



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2010

December 16 Board Meeting Highlights

Art Kaehn and Terry Burgess returned as Chair and Vice Chair; Economic Opportunities for Robson Valley to be Explored; Regional District Renews 5-year Funding for Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery; Volunteer Firefighters Recognized; Grant Funding Sought for Robson Valley Recreation and Community Centres; Lakes Cemetery Proposal Defeated in Alternative Approval Process

Art Kaehn and Terry Burgess returned as Chair and Vice Chair

Directors with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George have elected by acclamation to return Art Kaehn (Director, Area E Hixon-Woodpecker) as Chair and Terry Burgess (Director, Area G Crooked River-Parsnip) as Vice Chair for the Regional District for 2011.

Economic Opportunities for Robson Valley to be Explored

With funding from CEDI (Community Economic Diversification Initiative) and OBAC (Omineca Beetle Action Coalition), the Regional District commissioned a study to identify where the opportunities exist and how the Canoe and Robson Valley communities can position themselves to best take advantage of the economic opportunities that exist there.

The study determined the following as top opportunities:

- Recruitment of independent business people
- Tourism and Culture Sector
- Forestry and Wood Products
- Active Retirees
- Agriculture

The Regional District has been meeting with representatives from McBride, Valemount and area to develop next steps in implementing recommendations from the report.

Regional District Renews 5-year Funding for Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery

The Regional District will continue to provide operational funding for Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery. Both facilities are a part of the Regional Cultural Plan, which was approved by the Board in September 2010. Five year funding contracts are a core component of the Board's renewed five-year commitment towards culture and heritage within our region as they provide operating certainty for the funded agencies and enhance their cultural offerings to visitors. Over the five years, Exploration Place will receive \$3.63 million, and Two Rivers Gallery will receive \$2.25 million. As part of the funding agreements, both sites have committed to provide regional programming, outreach and support to other regional cultural facilities. Contracts with the other six sites will be brought forward early in 2011.

Grant Funding Sought for Robson Valley Recreation and Community Centres

The Regional District will be applying for \$400,000 from the Towns for Tomorrow Program for energy improvements at the Robson Valley Recreation and Community Centres. The project would see a retrofit of the arena to install a heat recovery system. This would allow for the capturing of low grade heat to be redirected into the dressing rooms, curling rink, hockey arena, and community centre with the potential to reduce energy costs by 70%. All high pressure sodium lights in the ice rink and curling rink areas would be replaced by LED lights with a potential energy savings of up to 95%. Total cost of the project is \$650,000. If the Towns for Tomorrow funding is approved, the remaining \$250,000 would come from the Community Works Fund.

Volunteer Firefighters Recognized

Fire service recognition awards are awarded to fire fighters who have served a minimum of 20 years in the fire service and done so in an exemplary manner. The Provincial Government recognizes fire fighters with the 25-year Long Service Award Medal of BC and the 35-year Long Service Award Bar of BC. The Federal Government recognizes fire fighters with the 20-year Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal and the 30-year Fire Services Exemplary Service Bar. The following Regional District volunteer fire fighters have been acknowledged in 2010 for their years of service and dedication to public safety:

20-Year Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal

- Deputy Fire Chief Amos Culham Beverly Fire/Rescue
- Fire Fighter Dave Main Ferndale/Tabor Volunteer Fire Department
- Fire Fighter Dave Crampton Ferndale/Tabor Volunteer Fire Department
- Fire Fighter Stan Zenzen Ferndale/Tabor Volunteer Fire Department

25-Year Long Service Award Medal

- Fire Chief Lyle Wood Pineview Volunteer Fire Department/Area D Rescue
- Lieutenant Alvin Scarff Beverly Fire/Rescue

30-Year Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal Bar

- Fire Chief Dave Hruby McBride District Volunteer Fire Department

Lakes Cemetery Proposal Defeated in Alternative Approval Process

In October, the Regional District Board voted to enter into an alternative approval process for a proposed new cemetery service in the Lakes area. There were a total of 1855 electors within the affected area, and by the deadline of 5:00 pm Tuesday, December 7, 207 response forms were received. This represented more than 10% of electors, and thus the service could not go forward without a referendum. Neither the Lakes Cemetery Society nor the Regional District will be pursuing a referendum at this time.

Community Grants

The Board approved the following requests for Community and Recreation Grants:

- \$5,000 to the Lakes Community Horse Club for a storage container and arena maintenance
- \$765 to the Reid Lake Community Association for liability insurance
- \$2,000 to the Reid Lake Farmers for the District C Farmers Institute AGM
- \$15,000 to the Beverly Community Association for Ball Diamond and ice rink fencing
- \$2,170 to the Bednesti/Berman Community Association for boat launch repairs
- \$500 to the Miworth Community Association for well testing
- \$1,120 to the Miworth Community Association for well purge and pump re-install
- \$30,000 to the Pineview Volunteer Firefighters Association for SCBA bottles
- \$20,000 to the Fraser Basin Council for Naver Creek mitigation work
- \$6,000 to the Hixon Community Association for community hall improvements and New Year's celebration
- \$500 to the Hixon Elementary School PAC Christmas luncheon for school and community
- \$5,000 to the Hixon VFD Society for park and fire hall improvements, generator accessories
- \$6,000 to the Hixon Women's Institute for Woodpecker Historical Church maintenance and insurance
- \$2,000 to the Penny Community Historical Association for hall heat and maintenance and website design
- \$300 to the Bear Lake Volunteer Fire Department for a volunteer appreciation dinner
- \$3000 to the McBride Roundhouse Theatre Society for equipment and technical costs
- \$800 to the McBride Secondary School for travel costs
- \$1,000 to the Robson Valley Support Society for a computer system
- \$2,000 to the Yellowhead Ski Club for train maintenance and grooming

Prince George Community Foundation Grants

The Board approved the following Community Grants in Aid for community endowment funds:

- \$47,000 to the Salmon River-Lakes Community Endowment Fund and Term Endowment Fund.
- \$62,500 to the Woodpecker-Hixon Community Endowment Fund and Term Endowment Fund.
- \$59,000 to the Willow River-Upper Fraser Community Endowment Fund and Term Endowment Fund.
- \$25,000 to establish a Crooked River-Parsnip Community Endowment Fund conditional upon matching grants from Northern Development Initiative Trust being provided.

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