

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sept. 17, 2008

The Editor  
Mackenzie Times

There is no doubt that times are tough right now, but I'm confident that Mackenzie is well-positioned to take advantage of the forestry opportunities that lie ahead.

We have a new owner and operator for the Mackenzie pulp mill – the deal closes Sept. 22. I've had conversations with Dan White the new owner, who has assured me that he wishes to restart the mill. Ministry of Forests and Range staff and he are in discussions to find a suitable source of fibre for the pulp mill. I'm also hopeful that Mackenzie Green Energy will be up and running in the near future – providing another source of local employment.

Through the Forestry Roundtable, we are exploring what further actions are needed to ensure a long-term, sustainable future. There are tremendous opportunities ahead. We are looking at changes to the building code to encourage greater use of wood products in commercial and institutional construction. We need to pursue the economic benefits from the growing market for carbon sequestration by becoming a world leader in growing trees. By highlighting how wood construction is more earthquake resistant, we're working to increase exports to China and other Asia Pacific markets. And by supporting the development of bioenergy, we can achieve significant economic diversification and environmental benefits for our communities.

We are also helping communities cope with the temporary downturn. Mackenzie has received \$2 million from the Community Development Trust for transitional assistance for older workers, training assistance for younger workers, and job opportunities. To date, the District of Mackenzie has approved \$750,000 in projects that are employing 64 people, with an additional five to start work next week.

By working together – communities, First Nations, industry, and governments – we can ensure a bright future for our forest industries.

Sincerely,  
Pat Bell  
Minister of Forests and Range