

# **The West Kootenay Power Building**

## **Introduction to the Project Review Public Meeting held in Greenwood March 7, 2001**

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### **Background Information**

West Kootenay Power permanently closed their sub-station in Greenwood in 1997. The sub-station is located just south of Greenwood City limits in a prominent brick building that has significant historical value. This large, well-maintained building contains electrical equipment dating back to the turn of the century.

The building was constructed at the turn of the century and was responsible for transferring power to the developing mines and the large copper smelter in Greenwood. The early development of electrical power for the city and the copper smelter illustrates the prosperity that the region enjoyed so long ago. The West Kootenay Power Building allows one to have a glimpse of the rich history that the area possesses. The community of Greenwood is dedicated to preserving and promoting this history and is determined to support and preserve this important heritage site.

West Kootenay Power donated the building to the community to ensure its preservation as part of its Legacy project and donated it to the community groups interested in preserving the building. These community groups combined their forces through a committee to help develop plans and to eventually operate the facility. They agreed to have the title of the property to be placed in trust with the City of Greenwood.

### **Participating Organizations – Signatories to the Agreement**

City of Greenwood  
Greenwood Improvement Society  
Greenwood Community Association  
Greenwood Heritage Society (Museum)  
Greenwood Board of Trade

### **Supporting Organizations**

Community Futures Development Corporation of Boundary  
Boundary Historical Society  
Ministry of Community Development Community Volunteers  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs  
Human Resources Development Canada  
West Kootenay Power

### **The Opportunity**

The West Kootenay Building is a very prominent entrance to Greenwood and possesses great potential as a gateway to the mining heritage of the whole region. Prior studies done by prominent professionals such as former Deputy Minister of Mines, Jim Fyles and Heritage Architect, Eileen Fletcher, discussed and researched plans for mining heritage in the area and identified a need for an Interpretive Centre to act as an mining heritage entrance showpiece. It has been concluded that in order for Greenwood to house an Interpretive Centre, influential organizations should be recruited, funding proposals developed and involve those who will work hard for the proper development of Greenwood to assist with the development of the building.

## **An Organized Community ... The Heritage Development Organization**

Many of the groups involved in this project expressed concern that their organization cannot handle sole ownership of this building. Because this was a universal feeling amongst the groups in Greenwood, a united approach to developing the building was proposed. As a result of this, two agreements; an operating agreement and a trust agreement are being developed for the West Kootenay Power Building. These agreements will be signed by the community groups involved to ensure that development, maintenance and operating costs and responsibilities will be properly administered and shared by the appropriate community groups.

The diversified interests and talents of each organization involved combine to make a powerful team that will work towards developing the building into a world class tourism site.

## **What is being planned ... The Interpretive Centre Concept**

Prior economic development studies, community visioning sessions and considerable discussions have concluded that Greenwood is an ideal site for an Mining Heritage Interpretive Centre. Until the West Kootenay Power Building became available, it was unlikely that Greenwood could develop the Centre. With the building transfer to community ownership, the Centre is now possible. An Interpretive Centre in Greenwood has an abundance of resources and history to draw from. It can tell the story of how copper transformed the City of Greenwood into a thriving city of 5000 people. It can tell the story of how copper mines such as the Phoenix and how the large smelters operating at the turn of the century employed thousands. The famous railways were developed to service the area. Greenwood was one of the first cities of a developing British Columbia.

To date, the Heritage Development Organization has achieved a great deal of success and cooperation, largely due to the combined and coordinated efforts of the member organizations. It will be in the spirit of this cooperation, communication and dedication that the Committee will continue to succeed.

In order for this project to sustain itself, it is imperative that several stable revenue streams be developed and programs to achieve this be developed and implemented. This can only be done utilizing sound business planning and development and human resources training.

## **What are the Plans?**

Through the Ministry of Community Development Community Volunteers, the Heritage Development Organization has recently been awarded funding for three phases of planning and implementation of the Mining Heritage Interpretive Centre.

Phase 1 – Examine the feasibility of the project. Budget \$7,500 , January – March, 2001

Phase 2 – Develop a detailed business and development plan. Budget \$18,000 , April – June, 2001

Phase 3 – Implement the project. Budget \$20,000 , July 1 – December 2001.

Budgets are subject to availability of funds and successful completion of previous phase.

Other funding is being sought to employ and train 6 workers through HRDC. Capital improvement funds will be sought from Heritage Trust, WKP, corporate and private donations.

## **Revenues from Operations:**

- Museum Photograph Archiving and Reproduction
- Mining Heritage Artifact Restoration and Display Development
- Souvenir Store
- Tour Information and Travel Planning

## **Expected Results - Community Benefit**

- Job Creation
- Increased investment activity
- Marketing and development of tourism industry with a heritage theme.
- Preservation of a historical building and cultural development.

## **Phase 1 Feasibility Study Results**

Sharleen Sutherland – Marketing a Mining Heritage Interpretive Centre

Keith Funk – An Architect's view of the building and site.

Final Reports to be submitted the Heritage Development Organization by March 31, 2001 and no later than April 7 to Ministry office for approval of Phase 2.

## **How might you help?**

- **Volunteer.**
- **Offer expertise.**
- **Co-market your business with the Interpretive Centre plans.**
- **Develop tourism related activities and events.**
- **Plan for the future.**