



# W'áném't'a

HEILTSUK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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February 2010

## Olympic Torch Arrives to *Huge Welcome* in Bella Bella

Tuesday February 2, 2010 is a day that will long be in the memories of the people of Bella Bella and the central coast. At 8 am the excitement began as BC Ferries Northern Explorer arrived in McLaughlin Bay from Prince Rupert and delivered the Olympic torch to the Coast Guard vessel Cape Farewell that carried it to the government dock for an 8:40 am official Heiltsuk welcome and blessing.



Olympic Torch and Don Tite arrive in Bella Bella

These five were part of more than 12,000 torchbearers who carried the flame on a 45,000 kilometre cross Canada odyssey visiting more than 1000 communities, including 100 First Nations settlements.

The flame was welcomed with open arms by Heiltsuk Hereditary Chiefs as it

was carried by local torchbearer Don Tite. In traditional red and black ceremonial dress, the Chiefs each took their turn blessing the flame as hundreds watched. Continued on Page 2

Despite the early hour there were many Bella Bella people and visitors from Shearwater and Klemtu to greet this global symbol. 300 sets of those famous Olympics mittens were distributed to the excited crowd. These were part of the more than 3.4 million sets sold in Canada to date!

The Olympic flame has a sacred history that symbolizes the principles of peace, brotherhood and friendship. This was day 96 of the 106 day Torch celebration in Canada. Five torch bearers- 3 locals and 2 visitors- were honoured in the community's torch relay which started a whole day of Olympic celebration.



Chief Wilfred Humchitt with the torch on the Cape Farewell

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### W'áném't'a

(pronounced *Wa nem da*) means to trade or exchange, reflecting historical Heiltsuk leadership in trading of furs, seaweed, and other products which underlie the important business relationships with outsiders to sustain our community.

# Torch Brings Excitement and Emotion to Bella Bella



**Don Tite arrives carrying the Olympic torch**

Young boys drummed and sang, while a group of young women performed the elegant Ladies welcome dance on the long dock. The still water and snow-capped mountains added a sense of serenity to the beautiful pro-

cession as the flame was passed on to Todd Ringness.

Cliff Starr Jr., chosen for his community contributions and sports commitment, received the flame from Todd and carried it to the local celebration and lighting of the Olympic cauldron.

Starr, who is known for his love and talent for basketball was followed by a parade of cheering residents as he made his way to the stage across from the Elders centre. Cliff was recently honoured and recognized at the All Native basketball tournament in Prince Rupert by being inducted into the All Native Hall of Fame.



**Cliff Starr lights the Olympic cauldron**

Heiltsuk Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett and BC Minister of Healthy Living and Sport, Ida Chong talked about the importance of the torch to the community and healthy living and shared the excitement of its all too brief, 75 minute visit to Bella Bella. Chief Slett remarked “we wanted to honour and rekindle the strong Heiltsuk tradition of athletics which continue with basketball today but also our past involvement with soccer and track and field events”.

The Bella Bella Choir accompanied a quartet in singing the *Cette Flamme* song. Sasam House and the Daycare Centre children ended the show with the Canoe Dance. Following the celebration, torch

bearer Rod Nikmaram carried the flame back to the dock, this time led by a dozen young men dancing the Archer dance. The flame was met at the bottom of the pier by Hereditary Chief Wilfred Humchitt Sr. in traditional dress who carried the flame on the bow of coast guard boat and back onto the Northern Explorer, heading for Port Hardy.



**Alyson Reid eagerly awaits the Olympic torch in Bella Bella**

Chief Slett continued “it was an awesome day for the Heiltsuk people. We didn’t really know how we’d react to the torch but when it arrived in our own community it was very emotional and generated a lot of pride, especially with our elders and youth “.



**Conor McConechy greets the Olympic torch**



First Nations peoples across Canada and especially in BC were prominently involved in everything from the 45,000 km torch relay to the fantastic Opening Ceremonies on Feb. 13 in Vancouver. Several First Nations peoples accompanied the flame from Mount Olympus in Greece to the start of the 106 day relay in Victoria on October 30 where it was greeted by the Four Host Nations and the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. Eleven young aboriginals were chosen to protect the flame as it made its way across Canada.

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**Lillian and Kylani Brown Singleton at torch events**



## Forestry Rebounding ~ *Slowly*

Forestry is the largest business enterprise owned by HEDC. Negotiations are underway between HTC and the BC government that will potentially add even more Heiltsuk forestry tenures in the future. The fortunes of HEDC are tied to the forest sector for now.

After two very poor years there has been a slight improvement in the markets. The world-wide recession and collapse of the US housing market have severely affected the business. While many of the logs that the Heiltsuk produce are sold overseas the US market is still key to a positive future for our forestry business.

HEDC went ahead with a small helicopter logging project in the fall and produced about 20,000 m3 of logs



**John Mohammed inspects Heiltsuk logs in Howe Sound with Japanese buyer Jiro Yamamoto**

(there is about 1 m3 in an telephone pole) that were mostly pre-sold.



**Log buyers Mr. Hong and Mr. Ting from China with Mr. Yamaguchi from Japan**

The net income from the project was about \$12 per cubic metre and reduced the financing from our partner A+A Trading by about \$400,000. Jim Richardson, HEDC CEO noted “This profit will help reduce our debt which has built up in 2009 due to a poor logging year.”

Heiltsuk Coastal Forest Products is also looking at another heli-logging project in Briggs Inlet this spring involving about 30,000 m3 of logs. The spruce can be pre-sold to Japan and Korea will buy the hemlock logs. However, the market is still tough and no long term logging plans can be forecast at this point. Some are predicting it will be another couple of years before the US market fully recovers and Heiltsuk logging operations can be more stable. John Mohammed of A+A Trading was recently in Japan and China looking at those markets for Heiltsuk logs and provided the following report:

Japan is still in recession and housing starts in 2009 were 35% lower than 2008 and GDP for their economy is down 5.4%. Log inventories are low right now and some customers are looking to buy with some moderate price increases. Freight rates are rising and that has wiped out the gains from Yen appreciation. Due to the higher yen, mills in Japan are making money and their order files are good.

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## All Day Olympic Torch Celebration

The Olympic celebration in Bella Bella continued through the day. Arts and crafts and a mini Olympic event involving youth and 45 young visitors from Klemtu and Shearwater took place. The inspirational day ended with a huge community feast at the Wawiskas Community

hall which was packed with hundreds of people.

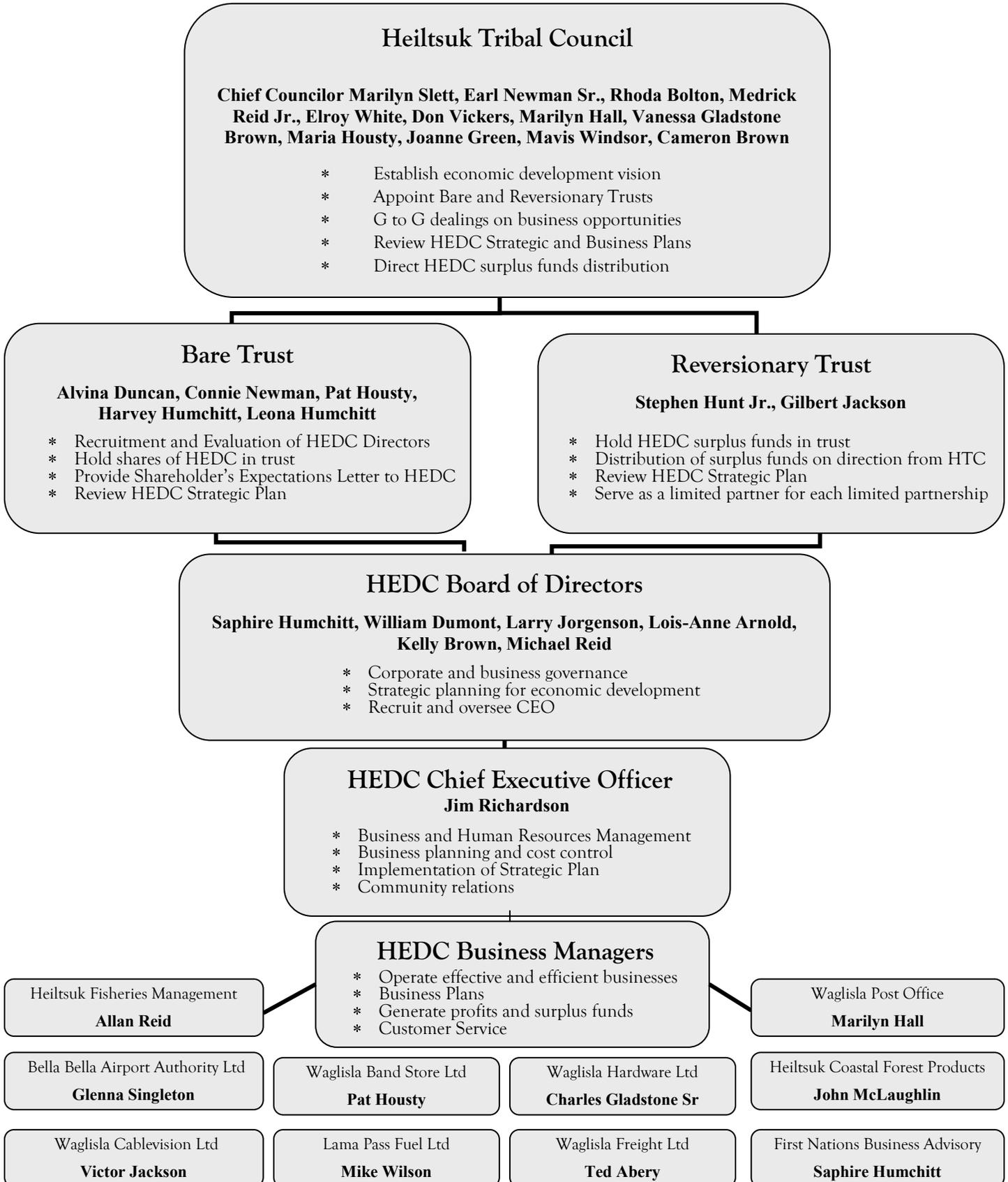


**The torch is passed at the Government Wharf**

The event was organised by the Bella Bella Olympic Torch Organising Committee led by Pam Reid and her Tagila Consulting Group which included Kathy Sereda, Beverley Humchitt and Glenna Singleton. They really achieved a GOLD MEDAL performance on this special Olympic day in Bella Bella!



# Heiltsuk Economic Development Structure and Roles



# Log Markets Improving in Asia



High quality hemlock logs from  
Johnson Inlet project

Japan's economy will take years to rebound and past market demands are unlikely to return. There is good demand for Sitka spruce and the hemlock market prices are up slightly but market share for hemlock is diminishing.

The China economy is continuing to grow even during the global recession and the GDP was up by 9% in 2009 and forecast 11% in 2010. Lumber is used primarily for concrete forming for skyscraper construction, bridges, highways and other infrastructure financed by the government stimulus programs. Some lumber is used for housing but that's small compared to the concrete forming. Other major lumber uses are for furniture, doors, crating and pallets. Hence Chinese purchase lower quality logs and strive for low prices.

The rise in ocean freight rates has resulted in higher log prices but with currency conversion that translates to about a \$60/m<sup>3</sup> hemlock log. A major trade barrier for logs into China is their general requirement for debarking. Those Chinese ports that do allow logs with bark pay a lower price and generally those don't match our production costs.

The overall impression for both Japan and China is cautiously optimistic for the first half of 2010.

## CONTEST

### BUSINESS OF THE MONTH AWARD

HEDC recognizes there are many independent businesses in Bella Bella and wants to recognize a business in each newsletter that deserve recognition for good customer service!

**Please send your nominations to:**

HEDC

Lisa McConechy

Box 950

Bella Bella, BC

V0T-1Z0

ea.hedc@gmail.com

## Edzerza Retires from HEDC

For the past two years Allen Edzerza has been an active Director of HEDC and has now retired from the board. Allen was a hard working, helpful addition and made many contributions, particularly his knowledge and experience with development corporations. Sapphire Humchitt, HEDC Board chair noted "we will miss Allen, his good humour, his excellent advice and dedication to moving HEDC forward ". Allen recently advised "the Tahltan Central Council has offered me the Lead Negotiator position for the proposed Northwest BC Transmission Line project involving BC and BC Hydro. This work is keeping me exceptionally busy and it is with great sadness that I am advising you that I will not be able to serve another term as HEDC Director. I have faith that HEDC will continue to move forward is well positioned to become the economic arm of the Nation as envisioned."



Allen Edzerza promoted to Lead  
Negotiator  
for Tahltan Nation



## Airport Faces Financial Challenges and Opportunities



Glenna Singleton, Airport Manager

*As part of a series of articles on the Heiltsuk businesses Wanemta interviewed Glenna Singleton, the Airport Manager recently.*

Glenna Singleton is a versatile Heiltsuk woman-when we talked just before Christmas she had been busy that morning taking boiling water to thaw out the lock on her Bella Bella airport shed. She got the lock open but the shed doors were still stuck from the freezing rain and ice! However, she persevered and got the shed open for service.

Bella Bella has a 3700 foot long and 75 foot wide runway situated north of town. Small, isolated coastal community's main lifelines are aircraft or a 6 hour ferry ride and Bella Bella is no exception.

Each year there are about 25 medical evacuations as well as more than 3000 landings. While 2009 saw some reduction in business due to the recession, landings reached more than 3200 in 2008, a 17% increase from ten years earlier. More Bella Bella residents are travelling during a time when the numbers of summer fishing lodges have fallen from 9 to only 5.

The runway and apron can accommodate a range of secondary aircraft, including corporate jets that include the high-powered, fast Citation and the old stable Viscounts flown by Air North on fishing charters. The only regularly scheduled airline into Bella Bella is Pacific Coastal to Port Hardy and Vancouver using the Saab and Shorts 360 aircraft with float-plane connections to and from Klemtu

which provides up to two daily flights . PCA flies more than 5000 passengers annually from Bella Bella. Hawkair has been an infrequent visitor with its charter Dash 7 aircraft. The airport is pretty reliable-losing less than 7 days a year to weather. Runway lights might help in low visibility and night conditions but costs are huge for this improvement.

The airport is one of the Heiltsuk businesses now managed by HEDC. Annual operating costs for the airport are about \$140,000 with revenues of around \$120,000. Revenue comes from landing and terminal fees-there are currently no departure or Airport Improvement Fees at Bella Bella. For a larger Pacific Coastal flight fees are approximately \$100. The adjacent Denny Island airstrip serving Shearwater is the only competition in the area-but it also has a shorter runway.

The airport operates with two employees. Two of Glenna's biggest challenges are snow removal and lack of sustainability on the financial side of the business. Public Works provides snow removal services. Glenna notes "we need to get some additional revenue or grants to address outstanding audit issues such as brush removal and runway lines which caused us to have a deferred audit approval. It's also time we looked at a new airport terminal, something more comfortable and attractive-perhaps in a long-house style to share our culture with visitors" Right now there are a maximum of only 29 seats in the terminal and that includes Glenna's desk chair!



Bella Bella Airport

Glenna has been working at the airport for 13 years, having started as secretary after 9 years at the Bella Bella community school and 7 years with Pacific Coastal Airlines. She was born in Bella Bella to Peter and Christine White and adopted by Chester and Deanna Lawson.

She lived in Melfort, Saskatoon, Ocean Falls and Prince Rupert before returning home about 19 years ago. She loves her job "you meet such interesting people. One day Bobby Baun of the Toronto Maple Leafs dropped in on the way to West Coast Resorts. I find it exciting to engage with people and provide a good service to all our customers-the residents of the central coast, and especially Pacific Coastal Airlines"

Glenna has been learning ever since she started at the Airport. In March 2004 Glenna received her Airport Administration and Services Program Certificate through Sault College. Being a government regulated entity there is lots of complex paperwork. She is looking forward to working under HEDC and "is pleased to get prompt answers now to my questions. With new financial accountabilities I can finally become a real Manager that I should be. Our CEO has been helping prepare our first budget and bringing everyone up to speed on business planning and improving our managerial skills. We appreciate that."



## HEDC 2009 Audited Financial Statements Completed

Reid Hurst Nagy, Certified General Accountants recently completed their audit of HEDC for the year ending March 31, 2009. There were no issues with the audit. Due to delays in securing a CEO and the transition of Heiltsuk businesses to HEDC there was a surplus of \$326,824 for the year. Most of that surplus will be used to fund operations for 2009/10. The full report is available for examination at the Heiltsuk Business Centre. The results are as follows with comparable results for 2007/08:

### *Balance Sheet*

	<i>2009</i>	2008
<i>Assets</i>		
Cash, GST and accounts receivable		
Prepaid expenses	310,140	67,223
Capital and other	<u>134,815</u>	<u>3,499</u>
	<b>444,955</b>	77,441
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Current	56,766	16,076
Equity - shares	10	10
Retained Earnings	<u>388,189</u>	<u>61,365</u>
	<b>444,955</b>	77,441
 <i>Statement of Earnings</i>		
<i>Revenue</i>		
Grants - CEDG, HTC, COF	429,104	300,000
Administration Fees, projects, miscellaneous	<u>211,463</u>	<u>0</u>
	640,567	300,000
<i>Expenses</i>		
Consulting Fees	63,399	
Contract Services	43,801	1,507
Accounting and Legal	58,487	114,228
Office	36,814	8,884
Professional Development		4,361
Travel	14,852	31,533
Meeting Honoraria (Project Work)	88,571*	39,775
Directors Project Work		36,850
Miscellaneous and depreciation	<u>7,819</u>	<u>0</u>
	313,743	238,645
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>326,824</b>	61,355

\* see next page for details

## HEDC 2009 Audited Financial Statement

### Summary of Directors and Trustees Payments Meeting Honorariums and Project Work



	Months Served	
<b>HEDC Directors:</b>		
Arnold, Lois-Anne	5	4,788
Brown, Frank	9	14,008
Dumont, Bill	12	14,982
Edzerza, Allen	12	10,434
Humchitt, Sapphire	12	13,989
Jorgenson, Larry	5	3,993
Wilson, Gary	9	18,577
		80,771
<b>Bare Trustees:</b>		
Duncan, Alvina	12	1,650
Housty, Pat	12	1,650
Humchitt, Harvey	3	450
Humchitt, Leona	12	1,200
Newman, Connie	12	1,650
		6,600
<b>Reversionary Trustees:</b>		
Hunt, Stephen	12	300
Jackson, Gilbert	12	300
Willie, Louisa	12	600
		1,200
Grand total		\$88,571

## Shearwater Looks to a Brighter Future

Craig Widsten – the *mayor of Shearwater*, right across from Bella Bella, is from a family with more than a century of roots in the Central Coast. His grandfather John was one of the original Norwegian settlers who landed in Bella Coola and Hagensbourg in 1894. His dad Andrew married Jean, matron of the Bella Coola hospital, who was an RN graduate from the Ottawa Civic Hospital and originally from Scotland. His dad served as the Marine Superintendent, Captain and Engineer for Pacific Mills at the new Ocean Falls pulpmill. Craig was born in Vancouver and received most of his schooling there including graduation from grade 13 at Burnaby South High and a Diploma in Business Management from the first classes at BCIT in 1966.

Craig's father was a hardworking, respected man of many interests and served as a Captain in the Royal Canadian Air Force who helped establish RCAF float-plane bases along the coast, including Shearwater, as part of the defence of North America from Japanese attack. At the time of the Second World War there was only a lone trapper in the area of Shearwater.

The base was built and eventually put up for sale after the war in 1947 when Craig's father and two partners bought the properties comprising the private lands and established the community of Shearwater and an elementary school.

The first company was known as Widsten and Logan reflecting the initial partner. Eventually the two partners sold out and it became Widsten Marine Services. A sawmill, marine ways and shipyard followed along with much contract work in establishing lighthouses and stations for BC Tel at Calvert, Swindle and Trutch Islands. Widsten Marine also established the Koye River Limestone Company in 1962 where limestone was mined and



**Craig Widsten**

barged to Ocean Falls for the pulp mill during the 1960s. Craig was a minority owner in Widsten Marine with his father at this time gaining valuable coastal marine business experience.

Facing retirement and seeing his son Craig with some other ideas, Andrew Widsten arranged to sell the operations at Shearwater to Craig in 1967. Andrew Widsten passed away at the family homestead in Bella Coola in 1973.

In the early 1970s Craig's firm, Shearwater Marine, built some of the largest fibreglass fishboats on the coast with Heiltsuk tradesmen providing the expertise and labour.

The Kitsoo's current flagship "Island Joy" (formerly Bripack) was built at Shearwater in 1971 with help of Heiltsuk craftsman Carmen Humchitt, Peter Mason and many others. Craig built a hotel in 1972 along with a cabaret in an old RCAF building. The times were good for Craig and his family, fishing was viable and flourishing, and logging was a mainstay in the area. There was a healthy economy in Bella Bella with fishing and canneries work at Namu. Craig's business strategy has always been one of diversification and flexibility

positioning his businesses as the major service provider in the Central coast.

Fishing and hunting friends from Quesnel convinced Craig to build an airstrip in the late 1970's to service his businesses and improve access to the small community. Craig provided the accommodation, meals, fuel and barging for the friend's equipment to build the strip followed by eventual government support to pave and upgrade it. Shearwater Marine and the other parties originally invested more than \$750,000 in the airstrip.

The serious decline in fisheries and logging in the past decade has seen Craig refocus and diversify to such enterprises as tourism in which he has now established a viable upmarket sports fishing enterprise, new hotel, pub and store, expanded services to providing fuel and freight transportation, towing, salvage and a sawmill. His strategy has been to diversify and try to become as self-sufficient as possible, the company has never owned fishing licences, logging or other tenures, preferring to provide services to those sectors.

The same pressures that saw the fisheries and forestry decline also affected most of the people in Bella Bella. As Craig notes "it was a tragedy to see ocean faring expert Heiltsuk fishers and their fleet in Bella Bella face such an uncertain future with the fisheries decline. At one time they were self-sufficient and most everybody was engaged in the sector, either on the water or at the fish plant. When business is good in Bella Bella it's also good in Shearwater. " He is looking at establishing a new enterprise of floating fishing cabins where sportsmen can park their boat right beside a nice cabin for accommodation and experience great fishing.

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## Shearwater's Success Closely tied to Bella Bella's Fortunes

As a successful businessman, Craig was asked about future business opportunities in the Central coast and specifically for Bella Bella. "Obviously, taking advantage of the Heiltsuk skills in fisheries and fishing makes a lot of sense. But now a new approach is needed such as aquaculture – the world is looking for new seafood sources.

There are many ocean species other than salmon which show promise. I am pleased to see HEDC looking at the scallop farm and there has to be other ideas as well". He also noted "The Heiltsuk are becoming larger players in forestry. While that business has been suffering there could be some big opportunities for value added work down the road with the high grades of cedar being logged. Panels could be made from clears to provide work for carvers for the high end housing market. Taking clear grade and combining it with some Heiltsuk artwork makes sense".



He feels that "working together on projects with the Heiltsuk has been mutually beneficial. We collectively took on BC Hydro over power costs from the Ocean Falls hydro plant and we succeeded in getting the rate that everyone else pays in BC – almost 16 cents per kilowatt hour less than the commercial rate we had been paying. That's a saving of more than \$500,000 to people in Bella Bella each year and \$5000 per month for Shearwater. That's a pretty powerful example of how working together can be great for both parties. Shearwater is always ready to look at new ideas for joint ventures.

It looks like the Heiltsuk are moving forward with their HEDC plans and that's great news". About a quarter of Craig's employees are Heiltsuk with 15 working during peak periods. He employs about 30 to 40 people year round in all his enterprises. All the guides for his fish tourism business are Heiltsuk "because they are the best fishermen, have great customer service skills and know where the fish are!" Craig sees a positive employment future for Heiltsuk in ecotourism, Marine accreditation as Captains, carpentry skills, kitchen specialists such as Chefs and servers and those with experience in sawmilling. "We really prefer to hire locally as employee accommodation is a major issue, it's easier for us; we don't pay the highest wages but we do offer stable employment. For example we



Shearwater Marine

have a Heiltsuk couple who are excellent employees, Ted Gladstone is our gourmet chef in training and his wife Phoebe the assistant manager at our general store".

Craig has worked long and hard to create a successful business and credits a dedicated management team and loyal, supportive staff for that success. Now in his 70's Craig is starting to look at transition to a less hectic life. He has three senior managers working for him who now hold an ownership stake in the business – Mike Pfortmueller, Vice president, Alan Tite, Resident General Manager and Mark Schlichting,

Resident Chief Financial Officer. He hopes his son Brad will also play a larger role going forward. "I have been married to my wife Elaine for over 52 years, we now have 3 children and 9 grandchildren and its time to enjoy them a bit more – but my heart and interests still lie in the heart of the Central coast at Shearwater."

### What it Takes to be a Successful Entrepreneur

Here are some of the things it takes to become a successful businessperson according to the experts:

**Motivation** – You have to be willing to pursue your idea. You have likely thought about it for a while and you are ready to launch your own business.

**Sacrifice** – It takes time and effort to run your own business. There's no accounting department or receptionist and you have to pay your own benefits and salary

**Research**- You have to be determined to go out and track down information and resources you need

**Support** – A mentor, a network of people to ask for guidance

**Organization** – You cannot wait for things to happen. You have to plan ahead and know how to turn a business plan into an action plan.

**Self-Confidence**-There is probably no money to do most important business things like selling- you have to go out, make sales presentations and market yourself to succeed.

**Are you ready??**

## Customer Service Helps Bring Home the Bacon!

### *HEDC Will Focus on You, the Customer*

The past two articles really dealt with getting your business started. The focus of this article is on customer service... an important factor in attracting a loyal customer following, keeping your existing customers and attracting new customers.

It is important that you have a product or service that people want but you must be able to provide it to them when they want it and in a fast and efficient manner. So, hours of operation are a big factor in this aspect



**Jim Richardson, HEDC CEO**

of customer service.

That is why many convenience stores are open 24 hours a day. Some large grocery stores in major cities are also following that trend. For example, you can find a Loblaw store in downtown Toronto that is open 24 hours. Gas bars provide 24 hour service too as they focus on service. The Western Canada gas bar chain, DOMO, operates on the slogan, "We jump to the pump for you". You cannot go into business and survive without attracting a loyal customer following and keeping that customer base. Some businesses also have annual customer surveys where they ask for the customers feedback on the service provided to them by the business. Then they tie that into a compensation package for employees.

For example, a poor customer survey response may mean that the employees receive less of or no bonus for the year. It would be a mistake to become complacent. That is, to assume that people will frequent your business just because you are the only option they have.

There are many examples of companies that have lost considerable business because of that. For example, sales fell considerably years ago for Harley Davidson because they did not concentrate on customer service and what the competition was offering. They did not believe that the Japanese could produce a motorcycle that customers liked. In this case, Honda entered the market and produced a line of motorcycles that severely cut into Harley Davidson sales. It took years for Harley Davidson to recover.

It does not matter where you are or the service you provide, you must provide customer service to grow. At HEDC we feel the same. HEDC will focus on customer service for all of its businesses. We want to develop a customer charter of



rights. We want you to feel good when you buy our products or services and we want you to come back. To do that we will have the welcome mat out for you from the time you enter the store, the gas pumps, speak to someone on the telephone or visit one of our offices. We will have zero tolerance for anyone of our staff using foul language or treating customers in a belligerent way. I want to hear from you on what you think of our

services.

If you have a concern about the service provided by any of our businesses, please feel free to call me at (250) 957-2217 or email me at:

[james.richardson@heiltsukdevco.com](mailto:james.richardson@heiltsukdevco.com).

I value your feed-back!



#### HEDC BUSINESSES

<b>Band Store</b>	<b>957-2373</b>
<b>Airport</b>	<b>957-2868</b>
<b>Cablevision</b>	<b>957-2191</b>
<b>Hardware</b>	<b>957-2672</b>
<b>Fuel Station</b>	<b>957-2440</b>
<b>Liquor Store</b>	<b>957-2300</b>
<b>Post Office</b>	<b>957-2301</b>
<b>Freight</b>	<b>604-472-9400</b>
<b>Fish Plant</b>	<b>957-2324</b>
<b>Forestry</b>	<b>250-668-0244</b>
<b>FNBAS</b>	<b>957-2555</b>
<b>HEDC</b>	<b>957-2217</b>

## First Nations and Economic Prosperity in the Coming Decade

*The BC Business Council recently released several papers on BC's economic outlook to 2020. The following is a summary of the studies on First Nations and economic growth.*

If First Nations are to take their rightful place in British Columbia by becoming a bigger force in the economy and a significant contributor to provincial prosperity, federal and provincial governments need to remove barriers to First Nations economic activity and more needs to be done ensure aboriginal youth complete skills training, K-12 schooling and post-secondary education.

Traditionally, First Nations have been viewed as a damper on economic activity as uncertainty related to unresolved aboriginal claims has often slowed development. The main solution pursued for almost 20 years now, the development of modern-day treaties, has yet to generate wide-ranging positive results. Nevertheless, the overall perception of First Nations and their role in the economy is changing.

Two things are happening. The Aboriginal population is demographically young, underemployed and growing rapidly at a time when the rest of the population is aging and growing slowly. This dynamic points to a greater role for Aboriginal people in the labour force of tomorrow.

At the same time, for the past decade or more First Nations have become more economically engaged, drawing on several different models and approaches to use economic activity as a path to self-determination and self-sufficiency. The result is that an increasing number of bands have built capacity and enthusiasm for participating actively in the economy.

While still in the minority, those leading the way are charting a course that others are likely to follow.



**Boeing Vertol Helicopter Prepares to Lift Cedar Log at Johnson project**

### Demographics and Education

British Columbia's Aboriginal population is young and growing, but it is underemployed mainly because of a lack of formal educational qualifications. Yet there is no real difference in labour force outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians holding post-secondary credentials. The real issue is there is much higher proportion of the Aboriginal population without a high school diploma than the general population and the proportion having completed post secondary education is much lower still. In large part this can be traced to the lower quality of K-12 education offered to many Aboriginal children. Accessibility and the relevance of post-secondary education and other skills training are also factors contributing to relatively low levels of educational attainment among Aboriginals.

Education is an important issue for all types of Aboriginal communities – urban and rural, and on and off reserve. The province and other public agencies

have done much to try to improve access to K-12 and post-secondary education and skills training for Aboriginal people, and there are certainly some signs of progress. However, more needs to be done on the educational and skills front to facilitate greater Aboriginal participation in economic development.

Looking ahead, federal, provincial and First Nations governments need to redouble their efforts in the following policy areas:

- improving K-12 Aboriginal education quality in urban and rural settings;
- finding better ways to get more on-reserve children through the K-12 system;
- enhancing Aboriginal access to trades and skills training; and,
- putting more emphasis on academic college and university attainment by First Nations students.

### First Nations Economic Activity

In many ways the experience of BC First Nations is similar to that of First Nations throughout North America. In the United States, the Harvard project has been exploring the principles and conditions that help First Nations achieve economic success. The main conclusions of this important work are:

**Sovereignty matters.** When Native nations make their own decisions about how they should approach development of their economies, they consistently outperform external decision makers.

**Institutions matter.** Sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of Governance.

**Continued on Page 14**

## Christmas in Rural Peru



**Jim's beautiful Macaw parrot in his backyard in Iquitos, Peru**

Having been in beautiful Bella Bella for over six months our family was anxious to visit family, friends and our animals in Peru for Christmas. With bags packed and "Lucky", our local cat, safely placed with a friend we embarked on our journey. Bella Bella to Vancouver then a five hour flight to Toronto. From Toronto we took and eight hour flight to Lima, Peru. Close to home... but not there yet as we had to take a two hour flight to Iquitos, Peru right smack along the Amazon river close to the borders with Columbia, Brazil and Ecuador.

As we disembarked from the aircraft in Iquitos we were greeted with humidity approaching 100% and a temperature of 35 degrees Celsius. Welcome to the jungle! Iquitos is a bustling frontier town only accessible by air or river.



**A baby Woolly monkey**

It has a large population but outside of the city centre it is very much rural like. It was founded by Jesuits around 1750 and really grew as a result of the rubber plantations in the 1800's. The rubber industry gradually disappeared and it now has an economy based on timber, tourism and oil exploration and development. Many of its inhabitants are from local tribes who still live along the Amazon and the various tributaries.

When you visit a village you notice the absence of many of the conveniences we take for granted such as electricity and running water. They live a subsistence lifestyle, depending on fishing,



**One of Jim's Toucans**

hunting and selling bananas, fruit and other jungle bounty to survive. They eat fish, fruit, plants, monkey, wild boar, chicken, and other animals. It is so sad that gold and oil exploration is now threatening that way of life. But...back to our trip!

Driving from the airport in a motorized rickshaw you see wooden houses built on stilts with thatched roofs alongside brick like houses. We noticed a couple of nativity scenes that people had placed in open areas. The scenes depicted the standard scenes of baby Jesus along with Mary, Joseph, the three kings and animals that we see elsewhere but.... everyone is shown



**Native nativity scene with local animals**

as local tribes people with the animals of the jungle surrounding the manger. Instead of sheep you see stuffed jaguar, puma, anteaters, parrots, macaws and other animals.

Christmas Eve is very noisy in the frontier town of Iquitos with fireworks set off on the dirt streets by children and adults from 8 in the evening until well past midnight.

We spent the holidays visiting family, cruising the Amazon and tributaries in our boat and caring for our animals. Lucas was anxious to get back to Bella Bella because he wanted to play in snow for the first time in his life. Well...he may have to wait for a few more weeks or maybe next year!



**Cheena, the margay**

## Economic Prosperity

**Culture matters.** Successful economies stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government.

**Leadership matters.** Nation-building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose constructive change.

The message is that to develop a successful First Nations economy, “investors” must be willing to invest, whether it is people coming to work as employees or businesses entering partnerships and contributing capital. The good news is that a growing number of BC First Nations have been able to attract investment and have made progress in developing their economies.

The next step depends upon Aboriginal leaders leveraging the lessons learned by those First Nations that are leading the way throughout BC. Success also hinges on leadership at the Band level and on the ability of local leaders to embrace the principles of nation-building and good governance in pursuit of self-determination and self-sufficiency.

For the federal and provincial governments, the priority must be to practice flexibility and to remove as many barriers as possible to First Nations economic activity, while being neutral regarding the approaches or models to be used, whether it is band-owned businesses, partnerships with the private sector or Aboriginal entrepreneurs.



*Cedar logs readied for barge loading at Heiltsuk heli-logging project*

## 9 Rules for Good Customer Service

Good customer service is the lifeblood of any business and its all about bringing customers back. One secret of good customer service and acting accordingly is “*You will be judged by what you do, not what you say*”. To ensure the business you manage has good customer service you have to consistently do the following:

- \* Always answer your phone-customers want to talk to a live person
- \* Don’t make promises unless you WILL keep them-Reliability is the key to a good relationship
- \* Listen to your customers-and show them you are listening by addressing the problem or issue
- \* Deal with complaints-positively
- \* Keep your business premises, including washrooms, clean, tidy and fresh for customers
- \* Be helpful-even if there’s no immediate profit in it
- \* Train yourself and your staff to be ALWAYS helpful, courteous and knowledgeable
- \* Take the extra step-people notice when you make the extra effort
- \* Throw in something extra-a smile, information, a coupon –the gesture doesn’t have to be large to be effective

The irony of good customer service is that over time it will bring in more new customers than promotions and price cuts ever did!



### First Nations Business Advisory

FNBAS is located at the Community Development Society (CDS) building located beside the Heiltsuk Tribal Council.

### New phone number:

**(250) 957-2555**

Fax number: (250) 957-2566

All payments for freight, cablevision, ads, can be made at this location.

Saphire Humchitt, Manager

Angeline Gladstone, Accounts Payable Clerk

Melanie Windsor, Accounts Receivable Clerk

### Cablevision Subsidy Policy

**Elders (65+) on Pension or Social Assistance will qualify for free cable, only if there are no other employed residents in the household.**

For further information you can contact:

Victor Jackson, Cablevision Manager  
**at (250) 957-2191**

Coming Soon to our local cable channel!

Live Cable Programming Events  
Hosted by HEDC



HEDC would like to congratulate the Heiltsuk Men's Masters Team on their victory at the 2010 All Native Tournament!

**Contact Us:**

**Heiltsuk Economic  
Development Corporation**

Box 950 Bella Bella, BC  
V0T1Z0

Phone: (250) 957-2217

Fax: (250) 957-2247

Jim Richardson, CEO ~ Ext 225

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