



# **SUMMARY**

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

**FORT ST. JOHN**

MARCH 2, 2004

**PREMIER'S TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL**

This document is a summary only of presentations made during the regional consultations in Fort St. John on March 2, 2004 and written submissions provided to the Premier's Technology Council. Every effort has been made to consider all input presented and be as accurate as possible. However, errors or omissions may have occurred. Please notify the PTC of any significant inaccuracies at

[Premiers.TechnologyCouncil@gems8.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Premiers.TechnologyCouncil@gems8.gov.bc.ca).

## FORT ST. JOHN CONSULTATIONS

Date : Tuesday, March 2, 2004  
 Time : 09:00-17:00  
 Location : Northern Grand Hotel  
 9325 - 100 Street Fort St John.

In attendance:  
 - Jim Mutter, PTC President  
 - Darcy O'Grady, PTC Council Member  
 - Len Juteau, PTC - Director of Operations  
 - Tia Tjandisaka - PTC Analyst

### AGENDA

Time	Organization	Name	Page
09:00-09:45	Doig River First Nations	Chief Gary Oker Warren Reade Pamelyn Koehn	1
09:45-10:15	Sci-Tech North	Lori Lynn Ackerman Dale Sokoloski	2
10:15-11:00	Northern Lights College	Marjo Wheat Mark Hanen	3
11:00-11:30	Northern BC Distance Education School	Hugh Bartlett Laurie Shuster	5
11:30-12:00	SD#60 – Peace River North	David Vandergugten	7
14:00-17:00			
	Kiwanis Enterprise Centre	Chad Anderson	7
	Northern Opportunities	John Royer	8
	Peace Region Internet Society	Arvo Koppel	9
	Axis IT Solutions	Dan Arbeau	11
	Eagle Vision Productions Ltd.	Lori Ackerman Dale Sokoloski	11
	Morrison Machine Works (written submission)	Jim Morrison	12
	<u>Observer:</u>		
	TELUS	Kevin White	

This page has been left blank intentionally

## DOIG RIVER FIRST NATIONS

Chief Gary Oker, Warren Reade, Pamelyn Koehn

### Introduction

- Located approx 70 km northeast of Fort St John, area is rich in natural resources
- Reserve: 2,500 acres; Approx 230 band members; adherent to Treaty 8
- Traditional people: Dane-zaa people, speak Beaver language

### Traditional People Using New Tools

- There is an urgency to capture traditional knowledge from elders (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, stories, language)
- Translated knowledge into policies and procedures for Land Management
  - data collection process –a lot of studies – but implementation is hard to do
- Combine culture and science together to benefit FN communities
- Transition into information area is a challenge
  - huge technology gap - many people do not have a clue about technology

### Challenges to technology

- Remoteness of community: no access to ADSL, slow dial up, lack of IT support
- Education level of members - lack of training for members
- Cost of technology - no funding for hardware, most funding programs are a one-time funding (no on-going financial support)
- Many band members do not own computers

Despite the gaps – we still find resources - negotiate with companies and government

- A new administration and community complex –cost \$5M
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Program
  - Partnered with Natural Resources Canada, North East Native Advancing Society, and the Oil & Gas Commission to offer a one-year training program to 2 band members
- Web development
  - Youth training project to develop a website about a traditional moosehunt
  - Develop a community website to educate community: [www.doigriverfn.com](http://www.doigriverfn.com)
  - Compilation of genealogies on computer - involve elders
- Video documentaries
  - "Contact the People" - 24 minute documentary, developed in 2000
    - o this creates summer employment and becomes a teaching tool for youth
    - o we are trying to document the past, present and future of our people
  - "Living Landscapes"- hosting the northeast BC as the focal point
  - "They Dream About Everything" - 50 min documentary, to be released in April 2004
- Stories and knowledge is important to transfer knowledge to the next generation
  - With technology, especially animation, it will be easier to capture the spiritual concept
- Cultural education and preservation: Dreamers' song CD, Digital video/voice/data archive since 1964 (know what changes happen in the community), taped elder interviews, Beaver language CD and teaching tapes, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) Television Documentary on "Finding Our Talk", 6000 digitized photos (2000 more to do – if not we will lose it)

### Moving Forward

- With multimedia and network connectivity - people around the world can learn our history
- Continuing education - everyone has different learning styles – we need to use as many forms as possible to get the information through
- Building a sound economic base to move beyond training - use technology to do this
- Developing a Land Use Management Strategy that integrates traditional knowledge
- Use website for communication with members – and around the world
- Need computer training for members and high speed Internet for all houses in community
- Develop a virtual museum
- Continue GIS program - digitally map entire traditional territory for a virtual tour (eg., can be used for tourism)
- Databases for Land Department – enable information sharing faster

### Message to the PTC:

- There is a need for a committed funding to develop a technology infrastructure, and to hire and train our people in IT.
- There is a lack of technical support in the region.

### SCI-TECH NORTH

**Lori Lyn Ackerman, Dale Sokoloski**

Currently going through an organizational change:

- Board training for Board of Directors (to understand their roles and responsibilities)
- New and updated mission statement and objectives to move us forward
- Seeking Directors - we currently do not have representation from all communities in the region

Projects:

- Renewable energy - wind and solar
- Sci-Tech North clients working with the Canadian Technology Network (CTN) to introduce CTN's programs to our clients
- Seminars: 2 day workshop in renewable energy, geothermal
  - The cost is high because we have to bring in people from outside the region
  - March 22: seminar of First Nations and Non-First nations Joint Venture
- Roadmap to Rural Resource industry cluster development
  - Beginning with the oil and gas industry
  - First Online database of oil and has related enterprises - companies can register online
  - EnCana acknowledge the potential
  - Taking this initiative to Vancouver, Terrace, Prince Rupert and Sherwood Park (transfer the knowledge) - promoting across Canada
  - Initialing cluster development in agriculture and forestry

Report on "Promoting Innovation and Commercialization in rural BC"

- Economic and business development organizations in the region to work together to strengthen all efforts
- Promoting opportunities for innovation, commercialization and networking throughout the Peace/Northern Rockies Region.

Benefits:

- Network with one another and other groups in North Eastern BC
- Share best practices and professional development activities
- Broaden base of support for network members
- Provide a structured forum for other organizations to communicate with members
- Identify, facilitate and secure resources for shared projects

Opportunities:

- UNBC to do a visioning and Strategic Development for Economic Development in Northern BC - March 19 in Dawson Creek
- Sci-Tech North is encouraging participation in this study so that we can get sub-regional perspectives and have representation from the NorthEast area.

Capital:

- There is a mistrust of government funding programs
  - For example, for SRED (Scientific Research and Experimental Development Program) and VCC program, when they come to Fort St John to promote the program - the money is already gone
- Venture Capital Corporation:
  - We need an angel forum here - we are endeavoring to create our own angel network
  - What we need to do is to start the process here, keep educating people and getting people involved - have knowledgeable people brought in

**Message to the PTC:**

There is a need for a Centre of Excellence for the Oil and Gas sector:

- look at the social, environmental, medical perspectives for the oil and gas sector
- R&D, incubation and technology transfer
- Look at government policies

With the presence of a Centre of Excellence we would be able to get endowment fund for medical research.

**NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE**

**Marjo Wheat, Mark Hanen**

- Covers northern third of BC: 324,000 km<sup>2</sup>, population: 67,000; large percentage resides in the Peace River region - largest towns: Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.
- Approximately 20% of the population registers in at least one course yearly.
- No IT programs:
  - Basic needs in the region is on oil and gas (focus on energy)
  - Don't have the bandwidth to deliver the program effectively
  - Lack of IT instructor

Challenges:

- Economies of scale is difficult to maintain in face-to-face programs, especially in smaller campuses and learning centres (eg., 3 or 4 people want to take a particular course, but viability requires a min of 16 students).

- Travel throughout the region is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming
- Telephone and cable companies are reluctant to install broadband service in remote sites with small populations (difficult to achieve economy of scale).
- Local primary industries: Oil & Gas exploration, Agriculture, and Forestry.
  - Many people travel extensively to work at remote sites where access to education is limited. NLC is currently developing pre-trades and oil & gas modules to prepare students to enter training in these areas. Online access to these modules would be helpful to prospective students.
- Students' average age is 30, many are employed and have families. They need flexible access to training and education. E-learning is a flexible tool to provide that access.
  - BCCampus can support learning in the north only if the infrastructure is in place to allow students to access it. Beginner students using eLearning also need extra support, especially in rural and remote areas. Local College campuses and learning centres can help support those students with face-to-face support at the critical starting period.

Strengths:

- Partnerships are needed to meet the needs of a sparse population over a large area:
  - with 3 School Districts and industries through the Northern Opportunities Project.
  - with Grand Prairie Regional College - agreed to share courses that are delivered by video-conferencing throughout the Peace Region. However, NLC is the 'bottleneck' in the system because of its low bandwidth and old equipment.
    - o need support from PLNet for dedicated bandwidth for videoconferencing. This would benefit all partners - school districts, industry and post-secondary.
- Innovations:
  - Developed a Distributed Delivery for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. 360 registrations this term (about one third are from greater Vancouver region). Delivery is through teleconference, print, and on-line methods using WebCT.
  - Hybrid course model for physics courses in Adult Basic Education (ABE). No physics instructor can be found in Dawson Creek. An instructor in Fort St. John teaches classes on the two campuses simultaneously, using white board technology, audio-conferencing and some face-to-face.
- Human Resources
  - Two educational technology facilitators: provide support to 264 regular staff
  - Has a cohort of instructors that are cognizant and capable of using the new technologies and are currently using these technologies to its limit.
- Experience with BCCampus - NLC has prepared and delivered courses through BCCampus. Continued growth and development of BCCampus will mean more opportunities for students in our region and faculty.

Opportunities (need sufficient technological infrastructure):

- Expanded course delivery with Grand Prairie Regional College.
- Increased offerings of our nursing programs and pre-nursing programs using video-conferencing and e-Learning methods.
- Trades and apprenticeship programs could use video-conferencing and WebCT to allow greater access to students throughout the region.
- Training programs for information technology specialist using e-packs, local resources and a strong connectivity base. Currently, we are one of the few colleges in BC that does not have an information technology program of study.



- We have had a number of requests for program delivery outside of BC. One is collaboration between NLC and Rainy River College in the eastern USA to co-deliver an Early Childhood Education program.

#### A Vision of Excellence

- A regional Northern Lights College Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) would encourage and facilitate distinction and innovation in teaching by offering: Media Production Services, Curriculum Development Expertise, Assistance With Educational Technology, Professional Development Resources
- A dedicated regional CTE would focus and highlight our existing resources and present an opportunity to add additional resources.

#### Message to the PTC:

- There is a need for increased bandwidth between communities to facilitate e-Learning delivery
- Restructuring post-secondary funding to acknowledge the local support needs of eStudents. Current FTE (Full-time Enrollment) funding is based on where they are enrolled - not where they get support.

#### **NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA DISTANCE EDUCATION SCHOOL (NBCDES) Hugh Bartlett, Laurie Shuster**

- One of the 9 Distance Education Schools in BC
- Regions covered: South East, North East, Stikine and Yukon
- DES started in this area – schools in Alaska: pay US\$12,000/year

#### Beliefs

- We believe that tomorrow's citizens must be able to learn in a variety of ways, including: face-to-face (instructor model), paper-based (programming the VCR model), online (including all kinds of media-rich vehicles)
- It is our responsibility to ensure our students are prepared for an environment where continuous learning using a variety of delivery systems is the norm.
- All students can and will learn given the right opportunity.
- All students have the right to equal opportunities.
- Relationships are essential to the learning process.

#### Challenges

- Schools need to provide a full suite of courses for their students but often can't access resources to provide a full elementary or secondary program.
- The BC Ministry requires that all schools provide a curriculum that is robust and meets the requirements for a fully funded program.

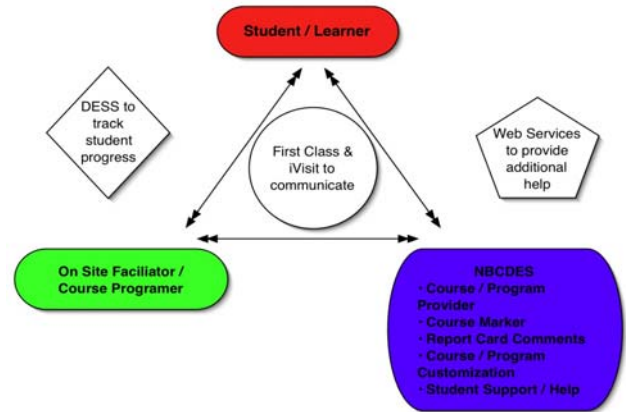
#### NBCDES Online Courses

- Are designed to be interactive and customizable
- Platform: Moodle (free, similar to WebCT)
- Courses available: CaPP (Career and Personal Planning) 8, 9, & 10; Accounting 11 & 12; Physical Education 8 - 10; English 10 & 11; full English suite coming soon.

- Course development is a focus for Distance Education Schools
  - Spent a lot of money for course development and learning object – there's a big debate on how best do it – should teachers be given learning objects and let them assemble the course, or should they be given the course as a package?

#### Learning triangle

- Students are supported by a school instructor and NBCDES staff
  - It is important to have on-site facilitator
- Programs are developed to meet student's needs - we have a 90% success rate



#### NBCDES provides:

- Customized course programs in various formats appropriate to the students' needs
  - Any of our paper based courses can be broken down to a per paper basis
  - Most of NBCDES are on an individualized program.
- Marking, assessment, evaluation and report card comments
- Student support/help
- Supplementary materials to support remedial students and challenge gifted students
- An electronic environment that facilitates communication, help for the student and interaction with other students

#### Issues of the Day

- 484 students enrolled - may range to as high as 700+ students taking 1200-2000 courses.
- In addition we have another 500 including adults wishing to graduate.
- Technology needs to be available and affordable for small schools-there is no economy of scale for them.
- Our students need good connectivity-the south just doesn't understand that TELUS isn't addressing the need for high speed in Coal River or Charlie Lake for that matter.
- Course development-time and money-who do we want developing? Who develops courses? Should be teacher – difficult, they are getting older and don't want to learn new stuff – need to make technology teacher friendly
- Technology skills of teachers
  - For teaching, developing and maintaining online courses (teachers put more hours to deliver online courses)
- Cost Issues
  - Course prices range between \$350 to \$650
  - How do we pay? We have enlightened Superintendents/Boards who believe in technology and some parents are willing to pay

There is a need for more partnerships with other institutions, eg., partner with Northern Lights College through Northern Opportunities to deliver training for skilled labour.

#### Message to the PTC:

There is a need for leadership in online education:

- A good indication that BC Ed Online is pushing the development of online learning objects

- We are not ready to accept BC ED Online as the leader in online education in British Columbia

**SCHOOL DISTRICT #60**  
**David Vandergugten**

Wireless writing program was initiated 3 years ago to improve student's writing scores

- We integrated technology into curriculum and collected the performance data
- We saw a double digit growth in writing performance
- 5 schools participated - 31 classrooms
- every school has a wireless network

Connectivity issues:

- 3 schools are on a 2 way satellite: Upper Pine, Prespatou and Buick Creek
  - To augment the speed – we put a DirecPC satellite on top of a 10-foot Infosat dish
    - o If Infosat receives more money from the province, they would be able to increase the bandwidth
  - If the backbone in Coquitlam is upgraded, every site can be upgraded (also helps other communities in BC):
    - o Tried contacting PLNet and EDS - no straight answer
    - o CITS (Common IT Services)/PLNet made quarterly visits to site
    - o It is not expensive to upgrade the connectivity in metro areas
    - o The digital divide group contacted us and mentioned that they want to increase connection in the Upper Pine – they didn't realize that we already have a 2 way satellite – all they need to do is increase the backbone connection in Coquitlam

**Message to the PTC:**

There is a need to increase the backend speed in Coquitlam to improve connection performances for the 3 school districts and other communities in BC.

**KIWANIS ENTERPRISE CENTRE**  
**Chad Anderson**

It is a challenge to find employment for youth –youth are encouraged to create their own opportunities.

- Branding the Peace Country Association
  - A non-profit membership-based organization formed to develop and promote a marketing advantage for the Peace Country.
  - Employing technology to create and promote a regional brand for the Peace River Country of northern Alberta and British Columbia (this is a cross border initiative)
  - Funded by Western Economic Diversification, Canadian Rural Partnership, local government and regional economic development groups
- CAP (Community Access Program) sites
  - Program funded by Industry Canada
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Feb - CAP Site Conference on sustainability and digital divide issue

- There is no sustainability funding and we try to do with what we have without funding. CAP sites needs funding to hire youth interns (currently there is federal program - CAP Youth Initiative)
- Peacecountry.com – a portal to Peace Country region
  - Funded by Western Economic Diversification (WED) and Sci-Tech North
  - A cross border initiative with northwestern Alberta
  - 850 links - to provide a centralized location for information on the Peace Country
- Enterprise On-line
  - A comprehensive learning resource centre designed to help entrepreneurs establish and maintain their own business (provide entrepreneurship and business training)
  - Maintained by the Kiwanis Enterprise Centre (KEC) to promote Entrepreneurship in the Peace Region of British Columbia. Funded by Office of Learning Technologies
  - Introduce e-commerce to help market companies' products and services in the region
- Peace Country New Media Association
  - Incubated by the Kiwanis Enterprise Centre, as part of Branding the Peace
  - Mission: to expand networking and promotional opportunities for Peace Country new media professionals and companies
  - 45 companies listed as members - many are micro companies (1-2 persons)
- Core issue in Human Resources from the New Media association point of view:
  - there's a lack of trained skilled people within the region
  - limited access to educational opportunities – lack institutional capacity to provide training –people in the region do not see themselves in the IT industry
  - E-learning might help but will not solve the problem
  - Basic level of technology level awareness already exists – but we need more

**Message to the PTC:**

- There's a lack of trained skilled people within the region
- There is a limited access to educational opportunities – lack institutional capacity to provide training –people in the region do not see themselves in the IT industry

**NORTHERN OPPORTUNITIES**

**John Royer**

Program background:

- The needs:
  - resource industry employers face a shortage of skilled trades persons as existing employees approach retirement.
  - young high school graduates from northern communities seek careers in the north
- The solution: Northern Opportunities: a public-private partnership to promote trades training and apprenticeships in northeastern BC
  - Mission: to strengthen individuals and communities in northeastern BC by enhancing opportunities for students to: succeed in high school, pursue post-secondary education and build a rewarding career in the trades/technology workforce

- Partners: Industry (Duke Energy (\$1.88M over 3 years), Slocan); School Districts (59 - South Peace, 60-North Peace, 81-Fort Nelson and area); First Nations; Northern Lights College; University of Northern BC; northern communities
- Process: students enter a Northern Opportunities program at the beginning of Grade 11 or 12, spend one to two years enrolled in trades and technology and graduate with: a high school diploma, up to Level 2 trades technical training, work experience, enhanced employability skills.
- Agreements between program partners enable students to receive “dual credits” (both high school and college credits) and begin college programs while still in high school.
- Credits can be accumulated through courses taken on the high school, College campus or in some cases possibly even on industry training sites.

The obvious need:

- We have small communities and a dispersed population
  - Many programs are only viable if we can deliver them throughout the region – many programs are not viable due to low enrollment
  - Need technologies to provide more equal access to training and apprenticeship opportunities throughout this large area
  - Exchange program with Yukon College or to the south with UNBC. When UNBC was created – it should be the university for the north not just for Prince George.
- We must make optimum use of scarce resources such as instructors

Alternate Delivery Tool - What we need

- Teleconferencing, videoconferencing equipment, conferencing tools such as Linkivity
- Online learning delivery systems such as WebCT, remote whiteboard systems
- Computers equipped with presentation and desktop sharing software
- Access to broadband Internet connections even in rural and remote communities
- Support from PLNet for “Quality of Service” dedicated bandwidth for video conferencing
  - In trades and science training, videoconferencing is an essential component.
  - We are the bottleneck for our partnerships with Yukon College and Grande Prairie College, both of which use videoconferencing to reach remote communities.
  - ISDN is expensive. We need IP solutions.
  - The need for equipment is not as critical as the need for broadband connectivity. If broadband is available, the College could turn to industry to provide the equipment.

### **Message to the PTC:**

There is a need for broadband connection to deliver the education program effectively.

### **PEACE REGION INTERNET SOCIETY**

#### **Arvo Koppel**

- A non-profit society to promote and provide affordable Internet and other electronic communications capabilities for business, organization and individuals in the North-East Region of BC. The society is fully funded by membership fees.
- Focus: to ensure that rural areas have access to services similar to those available in more densely populated areas

- Provided:
  - Local dial-up service in Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Tumbler Ridge, Hudson's Hope and Fort Nelson
  - Broadband connectivity to libraries, schools, CAP (Community Access Program) sites that are not served by PLNet
    - 6000 customers - over 600 have access to high speed broadband internet access (with wireless technology), similar number in the urban areas has access to ADSL
    - hopes to expand services to smaller communities along the Alaska Highway

Six key messages:

- Broadband connectivity within the homes of our residents, regardless of location, is of fundamental importance to the social and economic prosperity of our communities
  - There is a need for Internet access to every home – not only for work/school.
- Connectivity in rural community is overstated because the underlying concept that all residents and business live 'within' communities or attend school.
  - The community is not connected if only, for example, 60% have access.
- There seems to be an unwarranted bias against fixed wireless broadband connectivity
  - If there is only a wireless connection in the community - they are classified not connected??
  - Wireless is growing –some communities are rolling out wireless solutions
  - Wireless might be the only solution for rural/remote areas
- Signing "special deals" with the incumbent telephone carrier often leaves non-government residents and businesses at a disadvantage
- Agreements with large incumbent carriers can encourage an economic and technology deficit regionally, and in some cases, within the province
  - For example, a school district was currently connected at 56K. We can provide T1 connection for \$50/month. The school district is willing to pay, however, since they are connected to PLNet, they are not allowed to do that.
- There continues to be a lack of communication with local stakeholders during the decision-making process on provincial network development
  - For example, we bought a tower in February 2003 and put broadband connection to School District in Hudson Hope. The School District was suddenly informed that PLNet will provide a T1 connection.
  - It is encouraging to see that PLNet will provide a T1 connection to a school district for \$795/month. However, there is no point of doing that since that school will be closed – there seems to be a miscommunication among ministries and lack of local community input/involvement.

Efforts to extend network to communities:

- Work with TELUS to get better connectivity
- The solution for affordable broadband is to aggregate demand for broadband
- The effort is somewhat like bringing power to communities – it will take all stakeholders to work together: industry, government, communities – it will not be profitable to provide that service

**Message to the PTC:**

- There is a need to extend broadband connectivity to the whole communities
- Agreements with large incumbent carriers can encourage an economic and technology deficit regionally, and in some cases, within the province
- There continues to be a lack of communication with local stakeholders during the decision-making process on provincial network development

**AXIS IT SOLUTIONS**

**Dan Arbeau**

- Started own company – 1 year ago
- Products and services:
  - Server based Spam & Virus Filtering for business & personal use. The only company outside Vancouver to offer this service to anybody, not just specific ISP Clients.
  - Content Management systems for websites, Online Databases, Educational Websites with video and audio, and learning components.
  - E-commerce websites - one customer in Tumbler Ridge sells her products throughout Canada, USA and Europe.
  - Open Source Solutions, Linux Servers, VPN's, High Availability Servers.
- Work with Doig River First Nations - had the opportunity to teach youth how to use a website to promote their culture.

**Message to the PTC:**

- The community needs better access to education.

**EAGLEVISION VIDEO PRODUCTIONS LTD.**

**Lori Ackerman and Dale Sokoloski on behalf of Cole Busche  
(material also from <http://www.eaglevisionvideo.ca/>)**

- Offers video production services, tape duplication & conversions, DVD authoring, and graphic design.
- Picked up two awards at the “2003 Summit Creative Awards” - an international competition for creative accomplishments of smaller companies. The Awards received close to 3000 entries from 17 different countries.
  - The two awards are for the same video: a helicopter sales demo for Vancouver Island Helicopters. The video demonstrates the capabilities of the Kamov [KA-MOV] Russian built helicopter and the American built SIMPLEX fire attack system. The video demonstrates the helicopter hovering over a water source and filling the 3000-liter tank in just 60 seconds, and the helicopter's ability to fly at speeds of over 185 km/h fully loaded. The Kamov can drop the water in a variety of patterns to better attack different types of fires.
- The company has built advertising/marketing materials for the city and on the BC 2010 bid

**MORRISON MACHINE WORKS**  
**Jim Morrison**

Morrison Machine Works Ltd. has been involved in a zero emission chemical injection project for the past 2+ years. We are at the end of the prototype stage and have a production model running in the field.

With the help of Canada's National Research Council - Industrial Research Assistance Program, we were able to develop a completely unique 2 pos 4 way valve which very capably meets all of our requirements and expectations.

As we approach early stage production we have the ability to satisfy our requirements, but we will soon have to make decisions regarding mid to large scale production runs. Our intention is to utilize CNC shops that currently exist in western Canada to fulfill our immediate needs. Long range plans may require us to consider licensing arrangements or produce components ourselves here in BC specifically Fort St John.

The venture has the potential to create a good number of jobs in this area: assembly of components-3 jobs initially, sales and service-3 jobs initially and component manufacture-4 jobs initially. This work force would allow us a production capacity of 5000 units per year. Because of the numbers of applications for this valve especially in the Oil & Gas industry we expect demand to quickly put a strain on this capacity and we will have to get creative to meet demand.

**Message to the PTC:**

- There is a perception that Fort St John is not strategically located for a manufacturing facility. We believe this to be true if we had to rely solely on the existing skilled labour force. There is too much competition for the skilled trades people in the area and that in turn has an adverse effect on our ability to compete in a high tech manufacturing world.
- There is limited access to current oil and gas industry trends and market analysis. As a small company seeking financing, we need information on market analysis and industry trends to create a business plan. This information will also help us understand what the industry needs are.
- There is limited access to capital. Information on financing options is not widely available. We also need guidance on how to further develop our early stage company to the next level.

**GENERAL DISCUSSIONS**

First Nations communities experience difficulties in getting IT support.

- Very few youth has interest in IT
- People can earn more money in the oil patch than in IT

The issue in communities is not only providing connectivity - also how to make use of it.

Computer skills are limited in the regions:

- There is a need to spark interest in IT early - start in high school – current IT courses in Grade 11 is very light/basic
- There are very few teachers in high school to provide computer training



- High school graduates have computer skills (MAC-based) that do not meet the skills requirement of the industry/jobs (mostly PC).
- Education in rural communities is important.
  - Is there a way to standardize content and plug them into different communities?

BC3 had a meeting in Prince George last July:

- Small communities are trying to get solutions to the last mile problem (some of them do not have phone line or hydro)
- John Savage with Gold Trail Open Network created online and CD based training materials (Network Craft project) to assist rural and remote communities, especially FN communities, in building and maintaining their own infrastructure.

Centre of Excellence for Oil and Gas Industry

- Canada does not have one
- We believe that the knowledge here can be exported worldwide
  - Jim Morrison - Morrison Machine Works
    - o Created a pump that will not flare – there's no loss of gas.
    - o Plans to build this locally – and in 2 months would like to have 50 developed
    - o This product will have a worldwide impact on the industry
  - Dan Simmons on Angel Energy – nominated for industrial awards – we need investment to develop this spin-off – take this spin-off and take this to the market so that we don't have to import the technology later.
- With a Centre of Excellence, the federal government will be involved in research facilitation and incubation process
  - To have the Centre of Excellence, the province needs to provide support as the federal government will be asking the provincial government's input.