
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Houston benefits from labour market study

HOUSTON – In the aftermath of the West Fraser mill closure, the District of Houston has plenty of opportunities for economic growth and a healthy workforce according to a new study funded by the provincial government, which is being released today.

The District of Houston received more than \$51,000 in Labour Market Partnership funding to do the nine-month study to help industry, businesses and workers plan for the future. The report states that the community has weathered the mill closure quite well and that there are opportunities to recruit more skilled workers to the region and increase the local workforce's readiness for future jobs.

The key components of the strategy include:

- Continuing to support workers impacted by the closure of Houston Forest Products through job fairs, training and other activities to support transition as needed.
- Promoting the District of Houston's positive characteristics for families through a "work where you live" campaign that will help attract, recruit and retain workers to the community.
- Developing a more resilient local economy and labour force that adapts to the cyclical nature of the natural resources sector.
 - For example, focusing on training for in-demand occupations such as mill workers, healthcare workers and auto mechanics required across a number of employment sectors.
- Effective facilitation for local youth into the labour force.
 - An example is helping to get more local youth into the labour force by formalizing the relationship between School District #54, industry and post-secondary training to sustain effective school-to-work transition programs.
- Increasing local labour force by addressing barriers to participation.
 - This includes working to address barriers to employment that residents may be facing through programs that address literacy, provide job coaching and consider new opportunities, such as a women in trades program.

The partnership funding also allowed the district to hold a job fair last April in preparation for the May mill closure.

Labour Market Partnerships and Job Creation Partnerships are components of the Employment Program of BC's Community and Employer Partnerships fund for projects that share labour market information and increase employability throughout the province. Labour Market Partnerships help local employers, employee and employer associations, and communities develop ways to deal with worker shortages or changes in the job market so they can prepare

for the future. Projects that provide opportunities for people who are often disadvantaged in the workforce, such as people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and youth, are encouraged.

Quotes:

Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation Don McRae –

“The District of Houston’s Labour Market Partnership study is a great example of a community turning a crisis into an opportunity. This plan will help prepare workers in the Houston area for the future.”

Nechako Lakes MLA John Rustad –

“When a mill closes, it’s always devastating for a community. But thanks to this Labour Market Partnership, the District of Houston now has the tools to forge ahead with a comprehensive plan to help workers get the training and businesses get the people they need.”

District of Houston Mayor Shane Brienen –

“With funding from the Province of B.C., this Labour Market Partnership report will help the District of Houston plan for the future by attracting workers, getting people trained for jobs and helping businesses and industry fill positions with qualified people.”

Quick Facts:

- Houston population: 3,150 (2011)
- Number of people who moved to Houston between 2006-11: 435
- In 2014-15, the ministry has committed to investing \$331 million in employment and labour market programs under the Employment Program of BC.
- The Employment Program of BC is funded by the Province of British Columbia as well as the Government of Canada through the Labour Market Development Agreement.
- The Community and Employer Partnerships program is featured in B.C.’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint that helps align training and education with in-demand jobs and provides more support to people who are struggling to gain a foothold in the job market or who face unique challenges.
- Funding supports 85 WorkBC Employment Services Centres throughout the province and the four components of the Community and Employer Partnerships fund:
 - Job Creation Partnerships
 - Labour Market Partnerships
 - Project-Based Labour Market Training
 - Research and Innovation

Who is eligible?

- Businesses
- Non-profit organizations
- Crown corporations
- Municipalities, agencies or territorial governments
- Bands/tribal councils
- Public health and educational institutions

Learn More:

For more information on Community and Employer Partnerships: www.workbc.ca/CEP

Find a local WorkBC Employment Services Centre: www.workbccentres.ca

Learn more about the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation:
www.gov.bc.ca/sdsi

For the full report: www.houston.ca

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