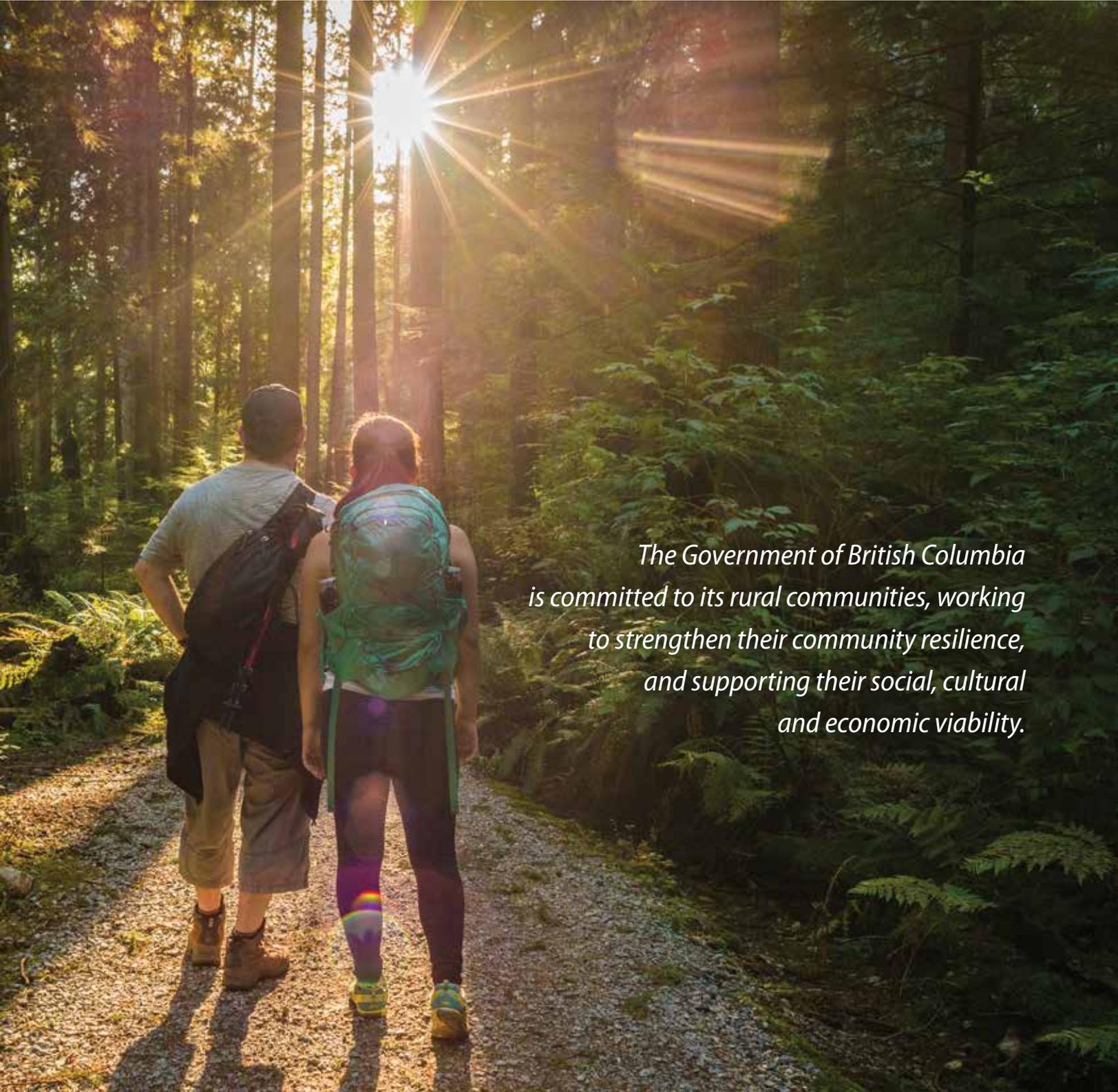
The Council's future priorities include offering advice on government policies that will help rural communities diversify their economies, moving from a dependence on natural resources and harnessing innovation to encourage growth in new economic sectors.

They will look for ways to reduce barriers facing rural communities and improve the well-being of rural constituents, considering issues such as rural community safety and wildfire management. They will seek outways to encourage new and stronger partnerships across rural B.C. that support shared prosperity.

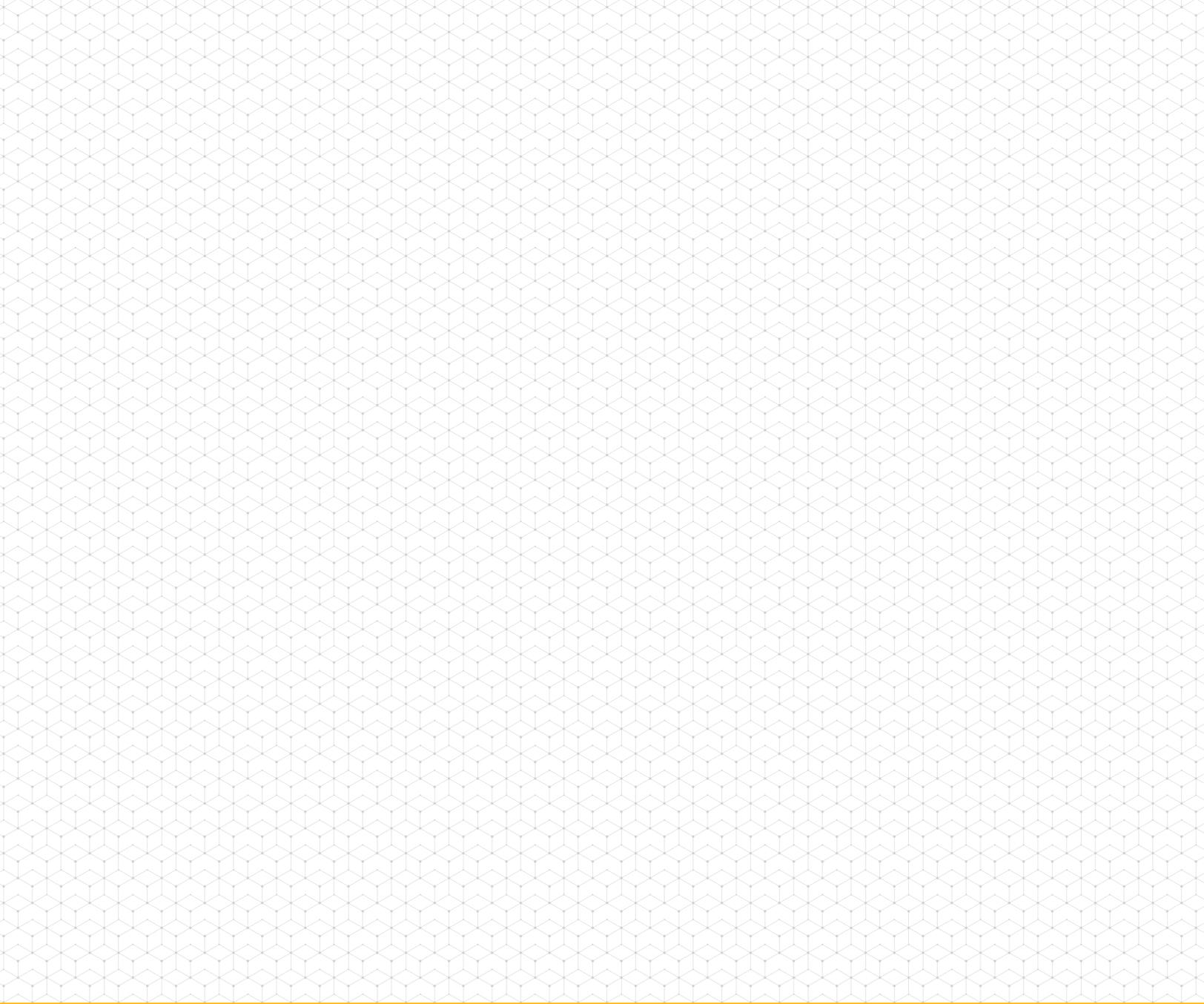
## Rural Mandate — Continued Accountability

This report outlines how the Province has delivered on its commitments to rural communities. The work will continue as government builds on this foundation and continues to find new ways to support rural development and growth.

*Accelerating Success for British Columbia's Rural Communities* is the first progress report. Government will continue to report on its performance in supporting rural communities. This includes measuring the performance of the BC Rural Dividend, providing public accountability for the program's record in meeting the needs of rural B.C.



*The Government of British Columbia  
is committed to its rural communities, working  
to strengthen their community resilience,  
and supporting their social, cultural  
and economic viability.*



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Ministry of  
Forests, Lands and  
Natural Resource Operations