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# TECHNICAL SERVICES CASE STUDIES

## Moricetown Supported Work / Manufacturing Centre | Feasibility Study

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### MORICETOWN, B.C.

The Moricetown Band is situated in a location that is not easily accessible to larger communities for employment. Moricetown is home to approximately 661 on-reserve members and 1129 off-reserve members with a total population of 1790 people. Smithers, the closest community to Moricetown is situated approximately 30 km to the East. Unemployment in Moricetown and the neighbouring Hazelton is greater than 85%. In an attempt to mitigate the impact of this serious situation, the Bulkley Valley FASD Prevention Program, the Moricetown



EQUIPMENT SUCH AS THIS SURVEY STAKE POINTER IS USED AS BOTH AN EDUCATIONAL AND PRODUCTION TOOL AT THE CENTRE

Band and the Smithers Community Services Association have formed a partnership in order to develop a “Supported Work and Manufacturing Centre” on the Wet’suwet’en reserve at Moricetown, BC. The facility is located in an old Band community centre that is being renovated by community trades people, at considerable expense to accommodate equipment, multi work stations and food services. Through the Northern Development Initiative Program the Centre has a confirmed contribution to purchase manufacturing equipment. This equipment includes a portable sawmill, sawdust extraction system, planer and other wood processing equipment. The plan is to produce such items as survey stakes, pallets and core boxes.

### TECHNICAL SERVICE REQUIREMENT

During 2008, the Centre’s management recognized the need for 3rd party assistance to establish manufacturing costs and assess the viability of product selection, as well as to provide ideas for equipment and manufacturing line lay-outs. The First Nations Wood Products Technical Support Program (WPTSP) was called upon to conduct an assessment and to develop recommendations for the Centre’s Business Plan.

### SERVICE PROVIDED

In performing the Feasibility Study, WPTSP staff considered the market opportunities for the range of manufactured products being considered by the Centre. Recommendations covered such areas as appropriate equipment purchases, production and sales strategies, potential business alliances, supplier relationships, and management development opportunities. The completed feasibility study report was presented to the Moricetown Band and the Smithers Community Association in October, 2008. The report will now serve as the basis for the development of a business and implementation plan for the Centre.

## BAND TESTIMONIAL

The value of the services provided by WPTSP staff is reflected in the following joint testimonial that was received from the Moricetown Band and the Smithers Community Services Association.

*“The report that you constructed from your research has provided us with an education tool for when we solicit support from various business and service sectors of the communities of the Bulkley Valley. It has also clarified the manufacturing focus of the project for the Moricetown Council, the Smithers Community Services Association Board of Directors, and the Steering Committee of the Bulkley Valley FASD Prevention Committee. The report, with detailed information regarding manufactured product line, equipment for employment training and production, and the safety factors necessary to successfully train individuals with multiple challenges to work, has hastened the contract process with funders including Service Canada and Northern Development Initiative Trust. The report has also become incorporated into proposals sent to Western Economic Diversification Canada and Service Canada-Youth Skills Initiative for potential funding of the operations phase of the project.”*

## B.C. FIRST NATIONS WOOD PRODUCTS TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

Administered by the B.C. First Nations Forestry Council, the Wood Products Technical Support Program offers access to FPInnovations, the world’s largest not-for-profit forest products research organization. Through FPInnovations, a network of qualified industry advisors, scientists and technologists, with expertise in primary and secondary wood product manufacturing as well as market intelligence and economics is being made available to First Nations businesses and communities throughout the province. In addition to applying their own knowledge to the challenges of the industry’s daily operations, these advisors are serving as the conduit for access to a much broader based network of experts throughout the international knowledge community.

## THE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The goal of the Moricetown Supported Work and Manufacturing Centre is to assist all members (focusing on First Nations) of the Bulkley Valley to engage in meaningful work opportunities regardless of their visible or nonvisible challenges, including those affected by fetal alcohol exposure. Participating workers will have access to career counselling, occupational mobility opportunities, a life skills worker, a job coach, and skill training towards employability in the general labour market. The Centre’s success will have a positive impact on the community and surrounding area both economically and socially. The Centre will assist in giving the participants a renewed sense of self-esteem and the training tools to enter the mainstream workforce. Another benefit from the Centre will be the direct employment created at the Centre itself. The far reaching benefit will be the opportunity that similar centres will be established in other First Nations Communities as well.

**For more information please contact:** B.C. First Nations’ Wood Products Technical Support Program

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