

President's Update to the College Community

Serving the communities of Northwestern BC

August 31, 2009

Community — Connection — Commitment

Last academic year ended with many amazing successes at NWCC, garnering increased focus from the country on just what it is that makes this college so incredibly special. From Haida Gwaii to Houston, program innovations and student testimonials were making headlines. Culinary Arts, Carpentry and First Nations Art Access programs on Haida Gwaii all contributed to various community projects culminating in the renovation of community buildings, the opening of a community kitchen and the raising of four totem poles at the Old Masset Community Hall. Houston and Hazelton graduated the 'first in the province' classes of the First Nations Home Support Resident Care Attendant program. The Challenging the Paradigm Summer Gathering drew educators from across the country and received rave reviews, and the Applied Coastal Ecology program gave flight to their thriving blue heron offspring on July 9th. These and many other achievements are capturing the hearts and minds of the communities we serve, strengthening our connections and giving life to our commitment to serving the northwest.

The 2009-2010 academic year is building on the successes of 2009-2010 and is already off to a very strong start as evidenced in the launch of the new Associate Arts degree First Nations Studies specialization. Judy Thompson and Order of Canada recipient, Dr. Nancy Turner teamed up to launch the first course in the degree, Ethnobotany. The course was a resounding success and drew the attention and involvement of many community members. Mark O'Hara is again working his magic with a class of students in Kitimaat Village where he is leading a combined carpentry and residential maintenance program and engaging his students in community projects. And, the Essential Skills for Work Cluster is launching college-access programs and ESWK in 14 different First Nations communities this year, including Hartley Bay.

It is going to be an incredible year. The College continues its path toward one that embraces the culture of the First Nations, on whose traditional territories NWCC's campuses are located. Adding to our existing Education Totem Pole at our Terrace Campus, poles will be raised at the Hazelton and Prince Rupert campuses. I strongly encourage you to take in one of these culturally vibrant ceremonies.

Similarly, work continues on what will be a spectacular first for our College. Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art students, graduates and instructors are working on house poles and sculptures for Waap Galts'ap, or

Emergency Services Training Centre — opens September 12, 2009

The communities in the northwest will reap the benefit of having an emergency services training centre located at NWCC's Terrace Campus.

In a unique partnership with the Terrace Fire Department, CN Rail, First Nations Emergency Services Society, Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) and Continuing Education and Industry Training at NWCC, a new training facility was erected over the spring and summer on the south east grounds of the campus.

The facility, built of CN cargo containers, will be a practical training site for various emergency training courses and programs such as confined space training, repelling, black-out exercises, and rapid intervention training.

The opening ceremony will take place at noon, Saturday, September 12, 2009 and will include a salmon barbeque. The opening ceremony coincides with the First Nations Emergency Services conference being held at Terrace Campus on the September 12 and 13.

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“Community House”, the first longhouse to be built within Terrace city limits. Construction on the Longhouse was greatly delayed due to difficulties in procuring logs which met engineer specifications, but work has commenced and a spring opening is anticipated.

Construction is proceeding at our Smithers Campus, with upgrades and a significant expansion that will accommodate additional mining and mineral exploration programs, as well as select career and trade programs. At Terrace Campus, upgrades on the student dorms will help those in our community feel more at home and able to focus on their studies.

From totem pole raisings, to the launch of construction for the new Smithers campus, from the welcoming of Qingdao Technical College Business Administration students to the welcoming of our own northern students, the face and reach of the College is changing. Watch for updates and announcements; it is going to be a very exciting year!

Totem Poles to be raised at Hazelton Campus September 11th

Two 14 foot contemporary totem poles will be raised, beginning at 11a.m. on September 11, 2009, at Hazelton Campus. Commissioned by NWCC, these poles were carved by Master Carver, Earl Muldon and graduates of the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, Arlene Ness and Rick Wesley. Dan Yunkws of Gitanmaax also assisted.

The figures on these poles honour the heritage of all Gitxsan and do not focus on one person or house group. The poles were designed to focus on the building of community, the College's connection to our northwestern communities and our commitment to serving the same.

One totem depicts *Owl* at the top, followed by *Beaver*, and the story of “*Man Half Way Out*” at the base. The other pole depicts the stories, “*Raven sits above the Sun*” and “*Man with Salmon*” at the base.



“SUN”



“BEAVER”



“MAN WITH SALMON”

Watch for further announcements about the upcoming ceremony and pole raising. Many hands will be needed to lift the poles into place!