

Update (#2) on BKB Cedar Manufacturing Fire

McBride, B.C. Tuesday April 11, 2017

On Monday April 10 in McBride a meeting was held to discuss the supports that are available to all residents of McBride and area that have been impacted by the events of the past week. The meeting was organized by MLA Shirley Bond as part of the provincial government's Community Transition Response to the recent mill fire. MLA Bond arranged for three key staff (two from Victoria, one from Kamloops) from the Community Transition Team to be in McBride today to assist McBride and area businesses and residents.

Participants included the Mayor and Council of the Village of McBride, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and the Ministry Responsible for Labour, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the Northern Development Initiative Trust, Community Futures Fraser-Fort George, the Valemount Learning Society, and the Robson Valley Support Society.

The thirty participants were provided an update from the Village of McBride on the impacts to residents and local businesses, and received information on the wide range of programs and supports that are being made available to those impacted or disrupted by the fire.

Action items and next steps were identified to help the community to recover. The participants discussed how to assist local businesses to mitigate impacts and get back in operation as soon as possible, and steps were identified on how to provide support to those who need it. Training and education, employment assistance, grant funding programs, economic development programs, career counselling, local job creation, and peer and professional support were all discussed and plans were made to start accessing these supports and programs as soon as possible.

On the afternoon of April 10, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) organized a working group meeting of key licensees in the Robson Valley to review the forest sector fibre supply. The goal was to generate ideas and actions that will support the full cross-section of forest sector industries in the Robson Valley. The licensees provided very useful information that is helping to better understand the available economic and non-economic volumes of fibre, and they generated a number of solid ideas (including some innovative "out of the box" suggestions) to make cedar available to local industry while at the same time looking at ways to resolve other related wood supply issues in the Robson Valley.

Summary of the outcomes of the first working group meeting:

- The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is working with all licensees as the first step in gathering ideas to strengthen the forest sector in the Robson Valley.
- The working group is looking for solutions that will have positive benefits across the forest industry in the Robson Valley, not just for one mill or licensee.
- The working group is also evaluating options to reduce some long standing impediments to forest sector growth and development in the region.

- The working group will be developing and evaluating a number of creative ideas and suggestions that are intended to help stabilize and enhance the forest sector in the valley.

Individual conversations will be taking place between each of the license holders in the Robson Valley and FLNRO staff over the next two weeks to discuss and evaluate specific ideas, options, and explore the development of new business-to-business relationships. Once a short list of ideas/actions has been identified by the working group a second meeting will be held where the working group will evaluate the implications of moving options forward

The members of the working group include: the Dunster Community Forest, McBride Community Forest, Valemount Community Forest, BC Timber Sales, Carrier Lumber, Hauer Brothers, and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

The Robson Valley Support Society will be holding another worker information meeting on Thursday at 10am at the Elk's Hall for employees of BKB Cedar. Employees and their family members are encouraged to attend.

In the coming days a "fact sheet" of supports and resources will be made available to the community – watch for information on the Village of McBride, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, and RVSS websites. Printed handouts of the "fact sheet" will also be made available at the Village office, McBride provincial government office, McBride Public Library, RVSS, and local businesses.



Meeting regarding Mill Fire in McBride

Contacts

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