

The Rural Link

YOUR CONNECTION TO RURAL TEAM BC AND THE CANADIAN RURAL PARTNERSHIP

Spring 2005 - Issue 6

in this issue

- Rural Canadians speak their minds in Red Deer **2**
- Canadians opting for high speed Internet **2**
- Softwood program revitalizes communities **3**
- Peer mentorship helps young entrepreneurs succeed **3**
- Innovation and entrepreneurship: The path of business in rural British Columbia **4**
- B.C. Provincial Nominee Program **4**
- Building FASD friendly communities **5**
- 'K' Mountain Music Invitational Society **5**
- Get connected to energy opportunities **6**
- Cool communities, Cool school **6**
- Coastal Shore Stewardship Guide **7**
- Environmental farm plans and rural sustainability **8**

A Message from Rural Team BC

The Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) in B.C. helps to better connect government to rural communities, encouraging all levels of government to understand rural issues and identify ways to work together to address these issues more effectively. To develop that connection and collaborative effort, we have brought together representatives from a large number of federal departments, provincial ministries and rural organizations. This is our Rural Team, a group of individuals who are committed to helping address issues in small-to-medium sized communities.

The Team looks at emerging rural issues and information we gather from the rural dialogue sessions with rural citizens. We use this information to establish our actions and priorities. Our current priorities include: community access to the information highway;

community development issues such as economic diversification, community capacity building, partnerships, and the measurement of community progress; community strength, safety, and wellness issues relating to access to health care, linkage between health and environment, and safe communities; and creating more opportunities for youth to stay in their communities.

In an ongoing effort to support local solutions to local challenges,

Rural Team BC is also working to enhance communications with residents of rural and remote communities through efforts such as this newsletter and an active listserv.

To join the listserv or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Brandon Hughes,
Regional Policy Advisor
Rural Secretariat
Phone (250) 354-3178
E-Mail: hughes.bn@shaw.ca



Rural Team BC members and other delegates attend the Third National Rural Conference held in Alberta, October 2004

Softwood program revitalizes communities

By *Community Futures Development Association of BC*

A site that once drove tourists away will now draw them in to visit a piece of Maritime history and learn about the future of aquatic health sciences in Campbell River. Replacing the city's abandoned sewage plant with a Maritime Heritage Centre was a dream of the Daybreak Rotary Club (and many

partners including the District of Campbell River, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, North Island College, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Aboriginal representatives) that became a reality when the Society received a \$322,250 contribution processed through the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Strathcona under the Softwood Industry

Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (SICEAI) program.

SICEAI is a national program that was implemented in 2003 to support those forest-dependent communities impacted by the US countervailing duties on softwood lumber. This program is funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WED), in partnership with the Community Futures Development

Association of BC (CFDA). Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) throughout the province are delivering the program to impacted communities. A total of \$50 million has been allocated to 146 BC projects designed to stimulate investment and job creation, generate long-term economic benefits and provide a transition away from traditional forest-based dependence to

Continued on Page 3



Rural Canadians speak their minds in Red Deer

By the Honourable Wayne Easter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with Special Emphasis on Rural



Youth Network, and continued throughout the weekend. Their message was clear and heartfelt: youth don't just want to be listened to by government; they want the tools to be active and productive leaders in their communities. They also insisted that youth programs need to be developed *with* youth, not just *for* youth.

“The conference helped me connect to other youth who are as passionate about sustaining their rural communities as I am. It made me aware of the efforts being made to include youth in policies and decision making while offering a forum for youth voices to be heard.” Vixn Przybysz, North Okanagan Youth Society)

Northerners too were clear in their message: northern communities face many challenges, but northerners have the creativity and the initiative to overcome them. They are also great producers of wealth for the rest of Canada. The North needs government to supply the tools and the support they need to bring to life the vision they have for their communities. Northerners spoke of the need for infrastructure programs suited to their needs, streamlined governance, and for all levels of government to work together and to share information. They also spoke of the need for municipal governments to work towards common goals for both their community and their area.

As I said in my closing remarks in Red Deer, the fabric of this country rests in rural Canada. We are going to continue to build our communities in rural Canada because we deserve our share, because we are producers of wealth in this nation. Together we will build on what we have, and we will take action for sustainable rural communities—where there's heart and where there's hope.

“The National Rural Conference was an excellent opportunity to come together and hear how Canadians in other parts of Canada work towards meeting many of the common challenges we all face in our communities, whether rural or urban. It's that “informed rural perspective” we all bring to such a meeting which made the conference so rich and meaningful.”

Harry Adam, *Pacific Community Networks.*

We saw a lot of this passion at the Third National Rural Conference held in Red Deer, Alberta from October 21-23, 2004. And we saw a lot of enthusiasm, drive and willingness to find ways to take action and build strategies to strengthen and sustain rural Canada. It is this sort of positive and forward-thinking human effort that will make a difference in rural Canada.

The National Rural Conference focused on five subjects important to rural Canada: entrepreneurship, community capacity building, infrastructure, northern issues and youth. Participants talked about projects going on in their communities, what makes them successful and what could be done to better support them and similar projects.

They spoke of the need for collaboration, partnerships and communication within and between communities, and the value of cooperatives in rural communities. They also spoke of the importance of long-term and stable government programs that rural communities could count on, and quality information they could use for planning. Increasing the awareness and understanding of the interdependency between rural and urban Canada was also raised.

Youth from rural communities made their presence felt throughout the conference. This began with a youth forum organized by the National Rural

Canadians opting for high speed Internet

The Internet is fast evolving to become a tool for economic and social development, as well as a valuable resource for education and entertainment.

As Canadians become increasingly dependant on the Internet, the issue of a “digital divide” between urban and rural communities is becoming more important and is seen as needing immediate attention. Rural communities across Canada are unable to take advantage of the opportunities created by the Internet because of the lack of basic infrastructure, which larger cities may take for granted.

“High-speed broadband connections to the Internet are flourishing in urban areas, but have been very slow to reach the rural north,” explains Rod Wheeler, a resident of Atlin, BC, a small community of 450 residents situated 57 kilometres south of the BC/Yukon border. This remote area is only connected to the Yukon portion of the Alaska Highway by a 98-kilometre gravel road.

The community of Atlin, like many other remote communities across Canada, is currently connecting to the Internet using dial-up connections. “Dial-up connections are very slow and often unreliable,” describes Rod. “Atlin residents are placed at a distinct disadvantage because we can't make full use of this medium—as a result, business and educational opportunities are severely limited.”

Thanks to the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program, Atlin is on its way to getting high-speed Internet connection. “This program will assist in levelling the playing field for small, rural communities to that of large, urban centres,” explains Cindy Jeromin, an Industry Canada Broadband program officer. Cindy, along with Gary Paugh, Director of Broadband, and Tanya Foran, Broadband Specialist, is working to fund nine projects in communities similar to Atlin across British Columbia.

Industry Canada's Broadband Pilot Program used a competitive process to bring broadband, or high-capacity Internet to unserved rural, remote and First Nations communities across Canada. Atlin was among the successful applicants who received funding to build the

infrastructure necessary to bring this community online.

The Broadband Pilot Program marks the first step toward the federal government's commitment to ensuring broadband Internet access for all Canadian communities, in partnership with local communities, the provinces, territories and the private sector. In total, the Government of Canada has invested \$4.2-million to support the development of business plans and

“Broadband can bring people in different regions closer together—from a doctor in Prince George and a patient in Atlin to a grade three class in Prince Rupert . . .”

\$79-million in the deployment of broadband services to Aboriginal, northern and rural communities across Canada.

“This program will definitely bring about positive change in this community—it has the potential to affect everything from business to healthcare to education,” explains Rod Wheeler.

The Northern Health Authority in Atlin currently has three nurses and no doctor, resulting in a serious healthcare challenge. With broadband, these nurses will be able to send X-Rays to doctors via the Internet, and get diagnoses in real time. This will, for the most part, relieve residents of the need to travel great distances to receive sophisticated diagnosis and local treatment.

Broadband can bring people in different regions closer together—from a doctor in Prince George and a patient in Atlin to a grade three class in Prince Rupert and a science centre in Kelowna. While this is next to impossible with Internet access over a regular dial-up phone line, broadband provides the support needed to view or participate in these opportunities. “Broadband is not the answer to our fiscal problems,” explains Rod, “but it is a catalyst.”

The community of Atlin is looking forward to connect with the rest of the world!

For more information on the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program, please visit www.broadband.gc.ca.

Softwood program revitalizes communities

Continued from Page 1
alternative and sustainable economic activities.

Situated in the heart of the downtown core, amongst the Farmer's Market and overlooking the Discovery Pier, the Maritime Heritage Centre will boast a large hall, meeting room, boardroom, an activity learning centre and the chance to explore the BCP 45 Seine fishing boat that was featured on the \$5 bill. There are also future plans for a state of the art wet lab for aquaculture research. It is expected that the economic activity arising from the centre will help alleviate the impact of jobs lost in the community, which had an estimated 36% of its residents dependent upon the forest industry.

The hall of the centre, made with beautiful second growth wood and milled from a few forest industry companies, is a testament to the dedication of the volunteers, fundraising, and overall community effort that helped make the Maritime Heritage Centre a reality.

Another example of a community project that has prospered with the help of the SICEAI program is the Merritt Walk of Stars Society. The Society will receive a contribution of \$375,000 from WED through the CFDC of Nicola Valley for a project that will create a country-music artist Walk of Stars tourist attraction within the downtown area of the City of Merritt. This project is Phase I of a



plan to create a western-themed tourism destination centred around the recent proclamation of Merritt as the "Country Music Capital of Canada." Subsequent phases will include conversion of the facades of downtown buildings to a western theme and an initiative to bring

"The Walk of Stars includes handprints from country music legends such as Loretta Lynn, Johnny Cash and Kenny Rogers."

country-themed entertainment to the community throughout the year.

The Walk of Stars project involves the casting of ninety-nine bronze replicas of country-music artists' concrete handprint and signature impressions in an existing

collection that includes handprints from country music legends such as Loretta Lynn, Johnny Cash and Kenny Rogers. The bronze castings will be installed in the sidewalks of the downtown area.

The project also includes the creation of a Walk of Stars Showcase Centre. The Centre will provide information and directions to visitors, highlight the many country music artists contained within the Walk of Stars through interactive and static displays, showcase project sponsors, and provide an area for media events and future star unveilings.

The creation of an all-encompassing western-themed tourism destination for Merritt will create new economic activity that will diversify the local economy and bring tourism-related jobs and business opportunities for residents.

For more information on SICEAI and the Community Futures Network, please visit www.communityfutures.ca.

Rural Team BC participates in an initiative to address rural homelessness

In the spring of 2004, several members of Rural Team BC participated on the Regional Homelessness Fund proposal review committee. The fund is a new component of the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, designed to provide support to small and rural communities experiencing homelessness. Ultimately, the objective of the initiative is to provide communities with support to develop sustainable approaches to moving people out of the cycle of homelessness and helping to stabilize the living arrangements of those at risk of

homelessness.

Proposals were received from all regions of the province and the committee worked to ensure a geographical balance in those projects that were recommended for approval. Inclusion of Aboriginal persons and youth were also key criteria in project selection. A total of 20 projects were recommended for funding in the following BC communities: Fort Nelson, Bulkley Valley, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Terrace, Fernie, Williams Lake/100 Mile House, Creston, Vernon, Oliver/Osoyoos, Abbotsford/Mission, Courtenay,

Campbell River, and one province-wide initiative. Projects range in focus from awareness raising and community capacity building to development of supportive housing services, meal programs and development of best practices for shelters and hostels. Once the projects are up and running, the Regional Homelessness Fund committee will explore strategies to add value to the process, such as holding an event in 2005 to bring project proponents together for the purpose of sharing lessons learned and best practices.

Peer mentorship helps young entrepreneurs succeed

Twenty per cent of all BC entrepreneurs are under 35 years old. They are using their energy, ideas and passion to turn their dreams into reality. That's the good news. The bad news is that youth-owned businesses are failing at an alarming rate. Over 75% fail within the first four years of operation. The reasons for this business failure usually include a lack of start-up capital, overall financial mismanagement, and limited access to information and resources. Of those who survive the first four years, only one in 10 last a decade. The stats can be scary but there are programs to assist young entrepreneurs in building successful and sustainable businesses.

The Young Entrepreneurs Association of Canada (YEA) is a national, non-profit organization that provides unique opportunities for entrepreneurs under 35 to connect with peers who understand the challenges and rewards of entrepreneurship. YEA is built on the belief that young entrepreneurs improve their chances of business success by sharing in the knowledge and experiences of their peers.

On Thursday, September 23, 2004, YEA launched its Peer Mentorship Program across Canada. This program is designed to provide young business owners with a group of peer mentors who offer ideas, wisdom, experience and support. The Peer Mentorship Program is the first national program of its kind to be delivered to rural entrepreneurs across Canada.

The need for such a program is overwhelming. A Peer Mentorship Group (PMG) places 8-10 YEA members into non-competing groups of business owners who meet monthly to share ideas and experiences in a confidential environment. The structure is based on the core values of confidentiality, commitment and communication and encourages participants to share, learn and teach each other in a casual and safe environment.

"Committing to a PMG can make a big difference in the success of a young entrepreneur," says Rebecca Myers, YEA's Director of Operations. "While our family and friends sometimes struggle to understand the nature of the issues we face as young entrepreneurs, PMG members know exactly what we are going through!"

PMG participants benefit from the knowledge and life experience of their peers. They collect tips and tools to manage professional challenges and can also get support for more personal issues.

To gain access to a Peer Mentorship Group in your community you must be a member of YEA. For more information on the YEA, visit www.yea.ca, or call 1 (888) 639-3222.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: The path of business in rural British Columbia

By Terri MacDonald, Mike Stolte, and Robert Stacey

Traditionally thought of as a vast resource-based economy, rural BC is undergoing a business transformation.

Recent research suggests that entrepreneurship is responsible for creating 60–80% of new jobs in North America in the last decade. *The State of Entrepreneurship in Rural BC* report states that the fate of rural communities in BC will increasingly be tied to stimulating an entrepreneurial environment within communities.

Jobs are being lost due to gains in productivity from new labour-saving equipment and outsourcing of many processes outside Canada, while resource extraction and most manufacturing are not expected to see an increase in the overall number of jobs. So if these traditional mainstays of rural BC communities continue to under perform, what are rural communities to do?

Nine rural BC communities have addressed the issue by examining their business health through the Business Vitality Index (BVI). The BVI process assists communities to focus on key community issues, and jump-starts action on priorities to improve business friendliness.

The BVI provincial report assessed nine rural BC communities throughout the province from November 2001 to June 2003. The report documents the findings, identifies problem areas and areas of strength, highlights some success stories, and makes recommendations for building prosperous entrepreneurial communities. The recommendations fall under three broad categories: attitudes, networking and opportunities.

Attitudes

Culture: By nurturing a community culture that encourages entrepreneurs, a long-term approach to building sustainable and

prosperous communities can be created.

Youth: Including and engaging youth in entrepreneurship in rural communities is an effective way of



With only 120 business licenses per thousand people, more than double most communities, Nelson leads the way in innovation and entrepreneurship

not only retaining, but also attracting youth to rural communities.

Vision: The key to a community's success is focused action that objectively lays out plans, visions and targeted measures.

Change Ready: A switch in thinking from “what’s been lost” to “how can we use our assets for future growth” can address burnout and negativity, and help to build community spirit.

Networking

Cooperation: Encouraging cooperation within communities and especially within regions is an important step in enabling communities to benefit economically through a regional approach.

Leadership: Leadership in the community can be renewed through rewards, success stories, mentoring opportunities, and by tapping into the talent and expertise of new residents.

Networking: Networking opportunities through forums or community events can be created between and among businesses, business support organizations, community organizations, government and community members.

Opportunities

Education: Life-long learning approaches can be encouraged through community-based organizations (i.e. colleges, Community Futures, youth centres). *Innovation:* Promoting attitudes that encourage and acknowledge the importance of innovation within the new knowledge-based economy is vital. Communities can be encouraged to identify and utilize key assets as catalysts for innovation, education and economic development.

Capital and funding: Issues around capital must be addressed in a meaningful way through education, utilizing mentors experienced in finance, encouraging investors, or promoting forums that build networks and promote the exchange of knowledge around funding.

These are just a few guidelines that have emerged from the BVI process to help a developing community realize its full potential. For more information, or to download the full report visit www.BusinessVitalityIndex.com.

B.C. Provincial Nominee Program supports development in smaller communities

Three years ago, Penny Gould was on a hunt. As imaging manager for Queen Victoria Hospital in Revelstoke, she had already lost one technologist to long-term disability and was about to lose another to maternity leave—which meant she would soon be on her own, the only one at Queen Victoria to do x-rays and ultrasounds, oncall 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But then she found Paula Hill.

For Paula Hill, an American, the job was exactly what she wanted—combining both her specialties, radiation and ultrasound imaging—in exactly the place she wanted. After completing her training in the U.S., Hill spent 12 years working in Maine. “Then my husband and I came out to B.C. on a mountaineering vacation, and that changed everything,” she says. “We decided right away that we’d really like to live here.”

Fortunately for Gould, Hill took a chance and moved across the border. Gould says she learned about the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program from the local paper and encouraged Hill to apply. Hill’s immigration process took about a year in total, much less than the average two to three years for applicants outside of the program. “With the program,” says Hill, “I felt like I had a friend. The process was not as bureaucratic and I did not need an immigration lawyer.”

Gould is glad things have worked out—for everyone concerned—but predicts there will be other technologists and hospitals in exactly the same position she managed, just barely, to avoid.

“A lot of technologists are reaching

retirement right now,” says Gould. “There aren’t enough, and smaller facilities, especially remote ones, are having a hard time finding techs. So I’m glad we found Paula, and that she’s here permanently.”

The British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program is one way the province and Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) are working in partnership with communities to meet skills shortages and economic needs. Employers facing a shortage of skilled workers find a qualified person, offer them a job and then work with them to complete and submit an application to the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services. The company must prove both that it has tried to fill the job with a Canadian worker and that the prospective employee has the right qualifications. If the ministry approves the employee as a provincial nominee, CIC will expedite his or her application for permanent residence in Canada.

There are a substantial number of employers using the program to address skills shortages regionally. It has positively impacted regional immigration to B.C., and communities from Prince Rupert to Invermere are recognizing that immigrants can play an important role in bringing their economic development plans to fruition. Discussions with key stakeholders are underway to determine how to promote further regional immigration and how additional communities could be engaged.

For additional information visit www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/amip/prgs/id.htm

Building FASD friendly communities: An important step towards more inclusive communities

By Jen Kyffin

The difficulties experienced by individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) present obstacles in every sphere of healthy living. FASD is a term for a range of diagnosable mental and physical

important step in this process is to give those living with FASD a voice that can help people to understand the invisible disability and to work together to develop solutions that build on shared understanding, respect and inclusiveness.

Awareness is not enough - it must lead to collective action for inclusion.

disabilities caused as a result of a birth mother's alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Permanent brain damage caused by prenatal alcohol

In order to increase understanding and practical supports for people living with FASD, the Cowichan Valley FAS Society developed Action for Inclusion. In this project, persons living with FASD work under the

and a disability program – received Inclusion Audits with recommendations, training, and support to make their organizations more FASD friendly.

Now in its second year, the Action for Inclusion project team is working with other BC communities including: Victoria, Campbell River, northern communities and First Nations communities of Penelakut, Lyackson, Chemainus, Helalt and

Malahat, to provide training that will enable them to replicate the Inclusion Audit process in their own communities. What is learned throughout the project will be compiled in a manual that will be distributed nationally in 2006.

If you are interested in learning more about the FASD Inclusion Audit process, please contact the Cowichan Valley FAS Society at (250) 748-0236 or e-mail info@cvfasd.org.



Some members of the Cowichan Valley FASD Action Team. Left to right: Dave Parkyn, Jen Kyffin, Belinda Jack, Leila Wilson and Lance deBree

is often misinterpreted as willful misconduct, laziness, dishonesty or being stubborn, when in fact, people living with FASD are struggling to understand instructions, need assistance organizing, have chronic memory problems, and experience sensory overload that impedes their ability to focus and process.

Without intervention and support, people living with FASD are more likely than their peers to develop mental health problems (especially anxiety and

depression), low achievement at school, problems with the police, alcohol and drug related problems and other difficulties that result from their chronic experience of repeated failures and not fitting in with others.

With intervention and support, our communities can adjust their expectations of people living with alcohol-caused brain damage. An

guidance of project staff to help community organizations identify the physical and social factors that impact accessibility and service provision to people with FASD. Each organization also receives training, written recommendations, follow-up and support to implement FASD inclusion strategies.

In the first year of the project, eight organizations throughout the Cowichan Valley Regional District — including Malaspina University-

Here's some of the feedback to date: "The site assessments were powerful because they were concrete and manageable." "I can put this information to work in my class and understand students' learning difficulties as they relate to the physical learning environment, strategies of teaching delivery styles, employment opportunities."

College, the RCMP, a women's safe house, a community resource centre, an early child education centre, a family counseling centre, a family summer camp program

'K' Mountain Music Invitational Society: Bringing new musical experience to a spectacular setting

By Sarah Godin

Keremeos is a vibrant agricultural community located in the beautiful Similkameen Valley of British Columbia. The Music Under the "K" Festival plays an integral role in Keremeos by bringing people together, generating pride in its citizens and providing a focal point

1999, the Society estimates the total audiences for the professional groups' concerts during the 2003 edition at over 3,000. Volunteers significantly boost the festival's success with 240 people in a town of 1,000 donating their time and energy to the production of the event. The festival receives support from the



for community spirit. The creation of the festival was the first concerted effort to bring professional music performances to Keremeos.

Held annually during the last weekend of May, the main objective of the Music under the 'K' Festival is to foster greater appreciation and support for music in the region and to develop facilities that will create more opportunities for musical experiences. The festival has played an important role in increasing the appreciation of the performing arts in Keremeos by hosting a variety of styles including classical, folk, rock, blues and jazz. A primary focus of the festival is on youth and emerging artists from the Similkameen region and across British Columbia.

The festival has grown significantly since its inception in

Department of Canadian Heritage through the Arts Presentation Canada Program.

In 2003, the Society purchased a portable bandshell for the main stage and created the bandshell trust. Artists now have a stage cover to protect their equipment from bad weather, and stage lighting capabilities will allow for more evening performances.

The closest indoor or outdoor performing venues are located 45 km away in Penticton and Osoyoos. Although the stage cover will provide only an outdoor facility, at least now for the summer months Keremeos will have a performance space.

Get connected to energy opportunities: BC Climate Exchange can help!

By Marni Gillis

What is the BC Climate Exchange?

The BC Climate Exchange (BCCE) is a province-wide initiative coordinated by the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) in partnership with the Canadian Institute for Climate Studies, Environment Canada and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. The number one priority is to strengthen connections between community, business and government organizations engaged in public education and outreach on climate

change, its impacts and solutions.

The BCCE sees climate change as integrally linked to all aspects of sustainability—a healthy environment, a vibrant economy and social well-being. The BCCE shares success stories of what individuals, businesses and communities can do to create healthier homes, reduce energy costs and improve their quality of life through the smart use of energy.

Here's one example of a success story in the making:

Cool communities! Cool school!

Through its “Cool Communities!” program, FBC with support from Western Economic Diversification is working on several initiatives that assist communities to become stronger through energy efficiency. Only a few minutes away from the historic gold rush town of Barkerville, Wells is one of BC's smallest communities, with a population of 175. Last year, the Wells-Barkerville Elementary School

Hendrixson and his council wanted to increase the energy efficiency of the school to reduce operating costs and maintain this important community asset. This would free up funds for other community activities while reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs).

The Wells Council explored energy options at the school, including upgrading the school to a geothermal energy system. This proved to



Mayor David Hendrixson at the reopening of the Wells-Barkerville Elementary School

was scheduled to close, with children to be bussed 80 km to schools in Quesnel.

To ensure its continued operation, the District of Wells took the unprecedented step of taking ownership of the school. Built in the 1930s, the school's monthly heating and electricity bills were significant. Mayor Dave

be a high cost item with a payback period of more than ten years. However, there turned out to be many short-term actions that would provide a greater “bang for the buck”. These included installing programmable thermostats to control temperatures, upgrading insulation, installing more efficient lighting (with

Rural BC Talks

Rural Team British Columbia continues to support the open dialogue among rural citizens and all levels of government through the listserv service Rural BC Talks. Participants from previous dialogues acknowledged the need to continue the discussion, share their successes and failures, and foster new relationships and networks with respect to community development.

Rural BC Talks encourages the opportunities for communities to make linkages, furthering rural development initiatives. The listserv is open to anyone interested in issues relating to rural British Columbia. We encourage you to subscribe by sending an e-mail to ruralteambc@agr.gc.ca.

assistance from BC Hydro's Product Incentive Program), controlling heat migration between floors, and sealing cracks around external doors and windows.

Whether you are an individual or part of an organization there are tonnes of ways to get involved - literally!

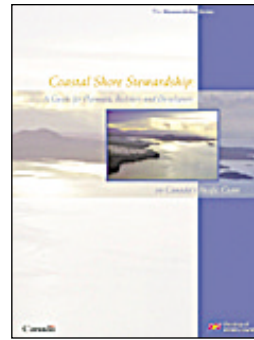
Join the One Tonne Challenge today! Sign up by following the link on the BCCE Web site at www.bcclimateexchange.ca.

Or, get in touch with the staff at the BC Climate Exchange by e-mailing climate@fraserbasin.bc.ca.

One Tonne Challenge: 1 simple challenge, 1 tonne of results.

On average, each Canadian generates just over 5 tonnes of GHGs per year driving vehicles, heating and cooling homes, washing and drying clothes, and using other appliances. The challenge for each of us is to reduce our annual GHG emissions by 1 tonne. If it sounds like a lot, think of this: more than 50% of our total personal GHGs come from driving. Driving smarter or using other forms of transportation will significantly reduce fuel consumption and emissions and save you money.

Coastal Shore Stewardship Guide: Promoting sustainable development in our coastal communities



By Graham van der Slagt

Released in January 2004 as part of the award-winning Stewardship Series, the *Coastal Shore Stewardship Guide* is now being promoted and distributed among coastal communities in British Columbia. The guide was created in response to some of the poorly designed commercial and residential developments along our coasts, which can cause irreversible changes to shorelines, damage habitat and impact shoreline properties. This can result in changes to water quality, damage wetlands and estuaries, diminish the beauty of the coastline and impact local economies. In short, the guide is intended to help individuals and coastal communities save money while preserving and protecting valuable shorelines.

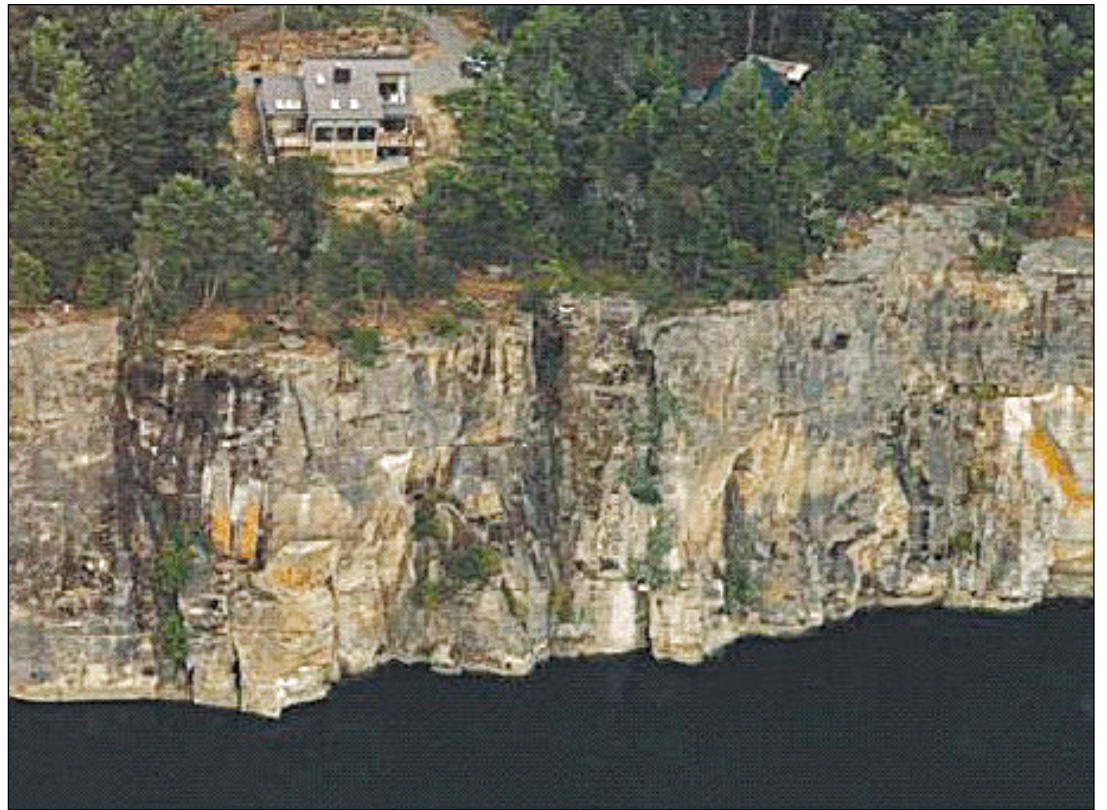
The guide informs planners, developers and the public how they can protect coastal areas, by providing information on the biological and physical processes that shape our shores. The guide also introduces best management practices for development on our varied shores and landscapes and summarizes some of the complex legislation that developers need to be aware of. Information is presented in

simple, easy-to-understand language with many explanatory diagrams and pictures to illustrate concepts. Users of the guide will be left with three simple key messages: don't disrupt, don't harden and don't pollute.

In the spring of 2004, a series of five workshops were held in coastal communities throughout BC to present the guide to local planners and developers. Participants were provided with an overview of each section of the guide, and were given an opportunity to apply the information

they'd learned to local case studies. The workshops were well-received, with 85% of the participants rating the information in the guide as "Excellent" or "Good," and 100% of the participants indicating that they will be able to use the information from the guide and the workshops in the near future.

The *Coastal Shore Stewardship Guide* was developed under the BC



Until recently, development along the BC shore gave little consideration to coastal processes.

Stewardship Centre banner through a partnership agreement between Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada, the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, the David Suzuki Foundation, and Ducks Unlimited. The BC Stewardship Centre is a partnership of government, private sector, professional and educational organizations, created to provide

better access to information and tools to improve stewardship of our land, water and air resources.

The guide can be viewed online at the BC Stewardship Centre site www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca. Any questions or comments about the guide can be directed to Graham van der Slagt at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, (604) 666-1089 or vanderslagtg@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Challenges and opportunities revealed at B.C. Rural Youth Forums

By Crystal Kimber, *Bridging the Canyons Society*

The small community of Boston Bar/North Bend, B.C. was temporary home for half a dozen Vernon youths



Some members of the North Okanagan Youth Source (NOYS) in Boston Bar. The group met with local youth to share ideas and stories about building a youth council

during the Bridging the Canyons Youth Forum on July 7-8, 2004. A group of youth known as The Noys (North Okanagan Youth Source) was there to speak to local youth aged

14–30 years old about the great things that a youth council can accomplish. Vixn Przybysz, youth leader for The Noys, spoke about some of their group's great accomplishments like the annual Red Carpet Film Festival, which features film projects by youth 21 and under.

The forum allowed local youth to voice their concerns about the community and to dare to

dream about some of the changes they would like to see. "The overall effect of the forum was positive and encouraging," said Vixn Przybysz. "It helped build momentum to form a youth council that is inclusive to the different groups of youth and meets their needs."

On July 15, 2004, the Kaien Island Youth Council (KIYC) from Prince Rupert presented at the Lytton Youth Forum where they shared some of their successful projects and brainstormed around ways to get some of the youth initiatives for Boston Bar and Lytton moving forward. Mobilizing local youths, and the Boston Bar group from the week before, the discussions built upon the momentum started at the earlier

forum. Youth from the Lytton area, including Siska Indian Band and Lytton First Nations, attended and were a very generous, energetic group of young people. It was an excellent opportunity to gain an understanding of the different challenges youth face in small, rural communities and provided a forum to look at how youth can take action to create positive change.

The issues discussed at the forum were varied. Many were age oriented like the desire for more recreation and organized sports, but through the discussions, the youth revealed that many of them had similar concerns about serious issues such as racism and separatism in the communities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Rural Team British Columbia Members

Federal Partners:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 Canadian Forest Service
 Canadian Heritage
 Environment Canada
 Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 Health Canada
 Human Resources and Skills
 Development Canada
 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
 Industry Canada
 Natural Resources Canada
 Public Safety and Emergency
 Preparedness Canada
 Public Works and Government Services
 Rural Secretariat
 Social Development Canada
 Status of Women Canada
 Western Economic Diversification

B.C. Provincial Partners:

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and
 Women's Services
 Ministry of Health Planning
 Ministry of Management Services
 Ministry of Small Business and
 Economic Development

Community Partners:

BC CED Network
 Columbia Basin Trust
 Community Futures Development
 Association of BC
 Fraser Basin Council

Rural Team BC



Environmental farm plans and rural sustainability: Protecting our drinking water sources

By Geoff Gilliard

The Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer in the Fraser Valley is an important source of irrigation and drinking water for many people on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. Yet there are several areas of the aquifer where the level of nitrate contamination exceeds the recommended Canadian guideline for drinking water. The problem comes mainly from nitrates in fertilizers including manure that is spread on farmland above the aquifer and leaches into the groundwater.

Nitrate is harmful to human health. It is especially threatening to infants because it decreases the amount of oxygen in their blood causing "blue baby syndrome."

The Georgia Basin Action Plan, a collaborative framework to address the sustainability of healthy ecosystems and communities, has assisted Fraser Valley farmers to tackle the nitrate contamination problem. The nitrate management and groundwater protection efforts, initiated through the Georgia Basin Action Plan in the Fraser Valley, are good examples of sustainable agricultural practices that will be

promoted through Environmental Farm Plans (EFP).

An EFP is a voluntary program that farmers and ranchers can use to identify both environmental strengths and any potential risks on their land. The EFP program will be delivered by the B.C. Agriculture Council throughout the province, and is guided by a work group composed of the Council, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Other agencies, including Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection are also supporting the program.

"Trained Planning Advisors will work with groups of farmers in a workshop setting and then work individually with each farmer to identify action items and prepare their Environmental Farm Plans," says Geoff Hughes-Games, a Provincial Soil Specialist with Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. "We put together an advisor

training program and to date we've trained 63 people."

"We did a series of workshops around the province to pilot the materials and the concept of the Environmental Farm Plan and we also did some pilot plans on farms," Hughes-Games says. "By and large the response from the workshop participants and the volunteers who allowed us to come on their farms to develop Environmental Farm Plans were very enthusiastic. They gave us lots of great constructive feedback that improved the whole program."

Information about cost-share funding to assist farmers with implementing their plan is available from EFP planning advisors. For more information on EFPs or to download brochures and applications forms, visit BC Agriculture Council at www.bcac.bc.ca/efp_programs.htm. For more information on the Georgia Basin Action Plan visit www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/GeorgiaBasin/.

FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Phone: 1-800-0-CANADA (1-800-622-6232)
 TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735

Web: www.canada.gc.ca

Service Canada Access Centres/Centres
 d'accès Service Canada

For more information
 on the Canadian Rural Partnership and
 Rural Team British Columbia contact:

Brandon Hughes,
 Regional Policy Advisor
 Rural Secretariat
 333 Victoria Street, Main Floor
 Nelson, BC V1L 4K3

Phone: (250) 354-3178 E-mail: hughes.bn@shaw.ca

E-mail the Team at
ruralteambc@agr.gc.ca or
 visit the Team on the Web at
www.rural.gc.ca/team/bc/bchome_e.phtml

Do you have an idea or story you would like to see
 included in *The Rural Link*?
 We welcome your submissions for consideration.

Contact: Christina Prasad, Rural Secretariat
 Tel.: 604-666-1677 E-mail: prasadc@agr.gc.ca

AAFC Publication No. 2096/E ISSN 1499-7002
 © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2005
 Aussi disponible en français

