

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range
Initiatives Prince George Development Corporation

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS JOIN PROVINCE TO PURSUE WOOD FIRST

VANCOUVER – During British Columbia's Forestry Day at the 2010 Olympic Games, mayors of the seven municipalities that have passed Wood First Resolutions in their communities signed a memorandum of understanding with the Province of B.C., announced Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell.

"I want to congratulate the mayors and councils for their vision and leadership," said Bell. "This co-operation will strengthen our forest dependent communities, help us achieve our climate action goals, and serve as a great example to other provinces and the federal government as we work towards a pan-Canadian Wood First policy."

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) will see local government become a partner with the Province of British Columbia to grow a culture of wood in the province. Signatories to the MOU include the Cities of Prince George, Quesnel, Campbell River and Castlegar, the District of Squamish, and the Villages of Nakusp and Fruitvale.

The agreement recognizes the opportunity for local governments to become wood champions and support the Government of British Columbia's Wood First Act by advocating for the adoption of Wood First resolutions by municipalities throughout B.C.

"Developing a culture of wood and showcasing the opportunities for structural and architectural use of wood in Prince George is core to our vision to grow northern B.C. as a knowledge-based resource economy connected to the world," said Tim McEwan, president and CEO, Initiatives Prince George Development Corporation. "The leadership shown by local governments to pursue a wood first policy objective is an important step forward to realizing our vision."

"As B.C.'s northern capital, and a community that continues to be very much dependant on the resources around us, it's extremely important for the City of Prince George to take a leadership role in promoting the benefits of building with wood culture both within our city as well as beyond our city limits," said Prince George Mayor Dan Rogers. "From an environmental perspective, this effort aligns well with the City's goals to become one of the most resilient and sustainable cities in the country. Building with wood has long been a priority for the City of Prince George. Now that broad statement is going to be backed up with policy changes that align with what the Province is doing to maximize the use of wood in all public construction projects."

Initiatives Prince George Development Corporation and the City of Prince George have taken the lead role in the development of the MOU.

“We’re proud to have pledged to develop a wood first bylaw and are equally proud to be a partner in this initiative,” said Quesnel Mayor Mary Sjostrom. “We want to further enhance our culture of wood. By working regionally we can devise new opportunities and partnerships to forge a stronger and more diverse future.”

The communities commit to the further development of policy that will encourage and promote the primary use of wood in municipal structures and also develop a culture of wood among architects, designers and engineers. The mayors of these communities have also agreed to work with the Union of BC Municipalities in order to achieve benefits available to communities through the expanded use of wood.

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