

Misty Isles Economic Development Society

Fall 2010

An Update from the MIEDS chair, Evan Putterill

In reviewing the progress made following our AGM in April, it is pleasing to note that the majority of identified priorities for 2010/2011 are currently being addressed. These priorities include completion of the Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI), the development of an Agriculture Strategy for Haida Gwaii, Forest Tenure Acquisition research on behalf of the communities, a Community Investment Package for Haida Gwaii, Freight Analysis and research into local interest in a secure source of tourism funding via the Additional Hotel Room Tax.



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MIEDS, working in partnership with various community organizations, is developing opportunities in Community Forestry/ Forest Tenure, Tourism, Agriculture, Community Investment Marketing and Employment and Training Opportunities. These efforts address identified gaps and will include public participation to develop strategies to strengthen our local economy.

Despite unemployment/underemployment rates rising and funding programs being eliminated, Haida Gwaii provides an abundance of opportunity if we remain committed to working together.

Highlights of this year include:

- Skidegate Band Council appointment of James Cowpar to the MIEDS Board of Directors
- Community Forest agreements are being discussed with government.
- Marketing of Haida Gwaii is being pursued with respect to the Tourism and Business Investment sectors.
- Food production and Product Development opportunities are being addressed with the objective of encouraging more food sovereignty for Haida Gwaii.
- Employment/Training opportunities are being developed for youth and adults through training partnerships and mentoring projects.



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An Agriculture Strategy for Haida Gwaii

Over the past year, Misty Isles Economic Development Society, the East Coast Graham Island Farmers Institute, Islands Food, and interested individuals met to discuss food sovereignty and local food production and storage issues for Haida Gwaii. The need for a clear strategy to provide direction for future local food production and markets was identified as a priority.

The Haida Gwaii Agriculture Strategy seeks to address food production and local food security with a broad-brush with the objective of informing and positioning the residents and communities of Haida Gwaii to take greater advantage of the opportunities that Agriculture presents for a stable local economy.

A series of community meetings are scheduled from Dec. 10-15 (dates will be published in the Observer). Research findings, markets and opportunities will be presented at the meetings.

Research has been conducted on the history of agriculture on Haida Gwaii, local food consumption, production and import data, freight analysis, agro-forestry, Agriculture Land Reserve on Haida Gwaii, forage and grains, mariculture, climate, local soil amendments and opportunities for accessing land for agriculture.

As a mechanism to help foster more local food production and promote a reduced carbon foot print, land that has good agricultural potential in close proximity to each community will be identified.

We are seeking public involvement in identifying how to encourage local people to participate in maximizing local food production.



We are grateful to the following funders for assisting us with this project:

- Northern Savings Credit Union
- Investment Agriculture Foundation
- Coast Sustainability Trust

Enquiries regarding Agriculture Strategy can be made to Mary Lou Schroeder, Project Coordinator (admin@mieds.ca or 559-8050).



Electronic News!

In an effort to 'go paperless' and reduce the number of newsletters we print, MIEDS is compiling a list of email addresses to provide residents with regular updates and future newsletters electronically. Contact us to be added to the list (250) 559-8050 or admin@mieds.ca.

MIEDS will continue to provide the newsletter in print form but in smaller quantities located at the MIEDS office, the village offices and the public libraries. Newsletters can also be found on our website - www.mieds.ca.

Thank you for helping us reduce our impact on the planet.

Message from the Chair—Continued from Page 1

We anticipate the completion of the Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) by the end of March 2011. This project brings to completion the review and update of socio-economic goals and objectives for Haida Gwaii as defined by

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the public in the 2007 Community Viability Study. We look forward to the appointment of an Old Massett Village Council appointment to the MIEDS Board of Directors and to working together towards a stronger islands economy.

Tourism on the Islands

Advertising and Marketing

The Haida Gwaii branding package continues to be a highlight. Ads in Northword magazine, Northern BC Travel Guide, Soar magazine, Go Camping magazine and the Observer publications are printing the widely recognized logo seen below.

Funding Opportunities

The Tourism Advisory Committee continues to look at the 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax. Research and Interviews with other communities in BC have seen a positive rate of return. This is a significant opportunity for the Haida Gwaii tourism industry.

Off Season Event

The Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) chose to support the 2nd annual Surfing Expression Session in order to help increase off season visitation to the islands. The event was partnered with North Beach Surf Shop, QCI Rec, and a number of other local businesses. Travel stories were written prior to the event in the Toronto Star, CBC radio, the Lethbridge Herald; among others advertising it as a positive sport-related activity for youth and their families.



Tourism Indicators

By using a number of available avenues for assessing the importance of tourism to the islands and the change after a stimulation project, we can better measure the success of the project.

Available indicators are the BC Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Investment website Data Tables, web hits on the www.goHaidaGwaii.ca website, BC Ferries rider information for the Prince Rupert—

Skidegate route and the BC Visitor Centre statistics. Should the necessary funding resource be available, a standard survey of visitors at each point of entry/ departure can provide the most meaningful information.

"Room Revenue for Northern BC was up 10.2% YTD 2010 but Visitor Centre access was down 8.2% YTD 2010 for same area" Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Investment Data Tables

October 2010

Community Investment Information

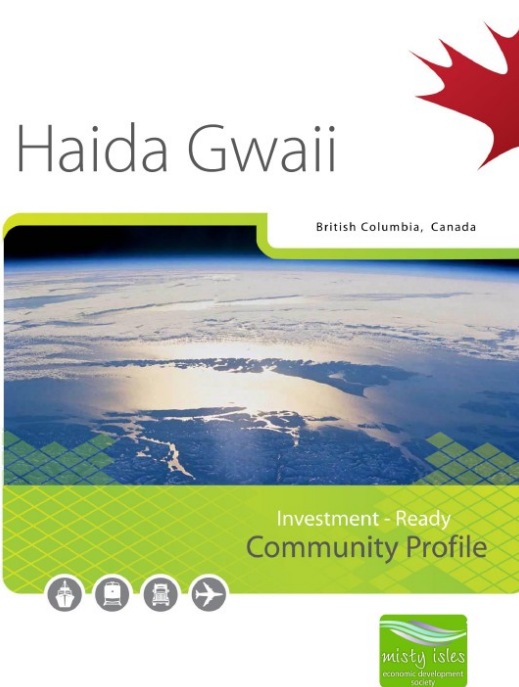
MIEDS has developed a Community Investment Profile, a Local Business Directory, and a Freight Analysis in an effort to develop information sources and data that will be of use to the communities, local business, and entrepreneurs, while potentially assisting in attracting off-islands investment capital to Haida Gwaii where sensible to do so.

Within the Community Investment Profile we collated the existing information and data on all of the communities and Haida Gwaii in general. It includes data like population, transportation, top employers, infrastructure, governance, health services, and government services. The document is being published with the assistance of Northern Development Initiative Trust, who has been completing similar profiles with communities across the North. Feedback from Northern Development staff tells us that we have one of the best and most comprehensive profiles they have seen. By the New Year, the document will be available in each community office and the MIEDS office and website.

The local business directory is a recent update to the list of all active businesses we have been able to identify. The Directory will be posted on the MIEDS website soon for everyone to access. The project employed 4 local people to conduct call outs to businesses and collate the data to develop the updated Business Directory. MIEDS will seek to maintain this list on an annual basis and can add businesses as they are brought to our attention. The Directory lists current businesses, contact information, number of people employed per business, and training/education requirements for various job positions. This work was done in partnership with Haida Gwaii Community Futures, Haida Gwaii Career Center, and Hecate Strait Employment Society.

The Freight Analysis is a report generated for MIEDS by a local consultant that looks at the existing modes and portals of freight movement on and off-islands in an effort to help local business identify more cost effective ways of move freight, as well as look forward to how we might ensure that Haida Gwaii can more effectively access the opportunities for product export through the Prince Rupert Container Port. This project meshes well with the recent barge study that Port Clements has completed and our plans to host Maynard Angus from the Prince Rupert Port Authority in the near future to come and speak to people on Haida Gwaii about opportunities that the Container Port presents to the region.

We believe these resources will assist in preparing Haida Gwaii to grow our manufacturing sector and stabilize the local economy. We would like to sincerely thank everyone who has provided their community or business information that made these projects possible.



The 2010 Free Board Development Workshop October 23/24 was a success with over 35 participants learning about effective board practices. The dynamics in the classroom was a great achievement with participants learning from each other as well as from the facilitators.

Contact us:

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