

**CULTURAL STRATEGIC PLAN  
2011 - 2015**

**for the**

**REGIONAL DISTRICT of FRASER-  
FORT GEORGE**

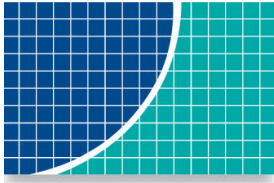
*Prepared for the:*

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George**

*Prepared by the:*

**Economic Planning Group**  
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September 2010



## Economic Planning Group

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September 8, 2010

Ms. Renee McCloskey  
Manager of External Relations  
155 George Street  
Prince George, BC  
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Dear Renee:

**Re: R D F F G Cultural Strategic Plan: 2011 – 2015**

This document is our final report of the R D F F G Cultural Strategic Plan: 2011 – 2015. It incorporates the comments generated from the draft report submitted in late July. This 2010 plan is an update of the initial plan prepared in 2006 and implemented over the past five years. It covers a variety of topics including an overview of the region's cultural resources, a review of the changing cultural funding environment, an assessment of the Golden Raven marketing program, and an evaluation of the success of the overall 2006 plan.

All of this background analysis was conducted to set the stage for preparation of the new strategic direction for the 2010 plan. This 2010 focused strategic plan includes a description of guiding principles, goals (3), objectives (17), and numerous related tactics or action items. A series of performance measures are also described.

Yours sincerely  
Economic Planning Group

G. David Hall, P.Phys.  
Partner

## **Acknowledgements**

This Cultural Strategic Plan has been prepared as an update to the plan prepared in 2006. It has been made possible with the assistance of a number of people in the culture sector within the region. Special thanks are extended to Renee McCloskey, Manager of External Relations and to Stephanie Killam, mayor of Mackenzie and chair of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee. Thanks are also extended to the executive directors and/or managers of the eight cultural facilities that are assisted by the regional district funding program. Several other cultural sector representatives were also interviewed and their assistance and insights are appreciated. The input and assistance of all these individuals is gratefully acknowledged.

## Executive Summary

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) has had a significant role in the development of cultural amenities for its residents and visitors. This support has involved annual operating financial assistance grants for eight of the key heritage and cultural facilities in the Region.

The overall purpose of the 2010 Cultural Strategic Plan project is to prepare an updated version of the 2006 five-year cultural plan for the period 2011 to 2015. Other objectives were to assess the success of the 2006 cultural plan and to document changes in the operating environment.

The key geographic markets for the area's cultural facilities are those people who live in the region (local and regional residents), and people who live outside and are visiting the region (tourists). The resident market can be separated into categories of adults and families, and school children. The tourist market can be separated into those persons destined to the region and those passing through.

The "vision" for the 2010 cultural strategic plan is to improve the recognition and profile of participating facilities, improve resident visitation, expand cultural tourist visits, expand collaboration among participating organizations, and to assist in new business creation and employee retention.

The environment under which the RDFFG cultural organizations have been operating has changed significantly over the five-year timeframe of the 2006 plan. The economic environment declined steeply and dramatically starting in 2008, and as of 2010, has improved but continues to struggle. The economic downturn created a similar decrease in tourism as people cut their discretionary spending on travel while the corporate sector cut business travel.

However, most significant was the dramatic cuts made by the provincial government to its annual financial assistance to culture. These decreases are in the range of 30% and have caused significant concerns for the arts and culture sector. Compounding the problems caused by provincial government cuts have been the declines in both corporate and foundation support. The net result of this situation has been a very significant, and multi-faceted decrease in support for cultural facilities.

The 2006 Cultural Plan included a number of Recommended Actions. These recommendations covered a variety of topics from administration and reporting to marketing and branding. Of the 26 individual recommendations, **eleven** items have been fully accomplished; **nine** have been partially accomplished; while **six** have not been accomplished. Of those action items that have not been accomplished some have been initiated but with no discernable progress, while others (i.e., cultural corridor) have been deemed to be outside the scope of the cultural plan.

The attendance numbers reflect the difficulties cited earlier regarding disposable income and tourism declines, both of which tend to decrease attendance at cultural facilities. The revenue numbers indicate that the organizations have been able to maintain revenues, although the effects of the provincial government grant reductions have not been fully reflected in the 2006 to 2009 numbers tallied here.

The Golden Raven Marketing Program has been a very thoroughly analyzed and professionally implemented component of the 2006 Cultural Plan. It was intended to address the issue of expanding the profile and attendance at participating facilities by providing an umbrella marketing strategy. It is currently (as of 2010) in its third year of operation and has been successful in creating a very identifiable “cultural brand”.

The 2010 Cultural Strategic Plan has been formatted around goals, objectives and tactics. The three overarching goals and their related objectives are to:

1. Engage regional residents in heritage and culture.
  - Enhance the profile of the regional cultural facilities
  - Provide tangible reasons to visit the facilities
  - Develop partnerships with other civic organizations
  - Develop partnerships with local/regional businesses
2. Increase visitation from tourists (non-regional residents).
  - Expand the curatorial functions to enhance the product offerings
  - Develop a regional heritage story
  - Develop a social media strategy
  - Maintain and enhance the Golden Raven marketing program
3. Streamline administration of the cultural services plan.
  - Enhance the information exchange opportunities of the CSAC
  - Develop a consistent facility attendance reporting structure
  - Develop a consistent financial performance reporting structure
  - Provide professional development opportunities for staff
  - Develop criteria for utilizing the CSAC Endowment Fund
  - Produce a grant database
  - Utilize cooperative opportunities for staff training
  - Consider ways to develop partnerships with other cultural organizations
  - Hire/appoint a cultural coordinator

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

*“Culture defines and records the heritage and lifestyle of a people. It is a living or historical record of the way people are and how they act. It is focused on history, values, activities, customs, languages, food, etc. It defines the way business is done and the way in which people use their time.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) has had a significant role in the development of cultural amenities for its residents and visitors. This support has involved annual operating financial assistance grants for a number of the key heritage and cultural facilities in the Region.

The Regional District has conducted two previous cultural research and planning studies to help define the issues and propose the way forward. These were:

#### **Regional District of Fraser-Fort George: Towards a Cultural Plan (2004)**

This report was prepared to assess the state of culture throughout the RDFFG. The findings indicated that there were a number of high quality cultural institutions and organizations located throughout the region and funded by the RDFFG. They were deemed to be highly valued by their communities, produced approximately 200,000 combined visits, and generated significant economic impact. The report recommended the preparation of a regional Cultural Plan.

#### **Planning the Cultural Experience in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (2006)**

This Cultural Plan report created a vision for the culture sector, suggested strategies of increasing use of regional cultural facilities, recommended human resource approaches, and proposed a funding model. Direction was also provided on information collection techniques, performance measures and other sources of funding, and the report included a series of recommendations to address these issues. The report also had a five year time horizon – from 2006 to 2010.

The 2006 plan was largely implemented as recommended and the five-year planning horizon will expire at the end of 2010. The Regional District intends to evaluate the performance of the plan and prepare a revised update for the ensuing five-year period.

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism BC and RDFFG, Cultural Marketing: Situation Analysis, 2007, p. 6.

The Economic Planning Group, was part of the study team that prepared both of the above reports and was retained to produce this 2010 plan update.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The overall purpose of the 2010 Cultural Strategic Plan project is to prepare an updated five-year cultural plan for the period 2011 to 2015. The specific objectives are to:

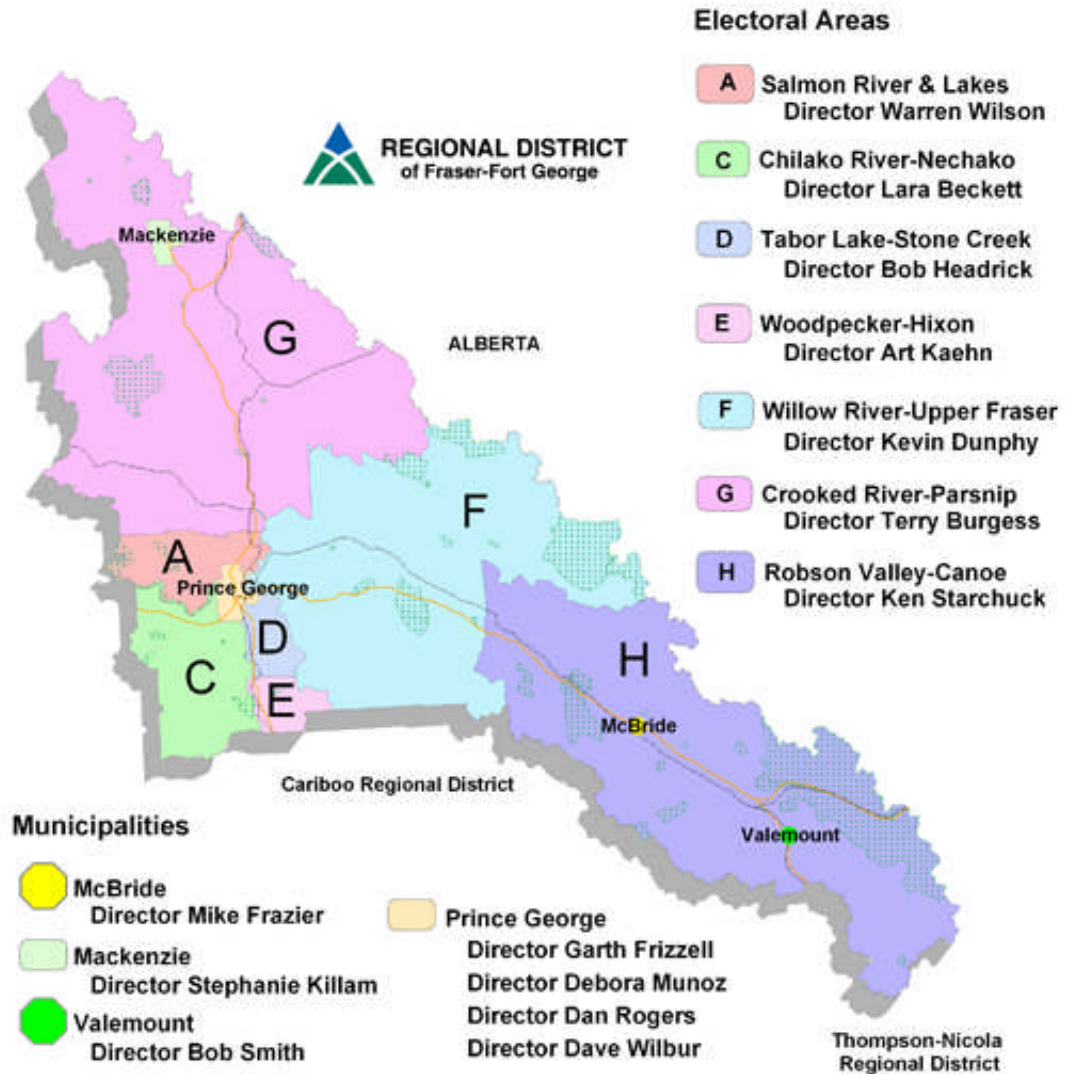
- Review the 2006 plan and evaluate its success in delivering cultural services and in implementing its recommendations
- Conduct a background scan to document changes that have occurred within the funding environment since the initial plan was prepared to set the stage for the new plan
- Conduct secondary source research on cultural planning in the region
- Conduct interviews with the eight funded facility cultural agency representatives
- Conduct interviews with other cultural agency representatives
- Prepare a new five-year cultural strategic plan for the Regional District.

## **ANALYSIS PROCESS**

The research for this strategic planning project has been conducted using both secondary source reviews and interviews with selected agency representatives. The secondary source analysis included the previous regional culture reports and internet searches and reviews. Interviews were conducted with representatives of all eight participating organizations, plus two other selected agency representatives. The analyst also visited all the participating facilities on two separate trips to the region.



## REGIONAL DISTRICT PROFILE



The RDIFFG is located in east-central British Columbia and extends along a portion of the BC-Alberta border. The region extends from south of Valemount in the southeast to north of Mackenzie in the northwest. The regional covers 52,000 square kilometers, representing approximately 5% of the provincial land mass.

The current estimated population is approximately 95,000, which has remained relatively stable over the past decade. Nearly 80% (75,000) of the region's residents live in the City of Prince George, while the remainder is distributed among the three incorporated communities of McBride, Mackenzie and Valemount, plus seven electoral areas.

The RDFFG provides regional government services to residents of the area. It is governed by a board of fourteen elected officials – seven of whom are appointed by their municipal councils and seven elected directly to the board from within their electoral areas. One of the purposes of the Regional District is to “foster the current and future economic, social and environmental well being of its community”. It is within this mandate that the cultural plan update is being prepared.

The RDFFG financially supports eight cultural organizations with grants to assist with facility operations. These eight organizations were the focus of the 2006 Cultural Plan as they were all receiving Regional District funding at the time through annual consideration of funding requests. The five-year plan was a vehicle to formalize Regional District assistance while providing funding certainty for the cultural organizations. These eight organizations were also regionally dispersed and provided inclusion of facilities in both Prince George and the smaller centres within the RDFFG.

The 2006 funding allocation was \$1,621,000 increasing to \$1,919,000 in 2010. This represents a combined annual tax estimate per \$100,000 of residential assessed value of \$16.00 in 2006 and \$19.05 in 2010.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL RESOURCES**

There is a large number and diverse range of cultural facilities in the RDFFG. This inventory includes the following facilities and organizations:

- The eight facilities that are financially supported by the RDFFG
- Approximately a dozen cultural societies and events which are supported by the City of Prince George
- Over forty not-for-profit theatre/artist/craft groups, clubs, associations, societies and guilds
- Several cultural for-profit businesses including dance and theatre companies
- Other major heritage facilities nearby, but outside the RDFFG, that contribute to the general region's cultural mosaic.

Taken in total, there are approaching 100 individual cultural facilities, organizations and/or agencies in the region. As noted in the Phase I plan – Towards a Cultural Plan - the economic impact of the eight regionally supported facilities was estimated at approximately \$2.8 million (2003). This included the spending by the culture facilities to purchase goods and services, plus the related spending by visitors who patronized these facilities.

It is reasonable to assume that with the passage of time to 2010 and with the addition of the “dozens” of other cultural facilities in the region, that the total economic impact might be double the figure above or approximately \$5 million.

### **RDFFG FUNDED FACILITIES**

The RDFFG financially assists eight cultural organizations/facilities. Three are in Prince George and four are in the three other municipal jurisdictions, and one is in an electoral area. A brief description follows:

## **Prince George**

### **Railway & Forestry Museum Prince George and Region**

[www.railandforestmuseum.com](http://www.railandforestmuseum.com)

This museum contains one of the largest vintage rail collections in British Columbia. The museum's collection dates from 1899 to the 1960s, and includes numerous buildings, locomotives, rail cars, and artifacts from the steam and diesel railway eras. The museum also contains forestry, fire fighting, and early communication equipment. The first artifact was the PGE 6001 Russell snowplow. The 10 acre site is located beside the Nechako River adjacent to the CN Rail yards. The operating society was incorporated in 1983 and the museum opened in 1986.



### **The Exploration Place**

[www.theexplorationplace.com](http://www.theexplorationplace.com)

The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre opened under the TEP brand in 2001. The Society started in 1958 and has operated a Museum at this location since 1975. The core of the existing building opened in 1981 with the 11,000 square foot addition opening in 2001. The Museum Society was incorporated June 7 1988.

The 23,000 square foot facility houses over 200,000 documents, photographs, natural history and paleontology specimens as well as historical artifacts. The collection is focused on the Human and Natural History and Development of the Regional District of Fraser Fort George and it's environs.



## **Two Rivers Gallery**

[www.tworiversgallery.com](http://www.tworiversgallery.com)

Two Rivers Gallery is the prime centre for visual art in Prince George and the central interior. It is run by the not-for-profit Prince George Regional Art Gallery Association with a mission to: encourage lifelong learning through the arts, create an environment for vigorous artistic and cultural expression, and provide opportunities for diverse experiences through participation and exhibition. The facility encompasses 20,000 square feet and has been in operation in its current location since 2000, although the art gallery has been in existence for forty years.



## **The Region**

### **Huble Homestead Historic Site**

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

The Huble Homestead is a historic site located in the Giscome Portage Regional Park and operated by the Huble Homestead/Giscome Portage Heritage Society. The 22 ha (50 acre) site offers tours of heritage buildings including the Huble house, Salmon Valley Post Office, and the animal shelter. It includes replicas of the original general store, trapper's cabin, barns, blacksmith shop and a First Nations fish camp. The site opened in 1989.



### **Mackenzie Museum**

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

The museum showcases the heritage and people of Mackenzie. The museum describes the development of Mackenzie in the 1960s as a planned community to accommodate the workforce for the growing local forest industry. The museum is located in the Ernie Bodine Centre (formally a hospital) and encompasses 2,000 square feet of exhibit space. Exhibits depict the area's First Nations heritage, early settlement, natural history, and the story of the creation of Williston Lake. The museum opened in 1991.



## McBride Museum

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

Valley Museum and Archives was incorporated in 1985 with the intention to collect and preserve information and artifacts from the Robson Valley. The museum operates a 575 square foot display space in a combined library/museum building. The museum prepares approximately six themed displays annually on such as paleontology, cameras, nursing, railways, and forestry. Robson Valley artists and local school art are exhibited in addition to travelling art shows. It is noted that exhibit storage is provided in the original town hall building as is outside display of historic farm implements.



## Valemount Museum

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

The Valemount Museum is located in the original train station and encompasses approximately 3,000 square feet on three floors, plus a 1,000 square foot annex. The main building displays railway artifacts, a model railroad (that runs through the bathroom), Japanese internment camps, war heroes, old children's toys, Valemount pioneers, Margaret McKirdy's little people, James Vanslyk's art, Valemount schools, sewing, Pioneer Kitchen, and a trapper's cabin. The annex contains railway and farming implements and space for children's programs.



## Whistle Stop Gallery (McBride)

<http://www.whistlestopgallery.org>

The Whistle Stop Gallery Society was incorporated in 2002 with the purpose of providing a venue for local artists and craft persons to display and sell their products. The gallery is located in McBride's historic train station, built in 1919 as a Grand Trunk Pacific Railway divisional point, and was restored in 2002. The facility encompasses approximately 600 square feet and is usually fully stocked with products representing over 80 artisans.



## **CULTURAL VISION OF THE RDFFG**

A vision was created for the 2006 Cultural Plan. This vision was intended to create a picture of the desired future state for culture in the region. Vision statements are important in that they enunciate and conceptualize where the organization wants to be at a future date. Vision statements are typically far reaching in their scope – perhaps 10 to 20 years out - but they also must be achievable over this long-term horizon.

During discussions with RDFFG participating cultural organizations, there was general agreement that the 2006 vision was still appropriate. It has been restated here with some refinements and updates to bring it up to the 2010 time-period.

### **Vision Statement**

1. The RDFFG is recognized locally, provincially and nationally for the high quality and diversity of its cultural offerings.
2. Residents in large numbers attend the events and facilities and are active in telling visitors to the region about the cultural activities offered throughout the RDFFG.
3. Both domestic and international cultural tourists have put the RDFFG on their lists of places to visit, creating significant positive economic impact within the RDFFG.
4. The cultural institutions and events are experiencing sustained growth due to cultural groups working together collaboratively and cooperatively in planning and developing institutions and events.
5. The cultural vibrancy of the region has resulted in new businesses locating in the RDFFG and existing businesses and institutions are able to attract a qualified work force.

These statements are intentionally “visionary” and not necessarily intended to be measured. However, the following assessment provides a subjective assessment on how the Regional District is doing in addressing its stated Vision.

- 1 Recognition and profile

The eight Regional District supported facilities offer a range of cultural experiences and many are of high quality. Regional funding support has allowed these facilities to continue and expand their offerings through events, programs and outreach.

The range of cultural offerings includes heritage artifacts, (from small historic items to large pieces of industrial equipment), plus visual art and crafts (from locally produced to nationally recognized).

The Two Rivers Gallery is a nationally recognized art gallery.

The Exploration Place is recognized provincially as a very successful community-focused museum.
- 2 Resident visitation

Although consistent statistics of visitor origin are not collected, observation by facility managers indicates the attendance is largely regional. Estimates are in the range of 80% to 90%. This has probably remained relatively consistent over the five-year timeframe of the 2006 - 2010 Cultural Plan.
- 3 Cultural tourists visitation

The profile of the regional cultural attractions has improved significantly through the design and implementation of the Golden Raven marketing plan. This thorough and well researched program started in 2007 and has systematically raised the profile and image of the participating properties.
- 4 Collaboration and cooperation

The eight participating facilities range from un-staffed heritage displays in rural locations to professionally staffed urban facilities. Informal assistance is regularly offered by the two large urban facilities on a range of topics ranging from skills training to curatorial assistance.
- 5 New business creation and employee attraction

The region has participated in the economic downturn that dominated the period from late 2008 through the present. This environment has dramatically affected the markets for cultural facilities. However, representatives of the larger facilities cite that they have been successful in attracting and retaining highly qualified staff persons.



## THE ROLE OF CULTURAL FACILITIES

Cultural facilities can have impacts on their host communities at a number of levels. One way to assess these benefits is from understanding the markets. The key geographic markets are those people who live in the region (local and regional residents), and people who live outside and are visiting the region (tourists).

The resident market can be separated into categories of adults and families, and school children. For these markets, cultural facilities can provide information about their community, education about heritage and art, and leisure opportunities. For the adult market, cultural facilities provide opportunities to spend leisure time, and places to take visiting friends and relatives. They are also responsible for improving ones sense of community and social well-being.

The student market is important for at least two reasons. One is that cultural facilities typically provide curriculum-based information in an informative, non-classroom environment. The other is that the children will have fun with the experience and encourage their parents to bring them back.

The tourist market can be separated into those persons destined to the region and those passing through. Destination travellers may be visiting for a variety of reasons including business, recreation, sports, or to visit friends and relatives. Cultural facilities can provide a learning experience by providing information about the community, which hopefully will result in a positive impression and word of mouth advertising on their return home.

Cultural facilities can also provide an economic impact by enticing visitors to either visit the community or stay longer in the community. The spin-off result is the requirement to spend money in the hospitality sector purchasing food & beverages, recreation, entertainment, souvenirs - and if an overnight stay is required - commercial accommodation. Per diem expenditures can range from a few dollars on souvenirs if the stay is brief, to a few hundred dollars for accommodation and food & beverage if the stay is extended.

The literature on museum patronage indicates that the market can be separated into three basic groups based on their demographics and interest in culture.

- **Cultural enthusiasts** are those people who spend a considerable amount of their leisure time in cultural institutions or pursuing cultural interests. The real keeners are the ones who participate as board members, become facility members, and volunteer to serve the organization. This group typically represents about 20% of a community's population while the keeners proportion is under 5%.
- **Cultural participants** are those persons that will go to a cultural facility or event if the right offer is made. They might participate or patronize a facility once or

twice a year, either in their home community or while travelling. This group also represents about 20% of the population.

- **Non-Cultural Participants** are people who have little interest in culture or heritage and generally are difficult to entice with traditional cultural offerings. Their leisure time is typically spent in a variety of ways including shopping, gaming, and watching or participating in sports. They can represent 60% of the population.

The markets can also be described from the perspective of the degree of interest or attention that potential patrons have in the facility. Facility marketers and those involved with interpretation and programming often refer to three types of “customers”, namely streakers, strollers and studiers. All three can be measured by the length of time they stay in the facility and degree of attentiveness they have for the exhibits/artifacts.

- **Streakers** walk quickly through a facility, glancing at the displays/exhibits, and likely read only the heading captions on the interpretation panels. They might be in and out of the facility in less than half an hour.
- **Strollers** will spend more time observing the exhibits, stopping to read entire panels for those displays that interest them. They will select the exhibits or galleries that interest them and might spend an hour or two in the facility.
- **Studiers** will look at all the exhibits and read virtually everything. These people might spend several hours in the facility.

Cultural facilities generally broaden the range of services and experiences that are available in a community. They are also instrumental in attracting and retaining highly trained individuals to the region, particularly in the difficult to recruit areas of healthcare and education. Furthermore, they add significantly to the quality of life for residents and create economic development based on non-resident patron spending.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE CHANGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

The environment under which the RDFFG organizations have been operating has changed significantly over the five-year timeframe of the 2006 plan. The leading cause of the problems was the dramatic economic downturn in world economies starting in 2008. This created a revenue shortfall for the provincial government, which in its efforts to reduce expenditures, drastically cut funding to arts and culture. The economic decline in turn affected the tourism industry with fewer people having the discretionary incomes to travel. Brief descriptions are provided below on these three elements of the changing operating environment.

### **THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

Over the 2006 to 2010 time period of the cultural plan, the provincial economy (and the world economy) has changed dramatically. The middle part of the decade from 2005 through mid 2008 saw a very strong economy worldwide. In BC, the economy was hot with nominal gross domestic product (GDP) increasing by 7.5% in 2005, and still a strong 5.1% in 2007.

The full effects of the worldwide financial meltdown started in late 2008 and continued through 2009. Provincial GDP growth had declined to zero in 2008, and was estimated to have declined by 3.1% in 2009. It is noted that the provincial economy is dominated by the metro Vancouver area and this urban region did not suffer nearly as severely as the interior of the province, including the Prince George area.

Economic statistics are not available at the regional level, but other measures provide a description of the state of the regional economy during the cultural plan period. One of these measures is population which typically mirrors the state of the economy. From 2005 to 2009, the regional population was virtually static, increasing by an estimated 350 persons for a five-year growth rate of under 0.4%. The value of residential building permits increased during the first half of the plan period then declined by about 50% through 2009. A similar rate of decline occurred in non-residential construction.

This decline would have had a significant impact on the performance of the region's cultural facilities. Residents without jobs would have less disposable income to patronize cultural facilities, while those with jobs would be concerned for their economic future and may have been cutting back on non-essential spending.

Furthermore, there has been a significant decline in school enrollment which affects the number of children who are available for school tour programs. K-12 enrollment in School District No. 57 has declined from approximately 15,000 in 2005 to a projected enrollment of 13,100 in September 2010, a decline of 1,900 full-time equivalent students.

## THE TOURISM ENVIRONMENT

Tourism throughout the province has declined dramatically over the five-year plan period. In fact, these are the largest and most sustained declines since tourism statistics were first collected in the 1960s.

American overnight visitors to BC is a key measure of inbound traffic and these numbers have been dropping since 2003. The decline over the five-year plan period represents approximately half a million travellers. There are also about 140,000 fewer residents of Asia-Pacific countries overnighing in the province and about 25,000 fewer Europeans.

Hotel occupancy figures present a slightly more positive picture with increases until 2007 followed by significant declines in 2008 and 2009. These provincial tourism performance statistics are reported below.

**Table 3-1: Provincial Tourism Performance, 2005 - 2009**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Overnight US	-3.4%	-2.0%	-2.4%	-9.5%	-4.7%
Europe Overnight	8.1%	0.0%	4.9%	-1.4%	-8.4%
Asia/Pacific Overnight	-2.7%	-1.1%	0.1%	-0.1%	-14.9%
BC Hotel Occupancy	64.6%	65.7%	66.9%	64.5%	58.9%
Percent Change	2.4%	1.8%	1.3%	-2.0%	-5.4%

Tourism in Northern BC and the Prince George region has not fared any better than the province as a whole. Annual hotel occupancy has declined from over 71% in 2005 to 57% in 2009. Airport enplaning and deplaning passengers have fluctuated but ended 2009 virtually the same as in 2005. Visitor Centre registrations (number of traveller parties at all Northern BC Visitor Centres) have declined about 5,000 parties over the five-year period. These statistics are tabulated below.

**Table 3-2: Prince George Region Tourism Performance, 2005 - 2010**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
PG Hotel Occupancy	71.2%	67.5%	68.5%	65.3%	57.0%
Percent Change	3.0%	-3.7%	0.9%	-3.3%	-8.3%
Prince George Airport	376,289	394,407	405,071	417,484	376,030
Percent Change	10.5%	4.8%	2.7%	-9.9%	-9.9%
Visitor Centres (NBC)	130,595	114,493	119,572	119,214	125,377
Percent Change	9.5%	-12.3%	4.4%	-0.3%	5.2%

## **THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The funding environment for the arts and culture sector has changed dramatically since the 2006 Cultural Plan was prepared. Historically, the senior governments have played a very significant role in supporting the annual operation of arts and culture facilities in BC. Federal government support has typically been provided by way of student wage subsidy programs while provincial government support was to assist with operations and for special projects.

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Young Canada Works** is a key program operated by Canadian Heritage that has existed under various names for many years. The program provides museums and galleries the opportunity to hire students (for summer jobs) and recent graduates (for internships). Many heritage and arts organizations in BC take advantage of this program annually although annual applications are required. Virtually all the RDFFG cultural facilities regularly utilize this program.

Another federal program is **Canada Summer Jobs** administered by Service Canada. This program, and its predecessors, offers not-for-profit agencies the opportunity to hire students for summer employment. This program is also widely used by provincial arts and heritage organizations. Applicants need to apply early in the calendar year (February in 2010) while decisions are typically not approved and announced until May.

These two programs have been in existence over the implementation period of the 2006 plan. Some administration and application criteria have changed, but the programs have generally been relatively stable in terms of qualification criteria and eligibility.

### **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

The provincial government has drastically cut its assistance to arts and culture over the last three years. In the recent past there have been two provincial programs that were relied upon by community cultural organizations to assist with annual operating costs - namely, Community Gaming Grants and BC Arts Council grants.

Community Gaming Grants include the Direct Access Program and the Bingo Affiliation Program. Prior to the 2010-2011 provincial budget, these two programs operated and were administered separately. As of the current provincial fiscal year, these two gaming related programs have been consolidated and renamed Community Gaming Grants and are administered by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. Funding programs for museums are currently being funded at 50% of the historical levels.

The Community Gaming Grant program has a transition schedule, given that some organizations had signed three-year funding agreements under the previous programs. The following schedule was announced in May 2010.

<b><u>Date of Expiry</u></b>	<b><u>Transition Process</u></b>
March 31/10	On April 1/10 these organizations moved to the Community Gaming Grant Program, with funding set at 50% of previous level.
April 1/10 to March 31/11	These organizations are to be fully funded to their multi year commitments. Upon completion of the contract, the organizations will be funded at 50% of the previous level.
After March 31/11	These organizations are to be fully funded to their multi year commitments. Upon completion of the contract, the organizations will be funded at 50% of the previous level.

The new Community Gaming Grants were developed around a number of qualifying sectors and sub-sectors. The former Arts, Culture and Sport sector is now focused exclusively on youth and has been split into two sub-sectors. The description of the Arts and Culture sector is as follows:

- Youth Arts and Culture: programs and services that support youth-oriented arts and culture programs
- Fairs, Festivals and Museums: fall fairs & exhibitions, arts and music festivals, and museums operated by non-profit societies

Specifically excluded are adult arts and culture.

The other stream of arts and culture funding was from the BC Arts Council. This agency conducted the administration of the provincial operating and capital grants to arts and culture organizations. The Council still administers the fund, but the amount of money has been dramatically reduced.

According to Alliance for the Arts, BC Arts Council funds have been cut 53% since the 2008/09 fiscal year, while the BC Gaming Commission contributions have been reduced by 58%.

There has been considerable confusion about the funding cutbacks and the size of the decrease. The figures quoted by the provincial government, including funding to the Royal BC Museum are as follows (figures in \$millions):

**Table 3-3: Provincial Funding Sources, 2008/09 – 2010/11 (Government Numbers)**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts	\$37.8	\$18.4	\$24.6
Ministry of Housing and Social Development	\$18.2	\$23.6	\$11.5
Supplementary Estimates and Contingencies	\$7.0	-	\$10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63.0</b>	<b>\$42.0</b>	<b>\$46.1</b>

Alliance for the Arts has calculated and depicted the funding decrease in more detail. Their estimate, excluding funding to the Royal BC Museum, by agency is as follows (figures in \$millions):

**Table 3-4: Provincial Funding Sources, 2008/09 – 2010/11 (Cultural Sector Estimates)**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
BC Arts Council	\$19.5	\$3.7	\$9.2
BC Arts Council Endowment	\$8.3	\$1.5	\$1.5
BC Gaming Commission	\$19.8	\$8.9	\$8.3
Gaming transfer to the BC Arts Council	-	\$10.9	-
Supplementary Estimates / 2010 Arts Legacy		\$7.0	\$10.0
Multi-year Commitments (Gaming)	-	\$3.2	\$3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$47.6</b>	<b>\$35.1</b>	<b>\$32.2</b>

Based on these numbers, the provincial government estimate represents an overall decrease of just over 27% for 2008/09 to 2010/11. The Alliance for the Arts numbers indicate that the reduction was closer to 32% (not counting the Royal BC Museum funding). Regardless, the reduction of approximately one-third of arts and culture funding creates a significant hardship for cultural facilities.

## **OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

The other key funding sources for cultural attractions are foundations and corporations. Foundations typically use the money they earn on their endowment funds to support their causes. The low interest rate environment over the five-year cultural plan timeframe has meant that foundation giving has not grown. Furthermore, with cutbacks in provincial funding, the foundations that support the arts have had to deal with an increased number of cultural facility applications.

Similarly, the corporate sector has also reduced its contributions to charitable causes, due to declines in revenue and profitability. These revenue declines or actual financial losses have reduced the amount of money available from the corporate sector to assist cultural facilities.

The economic downturn has also had a negative effect on facility volunteers as the number of volunteers, and the number of volunteer hours, have reportedly declined. This has required facilities to either cut programs or hire paid staff to undertake the tasks normally undertaken by volunteers.

## **OPERATING ENVIRONMENT SYNOPSIS**

The environment under which the RDFFG organizations have been operating has changed significantly over the five-year timeframe of the 2006 plan. The economic environment declined steeply and dramatically starting in 2008, and as of 2010, has improved but continues to struggle. The economic downturn created a similar decrease in tourism as people cut their discretionary spending on travel and the corporate sector cut business travel.

However, most significant was the dramatic cuts made by the provincial government to its annual financial assistance to culture. These decreases are in the range of 30% and have caused significant concerns for the arts and culture sector. Compounding the problems caused by provincial government cuts have been the declines in both corporate and foundation support. The net result of this situation has been a very significant, and multi-faceted decrease in support for cultural facilities.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVALUATION OF THE 2006 CULTURAL PLAN**

The 2006 Cultural Plan included a number of Recommended Actions. These recommendations covered a variety of topics from administration and reporting to marketing and branding. These recommended actions are listed below in the order in which they occurred in the report with a tally of progress made in implementing the recommendations.

### **CULTURAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Table 4-1: Evaluation of Recommendations**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
1	Provide for cultural coordination and administrative support system for the RDFFG cultural program.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> RDFFG has provided administrative support through the office of the Manager of External Relations. Considerable discussion by CSAC members about hiring a dedicated cultural support person. General agreement that this position be created so long as it can provide practical support to the cultural facilities. No progress in creating this position.
2	Create a RDFFG Cultural Services Advisory Committee to affect the implementation of the cultural plan	<b>Accomplished.</b> Cultural Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) structured and approved in 2006. Terms of Reference established specifying purpose, membership, meetings and process. General feeling of members that meeting schedule should become more formalized to perhaps once per quarter.
3	Seek agreement of all participants to the responsibilities as listed or as modified as the first step in implementing this leadership model.	<b>Accomplished</b> as part of implementing the CSAC.

4	Require all of the larger cultural clients to provide technical support to smaller cultural organizations throughout the RDFFG.	<b>Accomplished.</b> The Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery regularly provide assistance as requested and as scheduled (i.e., group training). Some progress made on assisting the smaller facilities through the Curatorial Sub-committee.
5	Identify community leaders to champion the further develop and implement the cultural plan.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Regionally, the sector has lost its original champion and proponent in a position of authority. However, knowledgeable and effective managers have been put in place in several of the smaller facilities. Two directors on the RDFFG Board head up the CSAC.
6	Seek specific support of The Exploration Place to assist in artifact management.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Curatorial sub-committee struck including curator of TEP and TRG. (It is noted that this committee does not meet regularly.)
7	Employ some strategies, such as those listed, to engage residents in the cultural life of the community.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Golden Raven applies to regional residents. Events are being used as a draw for residents to several facilities.
8	Create a communication plan as part of the work of the RDFFG Cultural Services Advisory Committee.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Golden Raven program which includes a quarterly newsletter.
9	Select one of the clusters as a pilot project to test the cultural cluster concept.	<b>Not accomplished.</b> Issue of cultural clusters deemed to be more of a community planning focus and beyond the scope of the agencies involved in culture to implement.
10	Engage in discussion with the Cariboo Regional District, District of Wells, City of Quesnel, Ft. St. James, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and the operators of Cottonwood House, Ft. St. James and Barkerville concerning a future extension of the cultural cluster concept to include their cultural assets.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Barkerville and Fort St. James have partnered on a pay-to-play basis in the Golden Raven marketing program.

11	Produce a pamphlet with a map showing the walking routes to the <b>Prince George</b> cultural facilities and include points of interest (heritage buildings, public art etc.) along the way as well as adding nature trails (along the river).	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Golden Raven marketing materials include a map of all sites. Private sector in Prince George has produced an “Art Walk” brochure.
12	Arrange a meeting for City and RDFFG officials to meet with local government representatives from the City of Kelowna to discuss the issues related to creating a cultural district.	<b>Not Accomplished.</b> Deemed to be beyond the scope of the CSAC.
13	Review the cultural district suggestions in this report and either using or changing those suggestions produce a plan to create a cultural district.	<b>Not Accomplished.</b> See above.
14	Using local expertise put together a group from across the region to create a cultural marketing plan directed at both residents and tourists.	<b>Accomplished.</b> The Golden Raven program is a thoroughly researched, broadly based and professionally delivered marketing program.
15	Using this same local expertise, engage in a branding exercise and create a cultural brand for the region.	<b>Accomplished.</b> See above.
16	Organize an annual forum for people working in the cultural sector.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Facility representatives meet as needed as part of the CSAC. Some facility staff have been supported to attend BCMA conferences as a way to improve skills.
17	Create a newsletter that provides information on what people working in the various facilities need to know over the course of the operating season.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Golden Raven newsletter.
18	Create a list of local experts that people in the region can call on for assistance.	<b>Not Accomplished.</b> RDFFG planning to produce this list.
19	Require all RDFFG funded facilities to prepare a five-year strategic plan and an annual operating plan.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> One year plans and annual reporting received from most sites.

20	Require all RDFFG funded facilities to use a standardized data collection system as per the template described.	<b>Not Accomplished.</b> Facilities supply their performance numbers in a variety of formats. Operators are looking for assistance in order that their statistics be uniform.
21	Develop funding objectives for each RDFFG cultural client.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Individual contracts established with each of the eight participating facilities.
22	Establish memoranda of understanding with each member municipality on cultural funding and operational details concerning facilities in their communities.	<b>Not Accomplished.</b> Preliminary discussions underway.
23	When it is reasonable to do so, target the maximum allocation from the RDFFG/City fund to be one-third of core budget and the remainder to come from earned and donated revenue within five years.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Most facilities are heavily dependent on the regional funding for day-to-day operational budgets. The recent provincial Arts Council and Gaming fund cuts are making achieving this objective much more difficult.
24	Encourage joint actions to deal with common issues such as marketing, brand development, financial management, fund-raising etc.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Significant progress was made in marketing and brand development with the Golden Raven program.
25	Leverage funds from other sources – federal, provincial and private using RDFFG core operating funding commitments and the associated Culture Plan.	<b>Accomplished.</b> Cultural participants have used the RDFFG core funding as leverage in their applications to other provincial and federal funding sources.
26	Standardize all reporting procedures on financial reporting and accounting, employment and attendance.	<b>Partially Accomplished.</b> Discussions have been undertaken but reporting requirements and templates have not been prepared. Cultural participants continue to submit their performance reports in a variety of formats.

Based on this analysis, considerable success has been made in implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Cultural Plan. Of the 26 individual recommendations, **eleven** items have been fully accomplished; **nine** have been partially accomplished; while **six** have not been accomplished. Of those action items that have not been accomplished some have been initiated but with no discernable progress, while others (i.e., cultural corridor) have been deemed to be outside the scope of the cultural plan.

Overall, progress has been significant, particularly on two fronts. One is in program administration and oversight, which has occurred with the creation of the Cultural

Services Advisory Committee. This Committee is a special purpose advisory committee reporting to the RDFFG Board of Directors. Administrative support is currently provided by the Manager of External Relations.

The other key success is in the creation and implementation of the Golden Raven marketing program. This program was researched and planned in the early years of the 2006 plan, and as of 2010, is in its third year of operation. It has enjoyed complete buy-in by all eight participants and is becoming a strong “brand”. (See Chapter 5 for a review of this program.)

## PERFORMANCE OF PARTICIPATING FACILITIES

The following information was obtained from a combination of society annual reports and financial statements, and from information provided by facility general managers. It is noted that the records are incomplete as there has not been consistent annual reporting from some facilities.

From a business performance perspective, the key statistical measures are attendance and revenues. These measures answer the basic questions of “how many people did you serve?” and “how much money did you make?”.

The attendance numbers reflect the difficulties cited earlier regarding disposable income and tourism declines, both of which negatively affected attendance at cultural facilities. The revenue numbers indicate that the organizations have been able to maintain revenues, although the effects of the provincial government grant reductions have not been fully reflected in these 2006 to 2009 numbers.

**Table 4-1: On-Site Attendance**

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Railway & Forestry Museum	-	12,995	13,751	15,205
The Exploration Place	71,891	67,234	64,607	57,720
Two Rivers Gallery	24,759	23,428	26,312	22,392
Huble Homestead Historic Site	7,211	7,934	8,668	8,300
Mackenzie Museum	-	468	439	688
McBride Museum	12,735	12,590	9,458	12,394
Valemount Museum	1,175	1,336	1,593	1,660
Whistle Stop Gallery	-	14,400	14,800	14,500

Notes:

1. Railway & Forestry Museum site attendance for general admission and special events.
2. The Exploration Place figures include general admissions, community programs, tour programs, and school programs.
3. Two Rivers Galleries numbers reflect gallery and programming attendance.
4. Huble Homestead is open four month, seven days a week. Attendance includes all regular, special event (11), school/day care programming, and facility rental attendance.
5. Mackenzie Museum figures include general admission and school programs.
6. McBride Museum has no monitored entrance and figure is from a mechanical counter.
7. Valemount Museum operates from May 15 to September 30
8. Whistle Stop Gallery numbers include tally of gallery patrons.

**Table 4-2: Total Revenues**

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Railway & Forestry Museum	\$456,000	\$406,000	\$445,000	\$342,000
The Exploration Place	\$1,393,000	\$1,554,000	\$1,324,000	\$1,345,000
Two Rivers Gallery	\$830,000	\$855,000	\$1,021,000	\$945,000
Huble Homestead Historic Site	\$269,000	-	\$279,000	\$301,000
Mackenzie Museum	-	-	\$37,000	\$40,000
McBride Museum	\$18,000	\$23,000	\$25,000	\$24,000
Valemount Museum	\$62,000	\$61,000	\$73,000	\$64,000
Whistle Stop Gallery	\$87,000	\$98,000	\$113,000	\$96,000

Source: Figures are from society financial statements and input from site managers.

Note: Revenues include monies from all sources including; self-generated, fund raising and grants.

There are also other measures that are not as quantifiable, but nevertheless, provide insights into facility performance. Virtually all facilities host new and/or temporary exhibits each year, and all conduct some form of outreach. Both of these tactics are intended to increase participation and to enhance the facilities' profile in the community.

Participants had the following comments about the significance of the Cultural Plan program to their operations.

*In 2008, the Cultural Plan allowed the Valemount Museum to leverage its modest Regional District's grant of \$23,000 into a record \$73,632.15 through additional grants and fundraisers.*

*Rashmi Narayan, Valemount Museum*

*Having the ability to plan for the future since the cultural plan has provided annual funding, gives a great opportunity for the Valley Museum and Archives Society to co-ordinate our activities with other organizations in the valley such as the Whistle Stop Gallery, the Valemount and Area Museum and the Robson Valley Arts and Culture Council.*

*Marilyn Wheeler, Valley Museum & Archives*

*For every dollar the Regional District has invested in 2008, the Gallery has directly returned three to the community. Indirect benefits are hard to calculate but include increased tourism, enhanced quality of life for residents and a greater appreciation of culture throughout the District.*

*Dannielle Alan, Whistle Stop Gallery*

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GOLDEN RAVEN MARKETING PROGRAM**

The Golden Raven Marketing Program has been a very thoroughly analyzed and professionally implemented component of the 2006 cultural plan. It was intended to address the issue of expanding the profile and attendance at participating facilities by providing an umbrella marketing strategy.

As a lead-up to this program, a systematic development process was undertaken. This work involved four separate pieces of research supported by the RDFFG and Tourism British Columbia. These analyses, conducted in 2007, were:

#### **Cultural Tourism Marketing:**

#### **Objectives and Focus**

##### **Situation Analysis**

- Defined “culture”.
- Described the local and visitor marketplace.
- Summarized relevant research on tourism in the region.
- Described marketing concepts and target markets.

##### **Marketing Strategy**

- Described cultural identity and vision.
- Proposed strategic direction.
- Outlined goals and objectives, and target markets.
- Described marketing strategies and annual priorities for three years to 2010.

##### **Marketing Plan**

- Described brand and identity.
- Outlined marketing tactics.
- Proposed marketing budgets.
- Outlined accountability and success factors.

##### **Implementation and Operating Plan**

- Outlined partner roles and responsibilities.
- Listed criteria for inclusion as a licensed user of the Golden Raven brand.

The Golden Raven marketing program is a very comprehensive program. It includes a website ([www.goldenraven.ca](http://www.goldenraven.ca)), an advertising campaign in key external markets, signage, brochures with coupons, posters and postcards. The Golden Raven annual brochure, along with the brochures and rack cards for the participating properties are



grouped for display in the regional Visitor Centres. The program also includes a number of collateral items including lapel pins, travel mugs and nylon carry bags.

The program is delivered by Tourism Prince George. The key objectives of the program are to increase awareness and interest in arts and culture, and to increase the attendance at participating properties.

It is difficult to assess changes in awareness since there was no benchmarks established against which to measure change. However, the program has a highly visible and distinctive logo (a golden raven silhouette) which is located on all entrance signage and is profiled on all literature. It also forms part of print advertisements which are read by local and regional residents. The website is very appealing and informative, and has been visited approximately 130,000 times since inception.<sup>2</sup> The websites of participating organizations also had links back to the Golden Raven site.

Information on the program is available in Visitor Centres in the region and in close-in markets. A survey of Visitor Centre by Tourism Prince George revealed that interest in the program was deemed to be strong, particularly in those centres north and east of the Region.

In an attempt to attract visitors to the sites, advertising was purchased and placed in a number of travel guide publications including:

- Milepost
- Northern BC Official Travel Guide
- Prince George Official Travel Guide
- RV West
- Northword Magazine
- Spirit of the North Magazine
- Yellowhead It
- McBride Visitor Guide

Based on all these actions, it is expected that the profile of the participating facilities would have increased significantly within the local and regional market, however this is not statistically verifiable.

The key statistical measure of the program's success should be attendance. However, as noted earlier, this program was rolled out during a worldwide economic collapse which produced a related decline in tourism. The reduced numbers of visitors to the region were reflected in an estimated overall reduction in the number of visitors to the participating facilities.

The following is an assessment of attendance as reported to Tourism Prince George as part of their assessment of the project.

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<sup>2</sup> Tourism Prince George, *2009 Golden Raven Accountability Report* (undated)

**Facility****Change from 2008 to 2009**

The Exploration Place	Decrease of 12%
Two Rivers Gallery	Decrease of 8%
Railway and Forestry Museum	Increase of 10%
Huble Homestead	Decrease of 7%
Mackenzie & District Museum	Slight increase
Valley Museum & Archives	Mechanical counter...uncertain
Whistle Stop Gallery	Increase in traffic...decrease in sales
Valemount Museum & Archives	Decrease of 20%

Cultural plan participants do not record the origin of visitors as part of their record keeping, but anecdotal information indicates that the proportion of local and regional residents had increased. This might be a reflection of the “stay-cation” phenomenon of people travelling, but staying closer to home to reduce travel costs.

Another significant success of the Golden Raven marketing program is the inclusion other major heritage attractions in the general area. For the 2010 version of the program, both Barkerville Historic Town and Fort St. James National Historic Site were included. These sites are outside the regional district but are very well know central interior heritage properties. Their inclusion in the marketing program on a paid advertising basis adds significantly to the heritage offerings available to the travelling public.

Furthermore, the program is highly regarded by the participants, one of whom had this to say about the Golden Raven Program.

*The joint advertising through the Golden Raven program is a big help, and I think will become even more valuable in the future once the brand takes hold, because those ads can reach markets that most of our organizations can't afford to reach with our current advertising budgets.*

*Krystal Leason, Huble Homestead*

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **2010 STRATEGIC PLAN**

The overall purpose of this plan is to prepare strategic direction to guide implementation of regional district funding of cultural organizations in the region. The plan includes information on the guiding principles, the goals, the objectives and the tactics. The intent is that this plan will provide the strategic project oversight and guidance for implementation from 2011 to 2015.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The BC Local Government Act describes the following purposes of regional governments:

- Providing good government for its community
- Providing the services that the board considers necessary
- Providing for stewardship of the public assets of the community
- Fostering the current and future economic, social and environmental well being of its community.

Regional District support for cultural facilities falls within this mandate, particularly the last two items. However, the RDIFFG continues to support cultural facilities and organizations for three fundamental reasons. These are:

**Community Engagement:** Providing arts and culture opportunities and experiences for residents.

**Economic Development:** Utilizing cultural tourism as a component of the tourism mix in order to generate visitor spending in the region.

**Cultural Sector Stability:** Assisting with ongoing operational costs to allow the facilities to focus on delivering cultural experiences.

This plan has been guided by some fundamental principles and requirements. These were outlined in the 2006 plan and are repeated here with some relevant updating:

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Description</u>
Be Strategic	The plan needs to fit into the RDFFG's overall purpose and responsibilities. It also needs to have a defensible and rational set of objectives.
Be Sustainable	The plan needs to be financially sustainable and affordable for the region's residents over its five-year time horizon.
Be Regional in Scope	The plan needs to be inclusive of municipalities and electoral areas.
Create Economies of Scale	The plan should maximize economies of scale with resulting benefits in joint actions.
Provide Value for Taxpayers	The plan should meet financial objectives and provide a measurable value for residents.
Include Outreach	Cultural facilities typically extend their reach within the community through outreach programs. These outreach programs need to be accommodated in the funding model.

The following description of recommendations has been developed around the guiding principles described above. The format utilized involves starting with the key, broadly-based **goals** for the plan. These key statements are intended to provide the overall direction of the plan and the general areas of focus.

These goals are supported by **objectives** that describe in more specific terms what needs to be done.

The objectives lead to actual action items or **tactics** to be implemented.

Based on the secondary source research and the cultural sector interviews conducted for this project, the following three goals are recommended.

## **GOALS**

1. Engage regional residents in heritage and culture
2. Increase visitation from tourists (non-regional residents)
3. Streamline administration of the cultural services plan

<b>Goal 1</b>		<b>Engage regional residents in heritage and culture.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>		<b>Tactics</b>
1.	Enhance the profile of the regional cultural facilities.	<p>Cultural facilities compete with other commercial entertainment businesses for the consumer's attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage high profile residents to become members of the boards of directors</li> <li>- Create news stories to be run in local media focusing on relevant local events and personalities.</li> </ul>
2.	Provide tangible reasons to visit the facilities.	<p>Heritage facilities often do not enjoy strong local support as there is no compelling reason to visit (because the facility will be there tomorrow).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a series of offerings intended to entice local residents to visit</li> <li>- This could include reasons to bring their visiting friends and relatives, discounts in the gift shop, two for one coupons, etc.</li> </ul>
3.	Expand partnerships with other civic organizations.	<p>Success of cultural facilities can be enhanced by spreading the word and the profile through partnerships with civic organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify candidate civic organizations with which to form partnerships.</li> <li>- This could include arts organizations, parks groups, recreation and sports organizations, libraries, etc.</li> <li>- Develop joint programs or offerings that bolster the profile of both organizations.</li> <li>- Expand opportunities to partner with educational facilities to build a connection between the cultural sites and students.</li> </ul>

4.	Expand partnerships with local/regional businesses.	<p>Developing partnerships with businesses provides a link between the culture and business sectors and helps to increase the profile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify candidate companies by business sector.</li> <li>- Likely candidates in the industrial sector are forestry and mining.</li> <li>- Likely candidates in the service sector are retail, transportation, finance and scientific.</li> <li>- Identify where local residents are spending leisure time and disposable income.</li> <li>- Develop joint marketing to local residents.</li> </ul>
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<b>Goal 2</b>		<b>Increase visitation from tourists (non-regional residents).</b>
<b>Objectives</b>		<b>Tactics</b>
1.	Expand the curatorial functions to enhance the heritage product offerings	<p>Cultural facilities strive to maintain their collection to contemporary curatorial standards. This ensures the integrity of the assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reactivate the Curatorial Sub-Committee of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee.</li> <li>- Use this committee to assist the outlying communities with artifacts and stories to enhance their ability to depict the history of the region.</li> </ul>
2.	Develop a regional heritage story	<p>Small community museums generally do an adequate job of depicting the history and evolution of their communities. Often the artifacts and stories can be similar between communities, missing the opportunity to provide visitors with a broader picture of the region's history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine what parts of the regional story can be best told by the various cultural plan participants.</li> <li>- Use this information to create a regional heritage strategy.</li> <li>- Use existing artifacts and acquire new artifacts to better tell the individual components of the overall regional story.</li> </ul>
3.	Develop a social media strategy	<p>Social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr) are becoming increasingly popular and increasingly more mainstream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Golden Raven website would be the ideal vehicle on which to provide content for these Internet media programs.</li> <li>- Individual cultural organizations would be able to host their own social media sites with links to the Golden Raven site.</li> </ul>
4.	Maintain and enhance the very successful Golden Raven marketing program.	<p>The Golden Raven marketing program was planned in 2007, implemented in 2008, and is currently in its third year of operation. It has been a very visible and inclusive marketing program targeting both regional residents and tourists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The program should be continued and its scope expanded to include other relevant cultural facilities (on a pay to advertise basis).</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 3</b>		<b>Streamline administration of the cultural services plan.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>		<b>Tactics</b>
1.	Enhance the information exchange opportunities of the CSAC.	<p>The existing cultural plan has had as a side benefit, improved communications and information exchange among participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This should become a more formal part of the CSAC structure to ensure that all parties are current on each other's activities and performance, including the sharing of successful programs.</li> </ul>
2.	Develop a consistent facility attendance reporting structure.	<p>Due to the variety of facilities, buildings and staffing, organizations report their attendance in a number of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistency is required in order to compare properties and to track performance over time.</li> <li>- See Chapter 7 of this document for a sample template.</li> </ul>
3.	Develop a consistent revenue and expense reporting system.	<p>As stated above, the different facilities have different formats for reporting financial data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For consistency, for measuring performance over time, and so that the RDFFG can readily assess the status of the cultural funding program, a consistent format is required.</li> <li>- See Chapter 7 of this document for a sample template.</li> </ul>
4.	Provide professional development opportunities for staff at RDFFG supported sites.	<p>An annual forum was recommended in the 2006 plan and it was never fully implemented. This is still a reasonable objective as the intent is to allow staff to upgrade their skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore opportunities for joint or cooperative training and educational offerings. This could be coordinated with the spring training program.</li> <li>- It is noted that a fall-back or optional scenario is to provide support for participants to attend the annual BC Museums Association conference held annually in the fall.</li> </ul>
5.	Develop criteria for utilizing the CSAC Endowment Fund.	<p>An endowment fund was established as part of the cultural plan implementation budget. It was intended to assist with one-off expenditures for capital improvements.</p> <p>The account currently contains \$860,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criteria need to be developed to assist in the adjudication and allocation of the interest generated from this fund.</li> </ul>



6.	Produce a grant database for use by all CSAC participants.	<p>The cultural funding grant environment is constantly changing. This includes government grants as well as funds from foundations and the corporate sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some plan participants (notably The Exploration Place) have done an admirable job of keeping on top of the grant status.</li> <li>- A central database should be prepared and kept current that would provide plan participants with relevant information.</li> </ul>
7.	Utilize joint or cooperative opportunities for staff training.	<p>In the spring of each year, most facilities conduct some form of training for their seasonal staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2009, TEP closed its facility to the public on a mid-May weekend to conduct a staff training retreat.</li> <li>- TEP has offered to provide training to staff of all participating facilities and this offer should be accepted.</li> </ul>
8.	Consider ways to develop partnerships with other cultural organizations within the region.	<p>There are many other organizations within the region that contribute to the cultural mosaic. While the Regional District may not be in the financial position to consider expanding its financial support to other cultural organizations, there may be opportunities for partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devise techniques to partner with other cultural organizations in the Region in the delivery of the cultural offerings, such as the Golden Raven external marketing partnerships.</li> <li>- Encourage collaborations and outreach between all cultural organizations</li> </ul>

9.	Hire/appoint a cultural coordinator.	<p>There appears to be sufficient coordination and assistance required to justify the creation of cultural coordinator position at the regional district. This would require a staff budget for salary and benefits, however some savings could be generated in freeing up time from the Manager of External Relations and in taking over the Golden Raven contract from Tourism Prince George.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some of the key tasks would be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Provide advocacy for culture as a component of community economic development strategies and off Official Community Plans</li> <li>o Manage the Golden Raven marketing program</li> <li>o Prepare the Golden Raven newsletter</li> <li>o Develop a grant funding database</li> <li>o Develop partnerships with civic organizations and businesses</li> <li>o Maintain communications among cultural plan participants and the RDIFFG.</li> <li>o Coordinate quarterly meetings of the CSAC</li> <li>o Assist the rural museums with curatorial and operational issues</li> <li>o Manage the cultural endowment fund.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## **EXPANSION OF THE CULTURAL PLAN**

Over the course of the past five years, the Regional District has been approached by a number of outside cultural organizations requesting financial support, by way of 5-year funding contracts. These requests are expected to increase, as other government sources of support for arts, culture and heritage continue to decline. Though it was not a specific objective of this plan update to determine which cultural organizations are supported and which are not, some observations are presented.

The eight existing organizations include six museums, one art gallery and one gallery/retail outlet. They have elements in common in that they all represent aspects of “culture”; they all maintain historical artifacts; they are all governed by their own not-for-profit societies; and they all operate out of dedicated buildings.

In the current financial environment, the Regional District is likely not looking for ways to increase or expand its financial support to the cultural sector. However, there may be some opportunities for partnerships with these outside organizations. An example is the recent marketing partnerships between the Regional District and Barkerville and Fort St. James National Historic site, which resulted in the inclusion of these sites in the Golden Raven marketing program. Other opportunities may exist for collaboration and outreach between Regional District funded and non-funded organizations, including artisans displaying their wares or performances hosted at different venues.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The information described in this document lays out the recommended strategy to improve the cultural environment in the RDFFG. In order to determine the plan's success in meeting its objectives, it will be important to measure the performance of participating facilities. Over the time-period of the last five-year plan, various performance statistics have been submitted to the RDFFG, sometimes on an intermittent basis, and there has been a lack of consistency. This irregular submission of statistics and the lack of consistency in formats has made it difficult to assess the success of the plan.

Described below are suggested formats to enable participating organizations to keep track of their performance in terms of attendance and financial operations. The templates are included as Spreadsheets in Appendix B.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is the key measure of cultural facility performance. It measures the facilities' success in attracting people to the facility and in spending money on admissions - or for those facilities that do not charge admission – spend some of their leisure time at the venue. The key measure is a count of the number of people visiting the facility (both paid and non-paid). There are two other basic pieces of information that are of importance because they help describe customer characteristics. These are where the visitor are from and how old they are. These measures are important as they describe who is visiting the facilities – equally as important - who is not.

A daily tally should be taken in order to produce a monthly summary. An annual tally will be able to be prepared from the monthly totals.

The following records should be kept. It is noted that these categories are relevant for all the RDFFG facilities with the exception of the Whistle Stop Gallery. For this facility, the key measures will be:

- Number of artisans represented
- Number of visitors (potential customers)
- Proportion local vs. non-local

<b>On-site Attendance</b>	Paid			Members/Other	
<b>Origin</b>	RDFFG			Outside RDFFG	
<b>Age Group</b>	Children <12	Teens 13 - 19	Young Adults 20 - 40	Mature Adults 41 - 60	Seniors 61+
<b>School Program Attendance</b>					
<b>Off-Site Attendance</b>	Outreach			On-line	
<b>Supporters</b>	Members			Volunteers	

## **FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

Measures of financial performance are also key to assessing success of the 2010 Cultural Strategic Plan. This information only needs to be reported annually and will be sourced from the society's financial statements. These are typically available a few months after the end of the fiscal year. It is noted that the Cultural Plan is implemented over a calendar year while some of the organizations may be operating on other fiscal years, typically the government fiscal year from April 1 to March 31.

The two basic categories of information required to measure financial performance are: revenues and expenses. The categories of interest here will likely be slightly different from the information published in annual financial statements, but the information should be readily available from the background material submitted to the accountants. The preferred categories are:

### **Revenue**

- Earned                      Admissions, Gift shop, Facility rentals, Memberships
- Fund Raised                Donations, Sponsorships, Partnerships, Fund raising events
- Grants                        Federal, Provincial, Regional, Municipal

### **Expenses**

- Salaries                      Full-Time, Part-Time, Seasonal, Volunteer recognition
- Operations and              Administration, Exhibit Operation, Programming, Marketing,  
Programs                        Membership, Retail cost of sales, F&B cost of sales
- Management                Occupancy costs, utilities, maintenance, annual appeal,  
Support                            exhibit upgrades

## OTHER MEASURES

### Media Related:

<b>Media Appearances (Unpaid)</b>	<b>Local/Regional</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>National</b>
January February			
<b>Annual Total</b>			

### Event Related:

<b>Number of Events</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Exhibitions</b>
January February		
<b>Annual Total</b>		

### Community Related:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>Value of In Kind Support (Labour, Materials, Equipment)</b>
January February		
<b>Annual Total</b>		

## PERFORMANCE RATIOS

The information tallied above will allow the creation of several operation ratios. These values will assist in allowing the facilities to monitor their performance over time and identify trends. They will also allow the RDFFG to compare the performance of the facilities. These would be calculated on an annual basis.

The recommended performance ratios are:

- on-site visits per exhibit space square footage
- operating expenses per on-site visit

*APPENDIX*

**APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>AGENCIES CONTACTED</b>
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES TEMPLATES</b>
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>SAMPLE CULTURAL FACILITY PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH</b>

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A

#### PERSONS INTERVIEWED

##### Contact

##### Agency

###### **RDFFG:**

Renee McCloskey  
Stephanie Killam

Manager of External Relations, RDFFG  
Director, RDFFG and Chair Cultural Services  
Advisory Committee

###### **Cultural Facilities:**

Peter Thompson  
Tracy Calogheros  
Ranjit Gill

Managing Director, Two Rivers Gallery  
Executive Director, The Exploration Place  
Executive Director, Railway & Forestry Museum  
Prince George & Region

Danielle Alan  
Krystal Leason

Manager, Whistle Stop Gallery (McBride)  
Operations Manager, Huble Homestead-Griscome  
Portage

Edith Henning  
Rashmi Narayan

Curator, Mackenzie & District Museum  
Administrator, Valemount & Area Museum &  
Archives

Nadine Shovar

Coordinator, Valley Museum & Archives (McBride)

###### **Other:**

Don Basserman  
Sue Clark  
Annie Doran  
Wendy Young

Councillor, City of Prince George  
Acting Executive Director, Tourism Prince George  
Marketing Coordinator, Tourism Prince George  
Executive Director, Prince George & District  
Community Arts Council

Roy Spooner

President, Prince George Chamber of Commerce and  
Director, Prince George Symphony Orchestra

Michael Kerr

National Research Council and Director, Prince  
George Symphony Orchestra



APPENDIX

**APPENDIX B**

**ATTENDANCE (Daily with Monthly Totals)**

RDFFG CULTURAL PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES											
FACILITY NAME: _____											
MONTH: _____											
ATTENDANCE	Count		Origin		Age Group					Outreach	On-line
	Paid	Members/ Other	RDFFG	Outside RDFFG	Children	Teens	Young Adults	Mature Adults	Seniors		
Date					<i>Under 12</i>	<i>13-19</i>	<i>20 - 40</i>	<i>41 - 60</i>	<i>61+</i>		
1											
2											
3											
Total											

APPENDIX

**ATTENDANCE (Monthly with Annual Totals)**

<b>Annual Total</b>
<b>Month</b>
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
<b>Total</b>

APPENDIX

**FINANCIAL MEASURES (Annual)**

<b>RDFFG CULTURAL PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>	
<b>FACILITY NAME:</b>	_____
<b>YEAR:</b>	_____
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Self-Generated	
Fund Raised	
Grants	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Wages & Salaries	
Operations & Programs	
Management Support	
<b>Total</b>	

APPENDIX

**OTHER MEASURES**

<b>RDFFG CULTURAL PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>					
<b>FACILITY NAME:</b> _____					
<b>Month</b>	<b>Media Appearances</b>			<b>Events</b>	
	<b>Local</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Exhibitions</b>
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					
<b>Total</b>					

<b>RDFFG CULTURAL PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>		
<b>FACILITY NAME:</b> _____		
<b>Month</b>	<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>Value of In Kind Support (Labour, Materials, Equipment)</b>
January		
February		
<b>Annual Total</b>		

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SAMPLE CULTURAL FACILITY PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH**

#### **RAILWAY AND FORESTRY MUSEUM**

##### **Community Outreach**

Military Families Support Group - support military families who have loved ones overseas, loved ones who have returned or loved ones who have not returned from Afghanistan. (Canadian Armed Forces in Calgary hosted Major Herold in Prince George in 2009 to lecture at the Museum about his personal experiences in Afghanistan as well as to visit with military families)

Prince George Salvation Army Food Bank (we have, on numerous occasions, provided free admission to the Museum with a donation of a non perishable food item for the Food Bank. This has been successful in assisting the Food Bank but to also increase visitation and gift shop spending).

Partnered with REAPS and the Prince George Symphony on the weekend of May 28 to 30.

Helped celebrate events as well as promote museum by taking minirail train to provide rides to the following events: PGX, 2015 Canada Winter Games bid, Huble Homestead's Homestead Days, Two River Art Gallery BMO Kidz Dayz, Canada Day, Prince George Rivers Day.

Community lecture series hosted, on average, once a month. Next lecture is September 18, "Geocaching 101" an event for the entire family.

#### **THE EXPLORATION PLACE**

The Exploration Place has been recognized nationally by the Canadian Association of Science Centres as the Best Onsite Program (Fort George Explorers After School Care Program), and with the 2006 "Making a Difference Award." In 2002 we were also nationally recognized by Attractions Canada as "Best New Attraction"

We have been recognized internationally by the Association of Science and Technology Centres in 2006 with a "Leading Edge Award for Experienced Leadership"

## APPENDIX

### **Outreach Community Programs**

#### **Participate in/Organize/Program:**

Central Interior Heritage Fair  
Central Interior Science Fair  
Mackenzie Children's Festival  
Billy Barker Days  
Canada Day  
Kidz Art Days  
Prince George Exhibition  
BC Rivers Day  
Chinese New Year  
Hixon Fall Fair  
Museum Gift Shop - Local Artisans  
Heritage Christmas Ornaments - Community Arts Council  
Studio Fair  
MS Walk in the Park  
Early Years Health Fair  
Healthy Kids Day  
Civic Light Up  
2015 Canada Winter Games Bid  
Cougar Games  
Snow Daze  
Dine in the Dark  
Totem Tour - Parks Canada

#### **Donate Door Prizes to multiple community events:**

CDC, Various PAC fundraisers, Prince George Jet Boat Association, Prince George Minor Hockey,  
Early Years Health Fair, Carney Hill Strong Start, Children First, Family Y, Snow Daze, Cedars Christian School,  
BC Friends of Children, St. Mary's Elementary, United Way, Rainbows, CNIB, Prince George Sports Hall of Fame,  
Spruce City Wildlife, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Sacred Heart School

#### **Facility Donations for partner groups:**

Prince George Rotary Club - meetings and President's Ball  
Theatre North West Wine Festival  
Lheidli Tenneh First Nations Elders Meetings  
UNBC Alumni Christmas Party  
Spruce Kings Summer Camp Gallery Tours  
Seedy Saturday  
Prince George Minor Hockey

#### **Educational Support in the Community:**

Homeschooler Mondays

## APPENDIX

UNBC Education Program Tour and Resource Open House  
ECE Program at CNC support for Student Practicums  
Teacher's Open House for School District 57  
Daycare Wednesdays  
Minerals North

### **Artifact Storage for:**

PG Playhouse  
City of Prince George  
Lheidli Tenneh Band  
Parks Canada Carrier Athapaskan Language Group Artifacts  
Valemount Museum  
David Douglas Botanical Society  
Prince George Sports Hall of Fame Society

### **Administrative Support for:**

Northern BC Palaeontological Society

## **HUBLE HOMESTEAD HISTORIC SITE**

### **Community networking & partnerships**

Each year in the General Store, we sell work from an average of 40 local artists and crafters. These consignors include local individuals, regional small businesses, and even non-profit organizations (Hart Pioneer Centre, PG Oral History Group, St Michaels Quilters). Between 2006 and 2009, after taking our percentage, we returned between \$6000 and \$8000 to consignors each year.

Local community groups, individuals, and small businesses are invited to participate in our on-site public events at no charge. We welcome the participation of approximately 40 groups, businesses, or individuals per year, and offer them exposure (booths, demos) or small monetary compensation (entertainers, demos). This is often by invitation, though many people contact us. We have many long-standing relationships with skilled individuals who perform demonstrations, both heritage and others relating to specific events (soap making, trapping/skinning, wood lathe, food preparation, pet demos, and many more). We also have entertainment and vendor/info booth contacts ranging from social clubs and first aid groups, to choirs/bands/musician and dancers, to advocacy groups and special interest groups, and more.

We also participate in multiple off site events (5-7 per year). Between 2006 and 2009, these included: Heritage Lane at PG Exhibition, BMO Kidz Art Dayz, PG Children's Festival, Community Arts Council's Spring Arts Bazaar, Volunteer PG's Volunteer Fair, Summerfest, City of PG's Spring Recreation Market, and PG Regional Heritage Fair (for which we are also on the committee). We have also performed heritage demos at events for the PG Cougars, PG Chateau, AimHi, Zellers, and others.

## APPENDIX

We work with School District 57 and local day care groups like YMCA and Cercle des Canadiens Francais for on-site educational programming. We also take our educational presentations into district classrooms, and have created and put into circulation multiple education kits teachers can access at any time through the Resource Centre.

### **VALEMOUNT MUSEUM**

#### **Annual Exhibits and Programs**

Every year, the museum staff researches and displays 3-4 exhibits. In 2009, we had 5 new exhibits / shows including a travelling show through the Two Rivers Arts Gallery.

#### **Outreach Events and Programs**

Since the Museum is open May 15-Sep 30, we undertake events during the off-season and off-location to engage local residents. We set up temporary exhibits at other locations like the Legion, Schools, Information Centres or Seniors Centre during Heritage Week in February or Remembrance Day or Olympics.

We organize interpretive walks of historic sites like Tete Jaune and Japanese Internment Camps. Other walks include a Wild Food Walk, Down Memory Lanes in Valemount Walk and Garden Tours, etc. The Museum hosts the Canada Day Celebrations each year. In 2009, we had 6 such events including a weekly free program for children.

#### **Community Partnerships**

*Valemount Community Television* for recording Oral Histories and a recent screening at the Museum of a locally produced movie by high school students during a Museum Day event.

*Information Centres* for interpretive displays at Valemount and Mount Robson to attract visitors to the Museum.

*Valemount Public Library* for children's summer programs and staging for their Reading Rocks program.

Hosting Mountain Biking Provincial Championships on our grounds in 2009.

Tours during our regular season and off season for school students, daycare children and seniors.

#### **Joint Marketing Programs**



## *APPENDIX*

In 2009, we undertook joint marketing with the Columbia Basin Cultural Tour (Columbia Basin), Golden Raven Cultural Tour (Regional District) and the Kellogg Adventure Pass (national).