

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BARKERVILLE makes a positive difference in the lives of BC's unemployed forest workers

Barkerville, BC, July 14th, 2009 - Barkerville Historic Town – North America's largest heritage site – is pleased to announce its affiliation with the College of New Caledonia's inaugural **Heritage Building Conservation Certificate Program**.

The Heritage Building Conservation Certificate Program was developed in consultation with British Columbia's Provincial Heritage Branch, the University of Victoria's Cultural Resource Management program, and Parks Canada. It is delivered through partnerships with the College of New Caledonia, School District #28, and The Barkerville Heritage Trust.

The program will combine 22 weeks of theory and hands-on work experience that blends online eLearning and classroom instruction with valuable field practice. It is intended to provide training opportunities for displaced BC forest workers and apprentices from various trades committed to expanding their employment horizons through the completion of a six-month, accredited program focusing on the art of heritage preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration.

Course participants will use various capital works projects at Barkerville Historic Town and nearby Cottonwood House to cultivate the fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to safely perform interventions and maintenance on wood buildings and wooden heritage structures, while incorporating principles and practices that encourage long-term conservation.

Thanks to grant funding provided by the Community Development Trust – a three-year program helping BC forest workers, their families and their communities get through challenging times in the forest sector – nineteen Certificate students arrived at Barkerville on the morning of June 30th.

Led by course instructor Howard Berlin – of Berlin Construction, Quesnel – the team immediately set to work investigating, documenting, and assessing the seven Barkerville projects chosen to benefit from this specialized attention: the Barkerville Hotel Ice House, two 1930s skid shacks, a carriage shed, the Fink Garage, the Tai Ping Fong Peace Room, and several hundred feet of Barkerville's signature boardwalk.

It was an important early step in the program's innovative, hands-on approach to teaching its students the building principles and practices important to the long-term preservation of British Columbia's historic buildings – a step made possible by the Community Development Trust.

"The Building Conservation Certificate Program is the first college-level program of its kind in Western Canada," said Bill Bennett, former Minister of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts in announcing the program. "Through this funding, the province is helping to build a knowledgeable and skilled workforce for the conservation and rehabilitation of existing buildings, including heritage buildings, which contribute to the sustainability of these

assets. In a time of economic downturn, it is more important than ever to have a workforce trained and able to contribute to re-investment in existing buildings.”

Barkerville’s Chief Executive Officer, Judy Campbell added: “Re-investment in existing buildings is an important part of our mandate. The Building Conservation Certificate Program and the Community Development Trust are helping fulfill that mandate through re-investment in an existing BC workforce. It is a partnership that we are happy to help foster, and one that will have a positive, lasting effect on both the structural sustainability of Barkerville and the occupational sustainability of BC’s transitioning trades-workers.”

The Heritage Building Conservation Certificate is a pilot program intended to become a regular offering from the College of New Caledonia’s Continuing Studies department. For more information, visit the CNC’s Quesnel campus page at: www.cnc.bc.ca.

- 30 -

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The Community Development Trust was first announced in May 2008 and its programs were developed in consultation with industry, labour and non profits to directly assist forest workers impacted by the recent downturn in the forest industry.

The funding is divided into three programs: Transitional Assistance, Tuition Assistance and Job Opportunities.

The \$85.5-million Transitional Assistance program has helped more than 1,675 forest workers with an average of \$37,983 per worker. The goal of the Transitional program is to support more senior workers in their transition to retirement.

Through the \$17.25-million Tuition Assistance program, more than 1,640 people have been able to access up to \$5,000 each for retraining. The Tuition funding is for workers who were expected to be on layoff for four months or longer. Applications are continually accepted throughout this three-year program.

Under the \$26.25-million Job Opportunities Program, \$16.8 million has been approved for projects to date. These projects are anticipated to employ more than 800 people. Approvals are ongoing to ensure as many jobs as possible for the spring, summer and fall of 2009.

The Job Opportunities Program helps reduce the impact of current layoffs on workers employed in the forest industry, retains skilled forest workers for the anticipated future upturn, and preserves the characteristics of the labour force in forest-dependent communities.

Through Budget 2009, the Province has committed an additional \$30 million in funding to allow for further programs similar to those offered under the Community Development Trust. For more information, visit www.cd.gov.bc.ca/cdt/.

ABOUT BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN

BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN is the largest historic site in Western North America (www.barkerville.ca). Barkerville is provincially, nationally and internationally recognized for its historic significance associated with its place in western Canada's gold rush era and the role the gold rush played in BC joining Canada. Barkerville is widely known as a "must see" for travel itineraries in western Canada. The historic town is also a significant contributor to the Cariboo regional economy and is widely regarded as a unique component of the regional identity.

The Barkerville Heritage Trust, as Barkerville's operating and managing partner, works in conjunction with the Province of British Columbia, the owner and statutory guardian of Barkerville's heritage resources, to ensure that Barkerville is efficiently managed, entertaining and educational to visitors, and financially stable as the premier heritage resource and tourism attraction for the Cariboo. The ultimate aim is to maintain and enhance Barkerville's position as a nationally significant heritage resource and tourism attraction for British Columbia and Canada.

Barkerville is situated 80 km east of Quesnel, British Columbia in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains, close to Troll Mountain Ski Resort and Bowron Lake Provincial Park. The nearby community of Wells (8 km from Barkerville) is the service and housing centre for the area (www.wellsbc.com) and is itself a dynamic cultural community, home of Island Mountain Arts, the acclaimed Toni Onley Artists' Project, the International Celtic Harp School (www.imarts.com), the dynamic indie music festival ArtsWells (www.artswells.com), and the Sunset Theatre (www.sunset-theatre.com). Wells is also situated close to a wide variety of winter and summer outdoor activities.

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