



President's Comment

British Columbia's new Premier Christy Clark was elected by BC Liberal Party members on a "Families First" platform.

With this in mind, it is timely to reflect on the many attributes – quantitative and qualitative – that make Prince George a "family friendly" community and a place for people in our larger urban centres to consider as a place to relocate to live, work, invest and play.

To begin with, Prince George is an affordable place to live.

The average 2010 detached housing price in Prince George was \$240,667 according to the BC Northern Real Estate Board, versus the provincial average of \$505,178. Meanwhile, housing in Vancouver is considerably less affordable at \$1,978,777 (Vancouver Westside) and \$770,070 (Vancouver Eastside) according to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. Put another way, estimates suggest housing in Prince George consumes 30.4% of pre-tax income, versus upwards of 70% in the Lower Mainland, making our city particularly attractive for young families.

"estimates suggest housing in Prince George consumes 30.4% of pre-tax income, versus upwards of 70% in the Lower Mainland"

Meanwhile, for students and others in the rental market, average apartment rents (all types) were \$666 in Prince George, versus the BC average of \$911 and \$995 in Vancouver.

Added to this significant housing cost advantage, the average one-way commute time in Prince George is 10 minutes versus 30 minutes in Vancouver.

Prince George is a great place to work.

In February, the unemployment rate for Prince George was 5.7% versus the BC average of 8.8%.



Tim McEwan

President and
Chief Executive Officer
Initiatives Prince George

Prince George employment earnings are also favourable, with labour force income averaging \$41,149, versus \$39,575 for BC and \$42,489 for Greater Vancouver. With income levels that exceed the provincial average and a tightening labour market as the resource and related service-based economy booms, now is the time for those with aspirations for a better life style to make the move to Prince George. Opportunity will continue to abound with numerous resource-based capital projects planned and underway for Prince George and the north totaling well into the billions of dollars.

The forest industry is flourishing with market diversification into the Asia Pacific, led by China. Dimension Lumber and pulp mills have re-opened, and new value streams in forest-based

bioenergy are creating new jobs and further diversification. Mining is experiencing a true renaissance. Gas industry expansion, the Site C Clean Energy project in the Northeast and the forthcoming Northwest Transmission Line along Highway 37 will enable billions of dollars worth of additional economic activity for Prince George businesses to tap into.

Prince George is a great place to invest.

In 2010, KPMG's Competitive Alternatives Study ranked Prince George first among 13 cities in its US/Canada Pacific Category as a preferred place to invest. Recent announcements by Fortis BC and TELUS Corp. to expand their presence in Prince George are driven by a number of factors including: cost of living factors, low business location costs, high-quality post-secondary graduates, high-quality fibre optics, higher employee engagement, and lower staff turnover.

Prince George International Airport boasts the third longest commercial runway in Canada, ideally situated on a circumpolar route between China and (Continued on page 2)

IPG is now on Facebook and Twitter!

Stay up to date with Initiatives Prince George programs and projects, as well as current economic issues and good news stories relevant to Prince George and Northern BC.

Visit us on Facebook and Twitter today!





President's Comment Continued

the US heartland markets for air cargo activity. Prince George is also at the intersection of Highway 16 (east-west) and Highway 97 (north-south), and boasts CN Rail service in four directions tied to the Port of Prince Rupert and Port Metro Vancouver. With nine return flights a day to Vancouver (less than an hour in flight time), Prince George is well connected for passenger service.

Prince George is also investment-ready with an abundance of low-priced light industrial and heavy industrial land.

Prince George is a great place to play.

Prince George offers a full suite of sport, cultural and recreational amenities that are readily accessible, including: a 50 meter competition swimming pool; six ice rinks; the 6,000 seat CN Centre multiplex; a 1,500 seat coliseum; Two Rivers Art Gallery; Prince George Civic (convention) Centre; numerous soccer fields; golf courses; recreational downhill and cross-country skiing facilities within a 30 minute drive; the Charles Jago Northern Sports Centre (an Olympic legacy); and, top-notch performing arts with Theatre Northwest, the Prince George Symphony, and other cultural organizations. In addition, planning for a new Performing Arts Centre for our downtown core is well underway! These facilities will all be showcased when Prince George hosts the 2015 Canada Winter Games!

As Premier Clark and her government embark on their "families first" agenda, Prince George is well-positioned as a family-friendly alternative to large urban centres. Prince George is truly a city full of opportunity where individuals can strike their own live-work-play balance. It's also an exceptional place to invest!

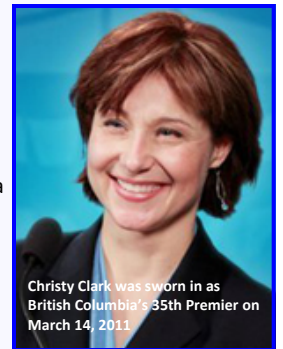
Premier Clark Meets with IPG

Premier Clark made Prince George her first place to visit outside of the Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island on March 18, just four days after she was sworn in as the 35th Premier of British Columbia. Her visit included a meeting with the Board and senior management of Initiatives Prince George to discuss local economic issues and priorities.

Following welcoming remarks from Acting Mayor Murry Krause, three immediate economic priorities for Prince George were discussed with Premier Clark: the Wood Innovation and Design Centre and associated programming (including engineering); completion of Hwy 97 Pine Pass safety and technical improvements; and, decentralization to Prince George of provincial government program and policy functions, particularly those within the purview of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Resource Operations and those related to the delivery of the 2015 Canada Winter Games.

There were a number of other northern program and public policy issues discussed as well with Premier Clark. These included: additional infrastructure and federal policy issues related to the Prince George Airport Authority; pressing infrastructure requirements at Ridley Terminals in Prince Rupert to facilitate resource exports, particularly coal and wood pellets; support for additional health care disciplines (speech, occupational, and physio-therapy; pharmacy; and dentistry) at UNBC during the next few years; finding creative ways to support rural K-12 education outside Prince George; ongoing support for the 2015 Canada Winter Games, including legacy projects in downtown Prince George; fast-track processes to deal with investment prospects from China; support for local efforts to build a forest based bioenergy cluster centered in Prince George and Central BC; and, continued efforts to harmonize federal and provincial environmental assessment processes.

Over the coming decade, Premier Clark was encouraged to support efforts to build next phase container and break-bulk infrastructure at the Port of Prince Rupert to enable further export growth from Northern British Columbia, while leveraging the Northern Corridor's inherent logistics opportunities as a "supply chain route of choice" (i.e. shortest distance) between China and the US heartland markets. Premier Clark was also encouraged to continue the Cariboo Connector four-laning program in full partnership with the federal government, and to define a timeframe for completion of the entire 463 km length by 2020. Along with transportation improvements, Premier Clark was also encouraged to work with private sector telecommunications firms to ensure that remaining gaps in cell-phone and broad-band coverage along key northern transportation routes are addressed as expeditiously as possible.



Christy Clark was sworn in as British Columbia's 35th Premier on March 14, 2011.

North America's Top Campus Sustainability Project Officially Opens

"From local employment opportunities in manufacturing, construction and ongoing fuel supply, these are the types of projects that will secure BC's future for the long term."

- BC Premier Christy Clark.

The University of Northern British Columbia officially opened a new bioenergy plant on campus that will make it a national leader in renewable energy.

The UNBC bioenergy plant takes wood waste produced at a local sawmill to heat the campus and reduce fossil fuel consumption by 85%. The new facility is in addition to a wood pellet system on campus, which opened in 2009.

"This is an important development for UNBC, but

it's also very important for the local forest industry and the 621 communities across Canada that are reliant on forests. This facility is a showpiece that will serve as a unique platform for education and research," noted UNBC President George Iwama.

Construction of the bioenergy plant involved local companies and is the second building in Prince George built to a LEED Gold Standard. It also features a variety of local wood products.

To learn more contact Robert van Adrichem, Vice President External Relations, UNBC – 250.960.5622.



BC's new Premier Christy Clark cuts the ribbon to officially open UNBC's Bio-energy Plant.





City Centre Development UPDATE

Building Community in Downtown Prince George

Between August 2010 and March 2011, nineteen projects valued at a total of \$45 million were announced for downtown Prince George. In the first quarter of 2011 alone, building permits for eight renovations valued at a total of \$2 million, and one new seniors housing complex valued at \$4.8 million were issued. Planned developments include forty residential units. TELUS Corp. and Fortis BC are expanding their presence and will bring an additional 200 people to work downtown as a result of projects. Nearly 200 employees will continue to work in the downtown when the new RCMP detachment is complete in 2013. All of these projects are building the downtown neighborhood as a preferred place to live, work and play in Prince George, increasing vibrancy and opportunity for retail, restaurants and culture.

Downtown Incentive Program to be in place by September 2011

In January, the City of Prince George approved a new incentive program in principle and approached Northern Development Initiative Trust to fund components of the proposed program. A consultation process in April and May will be followed up with a new revitalization tax exemption by-law before summer's end. The proposed program incents priority developments for residential, mixed use and façade improvements.

The Prince George Farmer's Market – a FIRST for B.C.

This marks the first winter that the PG Farmer's Market has been open, making it the first year-round indoor farmer's market in BC. Operating out of space at the corner of 3rd Avenue and Historic George Street, the market is open Saturdays 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Prince George Regional Performing Arts Centre Society UPDATE

The Society is holding its 3rd Annual General Meeting May 10, 2011 which marks further community progress towards the realization of a new Performing Arts Centre in the City Centre. The Society has now completed a concept design, is finalizing a proposed operational model and budget, and is exploring potential funding sources. The Society has approximately 750 members currently and continues to grow its support base for a new cultural anchor to the downtown.

Adorning Historic George Street with Traditional Aboriginal Art

The Lheidli T'enneh have been commissioned to provide public art for the Spirit/Veterans Square this spring, and will provide artwork for banners on Historic George Street. This is a significant step forward in the recognition of the traditional home and territory of the Lheidli T'enneh within the city's downtown.

The Downtown Partnership held its first quarterly meeting March 31, in order to review progress and update objectives on the downtown implementation plan. A status report will be released the second week of April.

Call 250-649-3201 or 250-561-7784, or email downtownpartnership@princegeorge.ca for more information.



Rick Mercer Visits UNBC

Canadian TV personality Rick Mercer was in Prince George on Monday March 21 to pay tribute to UNBC students.

UNBC students raised \$18,710 – more than any other University in the country – in the "Spread the Net" challenge. The money will be used to purchase pesticide-treated bed nets to protect children in Africa against malaria. The Mercer Report edition featuring UNBC aired on CBC, March 29, 2011.

Congratulations UNBC!



1st Quarter IPG External Media Highlights

- **Initiatives Prince George, the Prince George Airport Authority, and the Port of Prince Rupert** were featured on page 5 of the March 2011 **Emerging Markets Report** in the **Vancouver Sun**.
- **Initiatives Prince George, the Prince George Airport Authority, and the Prince George Global Logistics Park** were featured in the March 4, 2011 issue of Hong Kong's **South China Morning Post** on page S4 of the **Canada Country Report**.
- **Initiatives Prince George President & Chief Executive Officer, Tim McEwan**, had his opinion piece "**Next Premier Must Keep Eye Northward**" published in the **Vancouver Sun** on January 25, 2011.
- **Initiatives Prince George President & Chief Executive Officer, Tim McEwan**, was interviewed February 15, 2011 by CTV's **Business News Network (BNN)** about how growing exports of lumber and other resources to China are benefitting Prince George.

EDI Wins Eco Canada's 2011 Environmental Employer of the Year

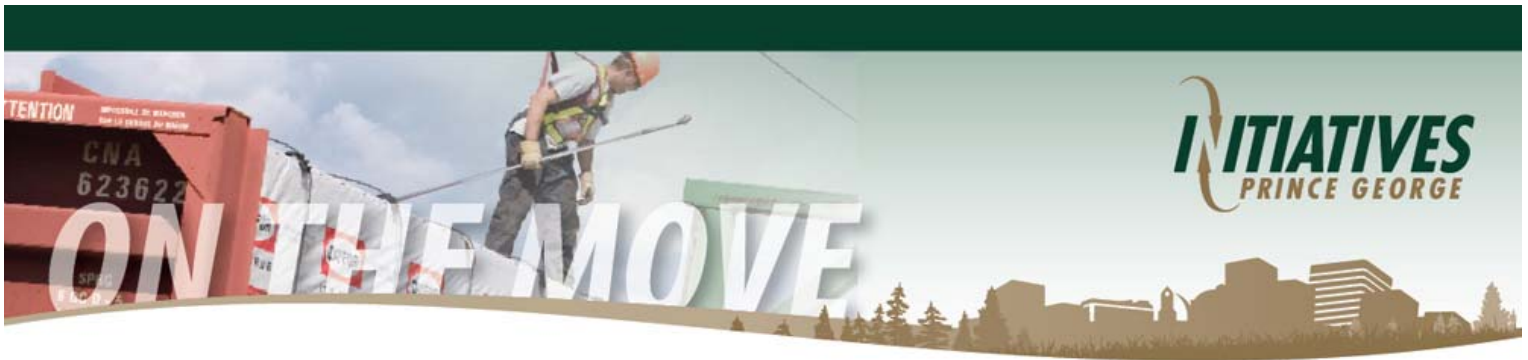
Prince George based Environmental Dynamics Inc. (EDI) has won Eco Canada's National 2011 Environmental Employer of the Year award. The award "recognizes employers within Canada's environment industry for their commitment to Human Resource excellence."

Bob Redden, President of EDI commented on the award: "EDI's entire team is extremely proud to receive this award. Unlike many corporate awards, this one is largely based on employee feedback. It is very gratifying to know that our employees appreciate the work they do, our corporate philosophies and our office culture."

Visit www.edynamics.com to learn more.

Congratulations EDI!





Mining Association of British Columbia Luncheon to be Held in PG

On April 26, 2011 the Mining Association of British Columbia (MABC) will be hosting a Mining Luncheon in Prince George, to kick off a month of BC mining activities planned in five communities and culminating with the province-wide Mining Week, May 8-14, 2011.

Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer of MABC will be joined by a panel of local experts to discuss the following topics:

- The BC mining industry as an important economic stimulus for Prince George and surrounding communities and an important contributor to the province's economic base.
- The need for the BC mining industry have a strong and progressive relationship with First Nations in British Columbia.
- Strategic investments in infrastructure necessary to open up new resource development.



Pierre Gratton

Registration: To register for this free luncheon, contact Sabine Cheng at scheng@prassociates.com or call 604-681-1407.



Meeting with Federal Minister of Transport

On March 14, federal Minister of Transport Chuck Straul held a roundtable meeting on transportation issues in Prince Rupert. Tim McEwan, President & Chief Executive Officer, Initiatives Prince George attended the meeting and presented on the various infrastructure, policy, and marketing initiatives required to advance the transportation hub at Prince George.

Additional infrastructure at the Prince George Airport (tied to carrier commitment), along with continued federal support for the Cariboo Connector four-laning program, and safety and technical improvements to the Pine Pass were highlighted. Capacity issues at Ridley Terminals for both coal and wood pellet exports were also noted as an urgent item, particularly from the perspective of growing export volumes which in turn provide supply and service firms in Prince George with business opportunities. Minister Straul and his officials were encouraged to advance "Open Skies" for air cargo and to address other regulatory hurdles faced by the Prince George Airport Authority. The strategic nature of the Northern Pacific Gateway Corridor as a "supply chain route of choice" between China and the US heartland markets was also referenced for its potential to dramatically assist ongoing economic diversification efforts in Prince George.

Some Major Projects in Northern BC

There are a number of capital projects currently underway or proposed in the region which are paving the way for further economic growth and diversification in Prince George.

Local and regional developments in the resource sector are creating jobs in the immediate term, while developing a broader range of resource activities will provide increased wealth and economic stability over the long term.

Over the coming months, Initiatives Prince George will be working on a comprehensive list of resource development projects in Northern BC.

Current Projects Include:

- West Fraser \$230M Capital Investment
- Canfor Capital and Maintenance Investments \$145M
- Canfor Green Transformation \$122.2M
- Rio Tinto Alcan Kitimat Modernization \$300M—Total project will be \$2.5B
- Endako Expansion \$500M
- Mt. Milligan Construction \$917M
- Western Coal Expansion \$230M
- Cancer Centre for the North \$103M
- Pine Pass Improvements \$135M
- Cariboo Connector Upgrades \$250M
- CN Northern Corridor Investments \$600M
- Dome Mountain Development \$5.7M

- North West Transmission Line \$404M
- Gibraltar Mine Capacity Increase \$325M

Proposed Projects Include:

- Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline \$5.5B
- BC Hydro Site C Clean Energy Project \$6.6B
- Northwest Transmission Line will enable up to \$15B in new mineral activity and mining development



Conceptual design of the proposed Site C dam on the Peace River —BC Hydro Website

OFFICE SPACE FOR LEASE

Initiatives Prince George has over 4000 sq. feet of office space for lease in its 1st Avenue building, downtown Prince George.

The office space is brightly lit, easy to access, has an excellent view of the cut banks, and comes with plenty of paved parking.

To view the space, call Majestic Management (1981) Ltd. at: 250-562-Rent



Mount Milligan Mine Construction Update

The construction program at Mount Milligan mine between Fort St. James and Mackenzie is progressing well with approximately 250 people living on site. The winter works program includes logging, clearing a power line right-of-way, site preparation for the plant and tailings storage facility, and camp operations.

Environmental monitoring continues through the winter months and two members of the McLeod Lake First Nation have completed training as environmental monitors.

Creating local jobs and opportunities continues to be a priority. The mine intends to fill as many jobs as possible with local candidates and will provide training programs to help people gain access to available employment opportunities.

To enquire about opportunities contact: info@mtmilligan.com

To learn more about Mt. Milligan, visit CKPG's website:

- Monday March 28: <http://www.ckpg.com/news/13784-fort-saint-james-community-have-a-renewed-sense-of-hope-video.html>
- Tuesday March 29: <http://www.ckpg.com/news/13800-fsj-boom-2-video.html>
- Wednesday March 30: <http://www.ckpg.com/news/13822-fsj-boom-3-video.html>



BC Chamber AGM Coming to Prince George

The 2011 BC Chamber of Commerce AGM & Conference will be hosted in Prince George this year.

The BC Chamber of Commerce AGM and Conference is a premier event of the year for the business community in British Columbia. The conference draws members from across the province for three full days of speakers, panel discussions, presentations, and networking.

Date: May 29 - 31, 2011

Location: Prince George Civic Centre

Note: The AGM & Conference is a members only event.

To learn more about the AGM visit:

<http://www.bcchamber.org/events/agm/agm2011.html>

Exhibitor Opportunities are available at the AGM Tradeshow – Whether you're an entrepreneur or a member of a powerful executive team, you can benefit from growing your list of target clients and business contacts by meeting members of the various Chambers of Commerce and business leaders from throughout BC.

For complete details about the tradeshow and the registration form, visit: <http://bcchamber.org/events/agm/tradeshow.html>

New for this month – IPG Economic Update Report

Beginning this month, IPG's *Economic Update Report* will be included in the regular email distribution of our *On The Move* Newsletter.

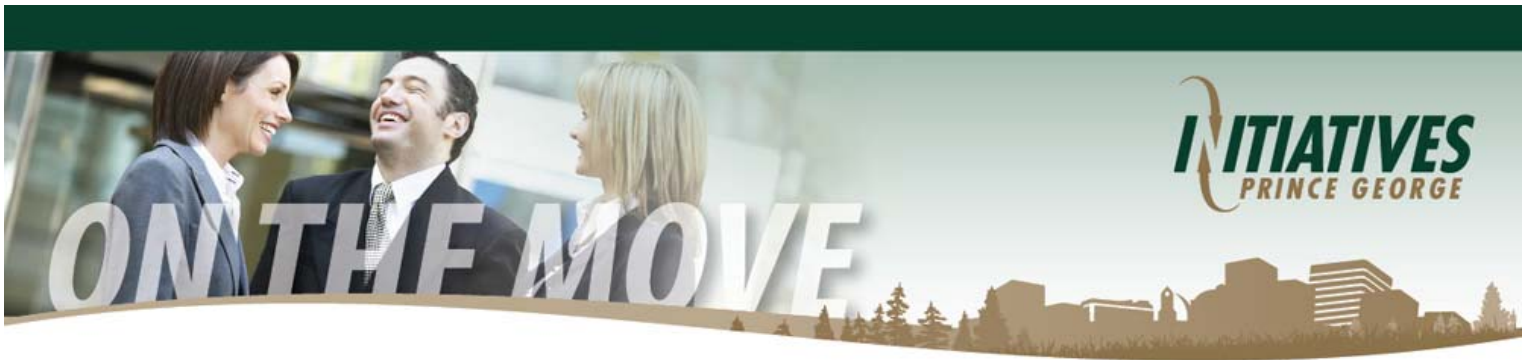
The *Economic Update Report* is produced monthly by Initiatives Prince George and provides a brief summary of economic performance in the city based on employment, real estate activity, housing construction, building permits, business licenses issued, and airport passenger volumes. The report provides a quick snapshot of how Prince George is performing relative to B.C. and Canada, and relative to the previous year.

Each month also features an article on a specific issue related to the Prince George economy.

The March 2011 *Economic Update Report* features an analysis of the performance of various industries in Prince George over the recent recession compared to the pre-recession period, 2003-2007.

To view the full *Economic Update Report* or, to view past reports visit: http://www.businesspg.com/Publications/Economic_Update.php





International Financial Centre Luncheon

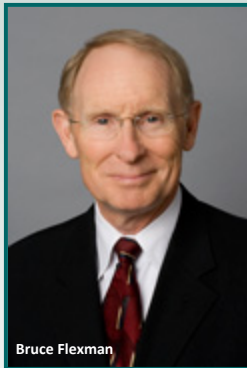
Initiatives Prince George and the Prince George Chamber of Commerce are pleased welcome Bruce Flexman, President of International Financial Centre (IFC) British Columbia to give a presentation: "Doing Business in Prince George: Competitive Tax Advantage".

When: April 4, 2011, 11:30 am—1:00 pm
Lunch served at 12:00 pm

Where: Ramada Hotel Prince George, Sky-light Ballroom

Cost: \$23 + HST for members, \$28 + HST for future members

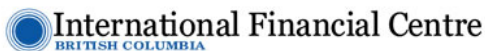
Bruce Flexman, formerly Canadian Managing Partner, Tax at KPMG LLP, is the President of the IFC BC. He is currently Chair of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) Tax Policy Committee, which includes the managing partners of the six largest accounting firms in Canada. Bruce is also a member of the Vancouver International Financial Sector Steering Committee, which has been tasked by the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation and the Ministry of Finance to present recommendations to enhance Vancouver as an International Financial Centre.



Bruce Flexman

Call the Chamber today to register at 250-562-2454!

You can also register by emailing:
admin@pgchamber.bc.ca



Year of Science Expo Coming to Prince George April 11 & 12

Prince George is a vibrant community with strong family and business ties to B.C.'s resource industries. This makes Prince George the perfect location for the Science and the World Around Us Expo. The event is free and open to the public April 11 and 12 at the Prince George Civic Centre. The Expo will feature expert presenters, workshops, and displays on topics related to forestry, transportation, green technology, biofuels, and mining. The Expo is part of the Year of Science, a provincial initiative designed to increase awareness about the benefits of an education and career in science.

The most recent BC Labour Market Outlook shows that demand for science-related jobs will increase over the next 10 years. One in every eight job openings will be science and technology related, making education in science and math very important for BC's future economic success. A popular feature of the expo is career roundtables, which inspire students by allowing field experts to share their knowledge and career paths.

Visit www.YearofScienceBC.ca to learn more about the Expo, and the \$25,000 scholarship available to one lucky innovator through the "Choose Science, Go Far, Win Big" contest.

Science & the World Around Us Expo:

Where: Prince George Civic Centre

When: April 11, 10:00am-7:00pm
April 12, 9:30am-2:00pm

CHOOSE SCIENCE. GO FAR.



National Aboriginal Business Opportunities Conference

Join Host Chiefs Harold Leighton and Garry Reece and over 200 other key Aboriginal and private sector business leaders on **April 12 -14**.



Chief Harold Leighton,
Metlakatla First Nation



Chief Garry Reece,
Lax Kw'alaams First Nation

This business conference is unique with a focus on networking and discussions about joint ventures. The plenary sessions will include successful private sector/Aboriginal business venture case studies.

Space is limited to 250 delegates and the expected mix will be 100 Aboriginal businesses and communities, and 150 delegates from private sector corporations.

To learn more or to register, visit:

<http://www.theeventpros.ca/conferences/NABOC-PrinceRupert2011.html>

Transpo-North - June 16 - 18, 2011

Save the date for Transpo-North, a new conference that celebrates the importance of transportation systems to our way of life in northern BC, promotes Prince George as a transportation hub, and discusses Asia Pacific Gateway Corridor opportunities.

Industry professionals will participate in discussions on the Asia Pacific Gateway, system users will explore innovative approaches to movement of goods, and a career fair will highlight employment opportunities.

A celebration of trucking will take place with a Truck Rodeo and Show and Shine that will be open to the public.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.transponorth.com>

