

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION WORKSHOP



This year's Community Organization Workshop was held on Saturday, April 25 with 34 community group representatives attending. Electoral Area Directors Warren Wilson, Lara Beckett, Kevin Dunphy, Terry Burgess and Chair Art Kaehn were also there to offer their support and appreciation for the many volunteers who continue to give their time and effort.

The day started with a presentation entitled 'Volunteers – The Key to Your Success' from Myrna Cable, Canada Winter Games Volunteer Services Chair, and was followed with a discussion regarding rural community care and a video presentation developed by the Regional District's Corporate Officer, Karla Jensen, about how to run an effective meeting. Participants spent the afternoon in a forum setting giving volunteers an opportunity to relate the past year's successes and challenges and look for solutions amongst their peers. ▲

## Prince George Community Foundation's Grant Award Reception

At the Prince George Community Foundation's Grant Award Reception on April 7 \$26,863 in grants were given out from the Fraser-Fort George Endowment Funds to the following groups:

- ▲ Spinal Cord Injury BC
- ▲ Nadsilnich Lake Community Association
- ▲ Beverly 4-H Club
- ▲ Miworth Community Association
- ▲ Beverly Community Association
- ▲ Hixon Elementary School PAC
- ▲ Hixon Volunteer Fire Department Society
- ▲ Eaglet Lake Farmers Institute

## ABOUT US

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George is home to over 93,000 residents and covers 52,000 square kilometers in central British Columbia – an area almost as large as the province of Nova Scotia. It extends from the Pine Pass in the north to Hixon in the south, and from Bednesti Lake west of Prince

George to the Alberta border. As a local government, the Regional District is accountable to the residents of the region. Services provided include fire protection, 9-1-1 emergency services, solid waste management, community sewer and water systems, land use planning, cultural and recreational services and parks. Total operating expenditures in 2014 were \$32.2 million.

The governing board of the Regional District has fourteen directors: four appointed by the City of Prince George from its council, one appointed by each of the councils of the District of Mackenzie, Village of McBride and Village of Valemount, and seven directors elected from within each of the seven electoral areas covering the unincorporated portions of the Regional District. ▲

## 'Robson Valley Region' program named best in BC



A marketing initiative designed to promote economic opportunities in the Robson Valley Region has been recognized by the BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) as the best community project for an area of less than 20,000 population. The award recognizes a community or regional partnership that works together in on-going economic development work and activities. There were more than 20 entries in the category from all over BC.

The Robson Valley Region economic marketing program promotes opportunities to live, work, and invest in the Robson Valley region. The program is multi-faceted and features a combination of online, video and printed marketing materials to spread the word about

the many opportunities in the area, which includes McBride, Valemount and communities in between.

The development of the program stems from recommendations in the Canoe-Robson Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan, that highlights opportunities the region is best suited for, such as tourism, agriculture, forestry, independent business people and active retirees.

The program is funded through the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, Village of McBride and Village of Valemount.

Grant funding has been received from Northern Development Initiatives Trust and Omineca Beetle Action Coalition. More information about the program is available online at [www.discoverRVR.ca](http://www.discoverRVR.ca) and the Facebook page "Robson Valley Region" ▲



# THE REGIONAL REPORT

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**IN THIS EDITION, WE WILL RECAP SOME OF THE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON WITHIN THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER-FORT GEORGE. ▲**

## WELCOME TO THE REGIONAL REPORT,

a regular newsletter designed to keep residents aware of programs, initiatives and events underway in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. If you have comments, feedback or ideas for articles to be featured in future editions of Regional Report, please email us at [district@rdffg.bc.ca](mailto:district@rdffg.bc.ca), call 1-800-667-1959 or write to us at: Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, 155 George St., Prince George, B.C., V2L 1P8 ▲

## Ferndale/Tabor Volunteer Fire Rescue

has purchased a used 2002 GMC Superior fire engine to better serve the community. The engine has a pumping capacity of 1050 gallons per minute, an 850 gallon tank and seating for six firefighters. The department is always looking for new members. They meet and train Tuesday evening at 7 pm. They also have a cadet program for 16 to 19 year olds. The department is located at 16315 Giscome Rd. For more information contact Fire Chief Bryant Kemble at 1 250 565 5075.



## Emergency Social Services Training

Members of the Regional District's Emergency Social Services (ESS) Mobile Support Team travelled to Smithers, BC to attend the 2015 Northern Emergency Support Services Training (NESST) Weekend, May 1st – 3rd. ESS provides short-term assistance to British Columbians who are forced to leave their homes because of fire, floods, earthquakes or other emergencies. The NESST weekend was spent networking, learning and practicing with other ESS Teams from throughout northern BC. Training sessions included Psychological First Aid, Managing Volunteer Programs, and Introduction to Emergency Pet Services.



(L to R) Keath Renfrew, Trisha Merriman, Wendy Howe, Rose Perrin, Pat Culham, and Carina Hanson.

## FireSmart Advice for Homeowners

Over the last 10 years, on average over 2,500 wildfires were started in British Columbia each year consuming over 25,000 hectares of forested land annually. Thousands of families were recently evacuated from their communities and hundreds of homes destroyed. If you live in or near a forested region of our province, sooner or later you may have to contend with the spread of a wildfire. The best protection against loss, damage or injury due to wildfire is prevention.

### Get Ready

Properly preparing your home and community doesn't guarantee that you will not incur fire damage, but it does reduce the risks. Obtain insurance coverage for all property at risk from fire – government disaster financial assistance is limited and only covers uninsurable perils. Some of these preventative measures cost very little and reduce fire dangers by a great deal; others require planning and a long-term commitment to change.

### Site Preparation

Mature trees, shrubs, grass, even your woodpile, are all potential fuels and can easily ignite (increasing the chance of building ignition and loss.) Managing the space around your house and buildings is of prime importance.

### Do you have a cleared zone around your house and buildings?

The first 10 metres of space around your home is your "First Priority". It's the most critical area to consider for fire protection. A good fuel free space gives firefighters a chance to save your home from an advancing fire. A home without a good fuel free space around it can make firefighting difficult, if not impossible. Remove any shrubs, trees, deadfall or woodpiles from this area and keep your grass mowed and watered.

### How FireSmart is your "Second Priority" zone?

From 10 to 30 metres out from your home is the second priority zone. In this zone, you need to reduce fuels by thinning and pruning so that combustion cannot be supported.

Remove trees and debris that can spread fire upwards to become a fast spreading crown fire. Space trees so that the crowns of individual trees are 3 - 6 metres apart. Remove or reduce the number of evergreen trees in the area. Evergreens such as pine and spruce are much more combustible than deciduous trees. In fact, aspen, poplar and birch all have very low flammability rates.

Remove deadfall, thick shrubbery and mature trees that might provide the opportunity for a ground fire to climb up into the forest canopy. Once a fire crowns out, it's virtually unstoppable.

Because fires spread more easily up hill, it's important to extend the second priority zone precautions further on downhill slopes and on windward exposures.

### Can you extend your FireSmart maintenance plan to the "Third Priority" zone?

The third priority zone begins 30 metres from any structure and extends to a distance of 100 metres and beyond.

The idea here is not to remove all combustible fuels from the forest, but to thin the area so fires will be of low intensity and more easily extinguished. Thin or reduce shrubs and trees that make up the under story, retain fire resistant deciduous trees, space trees (3 - 6 metres between crowns) to reduce the potential for a crowning fire.

### Burn barrels

Burn barrels should be located well away from buildings and other combustible items. Burn barrels should have proper ventilation, screens and should never be left burning unattended. For safer disposal, bring your debris to a landfill site.

### Power lines and propane tanks

Vegetation should be cleared well back from power lines, propane tanks and other fuel supplies.

### Emergency facilities

FireSmart building sites have adequate emergency vehicle access, with an on-site emergency water supply (pool, pond or tank).

### Shovels and rakes

Every home should have shovels, rakes, axes, garden hoses, sprinklers and roof ladders to assist in suppressing wildfires.

The Home Owners FireSmart Manual is available at the Regional District office or online at: <http://bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/firesmart.htm> ▲



## Regional District marks Emergency Preparedness Week with tech tips



Recently the Regional District marked Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada with information about technology use in a disaster.

We rely on technology more and more to keep in touch with our family, friends, and colleagues with a click of a button. But what happens in the event of a major emergency? Suddenly these tools can become vital in helping you and your family get in touch and stay informed. So here are some tips on the use of technology in an emergency:

- ▲ If possible, **use non-voice channels like text messaging, email or social media.** These use less bandwidth than voice communications and may work even when phone service doesn't.
- ▲ If you must use a phone, **keep your conversation brief** and convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family. This will also conserve your phone's battery.
- ▲ Unable to complete a call? **Wait 10 seconds before redialing** to help reduce network congestion. Note, cordless phones rely on electricity and will not work during a power outage. If you have a landline, keep at least one corded phone in your home.
- ▲ **Keep extra batteries or a charger for your mobile device** in your emergency kit. Consider getting a solar-powered, crank, or vehicle phone charger. If you don't have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card in your emergency kit.
- ▲ **Keep your contacts up to date** on your phone, email and other channels. This will make it easier to reach important contacts, such as friends, family, neighbours, child's school, or insurance agent.
- ▲ If you have a smartphone, **save your safe meeting location(s)** on its mapping application.
- ▲ **Conserve your smartphone's battery** by reducing the screen's brightness, placing your phone in airplane mode, and closing apps you are not using. You never know how long a power outage will last! Remember, in an emergency or to save a life, call 9-1-1 for help.

## Firefighter Games at the BCNE

Once again local firefighters will compete during the **B.C. Northern Exhibition in Prince George from Aug. 14 to 16.** The registration deadline is July 12. For more information contact Brian Froelich at [bfroelic@telus.net](mailto:bfroelic@telus.net) ▲



## Community Emergency Planning

Michael Higgins, RDRFG's new Emergency Services Coordinator, plans to develop emergency plans with communities in the Regional District. Michael will be asking community members for their trust, contribution and leadership in the overall RD emergency services program, developing local prevention and response plans that are supported by the RD Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He will be focusing on two option plans with communities, based on 'Stay or GO'; to shelter-in-place or to evacuate, depending on the type of emergency situation. Michael will be reaching out to interested residents, community associations and attending local functions within the Regional District. ▲

## FIRE SERVICES FOR LHEIDLI T'ENNEH

The Lheidli T'enneh and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George have signed an agreement that will see the Regional District provide fire protection services to the south side of the Lheidli T'enneh I.R. #2 adjacent to Shelley. The fire protection services will be provided through the Shell-Glen Volunteer Fire/Rescue.

"We would like to thank the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George for working with Lheidli T'enneh to achieve this agreement for fire protection services to the south side. Throughout this process, we are striving to coordinate our emergency community planning for both north and south side, to look at emergency preparedness, response, and capacity building for our community members," said Chief Dominic Frederick.

It is a fee for service agreement that will span five years for a total of \$39,400, or \$7,880 per year. The agreement provides for fire protection services for structural fires and fires threatening structures on the reserve lands as well as the provision of emergency medical first responder services. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for members of the Lheidli T'enneh to become members of the Shell-Glen volunteer fire/rescue department.

"We know how quickly fire can devastate a community and the peace of mind that comes with having a dedicated fire protection service available. We thank the Lheidli T'enneh for working with us to develop this agreement so members of their community can enjoy the same peace of mind in knowing that if needed, help is on its way," said Regional District Chairman Art Kaehn.

"We are excited to see our service area expand to include the Lheidli T'enneh reserve," said Shell-Glen Fire Chief Randy Kissel. "It provides an opportunity to expand our volunteer base to include Lheidli T'enneh members." ▲



## SPRING HAS SPRUNG WITH NORGROW COMPOST

Spring arrived early in our region allowing many residents to get a head start on their gardening. On April 17th Prince George residents were invited to bring non-perishable food items to the Foothills Boulevard Regional Landfill and in return they received a truck load of NorGrow compost. During the four hour event the Regional District gave away over 250 truckloads of NorGrow and received two and a half truckloads of donated food that was given to St. Vincent de Paul Society. It was a great way to introduce NorGrow to residents who weren't familiar with the product or did not realize that the Foothills Landfill produced compost.

On May 2nd the Regional District offered compost loading at the McBride and Valemount Regional Transfer Stations. Robson Valley residents who wanted to purchase NorGrow compost were given a helping hand to load their vehicles at the transfer station. Residents in McBride and Valemount have welcomed the opportunity to purchase NorGrow compost at the transfer station and have been happy with



the results they have seen in their lawn and garden growth.

A number of local non-profit groups have received NorGrow compost donations from the Regional District to assist in maintaining community gardens and landscaping. Huble

Homestead Historic Site is one of the groups that has received NorGrow from the Regional District and are ready to plant the Huble garden.

For more information on NorGrow compost please visit [www.rdffg.bc.ca](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca) ▲

## REGIONAL PARKS OPEN FOR THE SEASON

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George operates eleven Regional Parks.

- ▲ Berman Lake
- ▲ Cedarside
- ▲ George Hicks
- ▲ Giscome Portage (Huble Homestead Historic Site)
- ▲ Harold Mann
- ▲ John Dahl
- ▲ Koeneman
- ▲ Kristian Winther
- ▲ McMillan Creek
- ▲ Ness Lake
- ▲ Wilkins



Cedarside Regional Park is located 3 km south of Valemount on Little Cranberry Lake.

The parks are designed for day use only and offer a variety of amenities which can include picnic areas, fire pits, beaches, restroom facilities, interpretive services, heritage buildings, trail systems and boat launches. Please note as of our publishing deadline Berman Lake Regional Park west of Prince George is closed due to a wildfire – before visiting check with the Regional District on the current status.

Parks may be booked for special events such as weddings, family reunions and company picnic gatherings. Book online at: [http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Environment/Regional\\_parks/Application.html](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Environment/Regional_parks/Application.html) or call (250) 960-4400 for more information. ▲