

INTEGRIS integral to Barkerville's successful Mid-Autumn Festival

Barkerville, BC – A generous contribution by the Quesnel branch of Integris Credit Union helped to make Barkerville an “approved destination” for nearly twelve hundred travelers headed to the historic town’s 12th Annual Mid-Autumn Festival this past Saturday, August 21st.

The Mid-Autumn Festival, which includes a variety of daytime and evening activities commemorating British Columbia’s Chinese-Canadian pioneers, is traditionally the second most popular event in Barkerville’s summer season after Dominion Day (July 1st). This year was no exception. Lion dances, lantern-making workshops, a tea ceremony, games for all ages, moon cake tasting, two special celebration banquets, and a magnificent, night-time parade of illuminated paper lanterns filled the event with equal parts revelry and reverence for one of BC’s oldest and largest ethnic communities.

“British Columbia possesses a rich Chinese heritage, and Barkerville’s vast collection of Chinese architecture, artefacts, archival material and photographs helps our visitors celebrate those Chinese immigrants working and living in Canada during the Cariboo gold rush,” said James Douglas, Barkerville’s Marketing and Communications Officer.

“Thanks to the involvement of the Quesnel branch of Integris Credit Union, our 2010 Financial Sponsor – Mid-Autumn Festival, this year’s celebration was bigger and better than ever.”

According to ancient Chinese astrology, the moon is at its roundest in the middle of the autumn season. Since the round shape of full moon symbolizes family reunion and togetherness in Chinese culture, one of the pre-eminent festivals in the Chinese calendar is the Mid-Autumn Festival. During the festival, family members gather to eat moon cakes and appreciate the bright full moon - an auspicious token of abundance, harmony and luck.

Barkerville celebrates Mid-Autumn a little earlier than most – *Mid-August* rather than strictly *Mid-Autumn* – as a way sharing this special day with the historic town’s summertime guests.

“The hard work and sacrifice of Barkerville’s Chinese community has been recognized as an irreplaceable contribution to the forming of British Columbia as we know it today,” said Chris Hyde, Commercial Loans Officer for the Quesnel branch of Integris Credit Union, during the festival’s opening ceremonies.

“Integris is a proud supporter of Barkerville’s Mid-Autumn Festival. We are happy to help honour those Chinese miners who traveled to the far side of the world to work industriously in the goldfields in pursuit of a better life for their loved ones.”

If Saturday’s attendance record at Barkerville is any indication, it appears Mr. Hyde’s sentiments are shared by a great many people.

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 Only 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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