

**Community-to-Community Regional Forum – November 5, 2004
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Final Report**

(Minutes from the forum are attached and/or available upon request from CSTC)

Co-Chairs:

CSTC Chief Negotiator/First Nations Summit Executive Edward John
Mayor Len Fox – District of Vanderhoof

Delegates:

Bruce Allan	CSTC
Councillor Georgina Alexis	Saik'uz First Nation
Chief Thomas Alexis	Tl'azt'en Nation
Eddy Antoine	Nak'azdli Treaty Office
Councillor Jenny Bahr	District of Vanderhoof
Councillor Janet Besherse	Takla Lake First Nation
Jim Besherse	Germansen Landing
Paul Blom	CSTC
Kevin Crook	District of Fort St. James
Sylvia Sharon Dane	CFDC (Community Future Development Corporation, Stuart Nechako)
Chris Dittmar	Aboriginal Outreach - CFDC
Keith Federick	CFDC
Angie Grant	CSTC
Chief Allison Johnny	Saik'uz First Nation
Tara Marsden	CSTC Treaty
Justa Monk	Tl'azt'en Nation, Five Nations Spokesperson
Chief Emma Palmatier	Lake Babine First Nation
Jerry Petersen	Regional District Bulkey Nechako
Keith Playfair	REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative)
Tribal Chief Harry Pierre	CSTC
Councillor Fred Sam	Nak'azdli Band
Rosemarie Sam	Nak'azdli Band
Councillor Susan Schienbein	Village of Burns Lake
Roy Spooner	CFDC and REDI
John Thobo-Carlson	CFDC
Mayor Jim Togyi	District of Fort St. James
Chief Leonard Thomas	Nak'azdli Band
Donna Ward	Village of Fraser Lake
Chief Janet West	Takla Lake First Nation



CSTC Tribal Chief Harry Pierre welcomes delegates to the first-ever Community-to-Community Forum for CSTC Nations and local governments.

Forum Objectives

This was the first regional Community-to-Community Forum in the Carrier Sekani traditional territory, thus the overall purpose was to begin a process for relationship building and communication between First Nations and local government. Delegates were asked to bring any common issues or goals to the table to discuss with the other community leaders and to inform one another on current situations in communities.

The possibility of media coverage following the event was considered, however the nature of the forum was not necessarily conducive to this. Instead, CSTC will post pictures and the final report on the CSTC website and will include a story on the forum in the CSTC Newsletter to be distributed to all CSTC members. Each individual local government may determine how they wish to publicize the outcome of the event.

With this being a first-time event hosted by CSTC, there was a considerable interest on behalf of CSTC in developing 'next steps' and to look to the local governments to take the relationship building initiative to the next level. CSTC is interested in developing better relationships with local governments within the traditional territories, and this forum was the first step in working towards that goal. There appeared to be considerable interest on behalf of local government, and also regional community organizations such as REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative), Community Futures and the Bulkley Nechako Regional District in building these relationships and CSTC awaits future concrete commitments from local government in leading the next steps. There was a general consensus that the forum was a success, and that it was a historic event in that it was the first time that the community leaders had come together.



Delegates take in community presentations and discuss common issues and goals. Co-Chairs Mayor Len Fox and Grand Chief Ed John sit side-by-side at centre right.

Issues Discussed

- Each Chief gave an overview of the current issues facing their communities, and the initiatives they are involved in that address the issues. These were not necessarily directed at local government, but simply to inform them.
- Mayors, Councillors and Regional District delegates gave brief community overviews and in many cases updated the forum on how they are working with First Nations, including what has worked and what has not.
- The Stuart Nechako Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) gave an introduction to their organization and highlighted the importance of First Nations involvement in it and in regional economic development generally.
- Common issues included:

Racism and harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, land use conflicts, water and sewer and other infrastructure needs, transportation (i.e. between reserves and town) and roads, volunteer firefighting training, Emergency Preparedness Plans, the sale of the Fort St. James Mill and other forestry issues, cross-cultural understanding, treaty issues and reconciliation with all levels of government, economic leakage, education, violence and crime, fisheries, impacts of provincial social service cuts on communities, and telephone and internet services for remote communities.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Possible official apology to the community of Saik'uz for the incident at the Vanderhoof Co-op. (Saik'uz Elder Mary John, who is now deceased, was treated disrespectfully by Co-op staff.)
- Collaboration between District of Fort St. James and Nak'azdli, Tl'azt'en and Takla Lake on a Convention Centre at Fort St. James.
- Collaboration between local government and First Nations on Wellness and Healing Centres at Fort St. James and Burns Lake.
- Collaboration between First Nations and local governments on preventing economic leakage to urban centres.
- Collaboration between Nak'azdli, Tl'azt'en and the District of Fort St. James on the 200th Anniversary of Fort St. James.
- Assistance for First Nations in developing Emergency Preparedness Plans for their communities.
- CSTC First Nations involvement at the REDI table.
- Partnering for increased training in volunteer firefighting.
- A second meeting between CSTC First Nations and local government, to be hosted by local government in approximately six months, possibly funded through REDI.
- Prior to the next regional forum that individual communities meet to commence work on the above-listed initiatives.



Delegates all agreed that this 'historic' event should be repeated in the near future, and that individual meetings between First Nations and municipalities should occur in the near future.