



# CITY OF QUESNEL NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**December 10, 2007**

**Accessibility Committee welcomes new coordinator**

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**QUESNEL, B.C.** – The Quesnel Accessibility Committee introduced its new coordinator today who is charged with developing a plan for Quesnel addressing local accessibility and inclusion issues.

Long time Quesnel resident Liz Neave was introduced to the committee today. Quesnel received a \$20,000 grant from the 2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up and Inclusion Fund to help fund a local coordinator as well as some small capital projects identified by the Quesnel Accessibility Committee. That committee works in partnership with the City of Quesnel and the Child Development Centre to focus on issues concerning those living with a disability.

“I’m pleased to welcome Liz to the position and I look forward to the development of an accessibility and inclusion plan,” said Coun. Mary Sjostrom, who sits on a North Central Municipal Association Measuring Up The North steering committee working in partnership with the BC Paraplegic Association and Healthy Communities. “As the Councillor tasked with assisting with accessibility issues, I’m excited to be part of a process providing leadership for such an important issue.”

Laurie Ringaert, Measuring Up the North Project Director was also in Quesnel Monday to meet with the City’s planner, building inspector and City Manager to discuss accessible housing and transportation issues.

“This is about more than just helping those living with disabilities,” said Kurt Pedersen, executive director of the CDC and Chair of the Accessibility Committee. “We’re looking towards a community that as a whole is more inclusive.”

“This is an exciting project that I’m happy to be a part of,” added Neave “I’m excited to work with the committee. Quesnel’s a great place to live and we look forward to making it even better.”

The Quesnel Accessibility Committee is a non profit organization formed in February 2004 to work toward the removal of physical and social barriers that impede full participation in community life by people with a disability. Anyone interested in getting involved with the committee or local initiatives can contact Mary Sjostrom at 747.2924 or Diane Rogers at 992.8206.

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BC Healthy Communities  
People. Place. Potential.



British Columbia has all the ingredients to become the most accessible and inclusive place to live, work and visit in the world. Growing awareness on disabilities, an increasingly diverse and aging population, a booming economy, labour shortages, the coming 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the election of a Mayor with a disability and the Province of British Columbia's commitment "To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors." These combine to make this the most opportune time for communities to advance and become leaders of accessibility and inclusion.

## MEASURING UP THE NORTH

**PURPOSE:** *Measuring Up The North* (MUTN) is an innovative new project to facilitate development of disability-friendly, senior-friendly communities in nearly 40 locations in Northern British Columbia.

**INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP:** The project is a partnership between the North Central Municipal Association and the BC Paraplegic Association with supporting partners BC Healthy Communities Initiative and 2010 Legacies Now. This unique partnership provides vision, leadership, and support to northern BC municipalities and Regional Districts that want to realize the social and economic benefits of becoming accessible and inclusive for all citizens.

**LOCAL INITIATIVES:** Since its beginning in August, 2007, this project has gained interest and support from many northern communities. Each MUTN community has an NCMA Liaison, a Community Liaison (person with a disability or senior) and a MUTN Committee to set community priorities and goals.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** For municipalities, businesses, and others, becoming involved with *Measuring Up The North* is a way to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the social and economic prosperity of your community. This is especially true for over 13% of BC's population that has a disability as well as our rapidly growing senior population. The reality is that everyone benefits when communities become accessible and inclusive – parents pushing baby carriages, anyone trying to manage a heavy load, a small child that has difficulty reaching things high up, people using other languages, experiencing depression, a sore back or broken limb, etc.

When communities are accessible and inclusive to residents, this attracts visitors who spend their money in local shops, hotels, restaurants, recreation facilities, museums, and many other businesses, adding to the local economy. And when the economy is good, jobs are plentiful. People with disabilities are eager to become employed and bring significant value to any company.

**HOW MEASURING UP THE NORTH WILL HELP:** *Measuring Up The North* will assist communities to evaluate how accessible and inclusive their community is now, and to work together to set goals and work towards improvement. With strong support throughout Northern BC, we will help all North Central municipalities and Regional Districts strengthen their communities with locally controlled initiatives that will potentially increase participation of seniors and persons with disabilities, employment rates, tourism opportunities, retirement living, community processes, cooperative ventures and sustainable progress.

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED:** Contact the *Measuring Up The North* Project Director who will guide you and your community to benefit from the Measuring Up experience. For more information and to become involved contact:

**Laurie Ringaert, Project Director at 250-563-6942 or at [measurenorth@bcpara.org](mailto:measurenorth@bcpara.org).** You may also contact:

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