



Skeena Native Development Messenger

December 2008/ January 2009

www.snds.bc.ca

A very special issue indeed!

In this extended edition of our newsletter we celebrate and highlight some of our Business Development successes. We encourage our readers to support these businesses and hope their stories will inspire others to pursue their own entrepreneurial endeavours. Our office eagerly looks forward to another successful year and what better way to kick it off than with our best newsletter yet, enjoy!

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Putting Apprentices in Motion

Skeena Native Development and the Piping Industry Apprenticeship Board (PIAB) co-hosted a public presentation January 23rd '09. The event was very well attended and provided insight to participants regarding the opportunities in the piping industry. Kelly Sinclair and Albert (Bert) Phillips were on hand to provide information to the audience.

The PIAB training centres were established in 1972 with one location in Delta BC and the other in Ft. St. John BC. They offer training in the four main categories of the piping industry (plumbing, pipefitting, steamfitting and welding). Each category represents a variety of certifiable trades. The school is governed by a cooperative committee comprised of Business and Union (United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170) members. Students who attend the training centres can pursue an apprenticeship through the Union and enjoy the benefits that come along with this association.

PIAB is offering a

Foundation Course (**next intake deadline February 23rd-inquire with our office for information**) that will provide pre-apprentices with an introduction to all of the piping trades leading into the advanced programs. An Introductory Course for Women (who are un- or under-employed) is also being offered that will provide full tuition and childcare to female pre-apprentices.

SNDS has a unique working partnership with the PIAB. First Nations and Inuit interested in these programs or pursuing an apprenticeship in the piping industry should contact Dianne Shanoss at the SNDS office.



Pictured (L-R) Dianne Shanoss, Kelly Sinclair, Bert Phillips and Kevin Jefferey

Poles Welcome Guests to Terrace Sportsplex

On November 7th 2008, the City of Terrace unveiled two totem poles that now stand to welcome guests to the new Sportsplex. Carved by four graduates from the *Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art* (North West Community College) the poles depict the Wolf, Killer Wale, Eagle and Raven - the four main clans of the Tsimshian Nation whose traditional territory includes the Terrace area. The four artists, Titus Aukland, Henry Kelly, George McKay and Jacquie McNeil, successfully completed the *First Nation Fine Art Certificate* with assistance from the Skeena Native Development Short Term and Certificate Training program.

In response to their cooperative efforts at establishing a business, SNDS utilized their services to design and bring the pole project to life. Our organization is extremely proud of the workmanship now on

display for the enjoyment of the community.

All four artists are currently leasing space at the mini mall on the corner of Kalum and Lazelle (#4613). With the assistance of our Business Development Department, they are finalizing a formal business plan and are working toward establishing the space as a carving workshop and gallery where they will have both an inventory and fulfill custom orders. They plan to officially open their doors within the upcoming year, so be sure to stay tuned. We certainly look forward to seeing the success of their efforts.



L-R: Titus Aukland, George McKay, Henry Kelly and Jacquie McNeil with one of the poles that now stand at the Terrace Sportsplex



Officiating dignitaries; L-R: Former Mayor Jack Talstra, Chief Glenn Bennett and Hereditary Chief Mel Bevan

Business Development: Wealth Creation

SNDS has long nurtured the entrepreneurial spirit. Our Business Development Department has helped bring many business ideas to life through solid planning. In going through the screening and planning process an entrepreneur can determine whether or not the business is sustainable before committing capital. The process also creates a venue for self assessment and identifying the expertise that is necessary to run a business.

Once an idea has been deemed a viable venture our company will assist individuals to secure funds from various agencies to start the business (SNDS does not provide www.snds.bc.ca

capital), provide after care - specifically as it pertains to capacity building, and ensure the entrepreneur has covered all of the legal aspects of starting a business.

Roland Wright has recently been contracted to assist our Business Development clients with their marketing efforts, providing an added service to entrepreneurs.

We are pleased to present some of our successes in this issue of the *Messenger* and hope their stories will provide inspiration to those who may be



Geri Budden with Roland Wright

considering self-employment. If opening your own business has been sitting on your mind, give our office a call!

Spankies brings a new vibe to Haida Gwaii

Three years ago the SNDS Business Development Department assisted Myrna Jacobson as she established her retail store, *Spankies*. The store specializes in urban clothing filling a niche market in the community of Masset. Myrna is a natural business woman with a keen entrepreneurial instinct. Opening the store was something she had wanted to do for a long time as she has always had an interest in fashion. She also wanted the freedom every entrepreneur desires in not working for someone else.

Myrna had originally considered buying the local travel agency, but the process took longer than she had hoped. By the time she was able to purchase the agency, most in the community had become accustomed to booking travel arrangements on-line. After deciding the travel agency wouldn't be a viable venture, Myrna and her husband Troy discussed options, and it seems that *Spankies* was simply meant to be.

Because Myrna and Troy had contributed their own money into

the venture they had a 100% vested interest in seeing the project succeed. They put in a great deal of personal time and effort into ensuring the business was up and running in time to capture the Christmas season. Finding a store location was a challenge as there isn't a great deal of infrastructure on the island. The building they found was definitely a "diamond in the rough", requiring many hours of hard work to completely renovate. During this time Myrna was also off to Vancouver to select the merchandise for the store and prepare for the grand opening. To generate interest in the store *Spankies* donated a number of items to the Timmy Telethon campaign broadcast on the local station. This was not only a brilliant marketing campaign, but supported a good cause. In response the whole community came out to the December 15th opening and the rest, as they say, is history.

Myrna's advice to other budding entrepreneurs is, "to never give up, when one door closes go and

knock on another." She would also recommend to persons looking at opening a business in a rigid economy to "plan ahead and be diverse."

Spankies is part of Gwaii Holdings Enterprises, which maintains many ventures including an eco-tourism business, construction company and a mould remediation company.

To learn more call 250-626-3270.

Spankies operates from 12:00 pm to 5:30 pm Tuesday to Saturday and can be found at 1630 Orr St, Masset BC.



Myrna's daughter Allanah and friend Fisha model clothing inside Spankies

R.D Wilson Janitorial Services

Ruby Duncan Wilson began her journey to self-employment when her employer retired and asked Ruby if she would like to take over the clientele. Having been in business now for one year she has a number of commercial and residential clients.



Ruby had 11 years experience as a janitor when she approached SNDS. The Business Development Department was able to assist Ruby

with her business plan in order to formalize her venture. As she says, the business plan helped her to see where she was, where she is suppose to be and will help her to determine where she would like to be in the future. She admits that it was a struggle before SNDS came along. Challenges included dealing with finances and employee retention,

but she is happy to report that she now has three regular employees.

Her advice to others is to "keep plugging away, things will look better in the future." She also reminds prospective entrepreneurs that "success isn't instant". Ruby is very grateful for the assistance she received from SNDS and is looking forward to building her client base.

R.D. Wilson Janitorial Services is located in Kitimat, to inquire into services call 250-632-7809.



Blueberries in the Northwest

As Art and Patsy Sterrit near retirement they wanted to find a means for the land they own to sustain itself and generate revenue. They also wanted to build equity for the benefit of their family. Blueberries seemed promising as they are difficult to find and harvest in the region, plus they have a cultural and personal significance.

Berries have long played a role in the First Nations diet and Art explained that, in this region particularly, blueberry crops were once maintained on mountainsides through burning practices. He recalls watching the work at the burn sites as a child and the easy access many had to this nutritional powerhouse. However, with the introduction of government regulation that prohibited burning, the old blueberry crops have overgrown. As the blueberry farm continues to develop the northwest can once again look forward to a local source. Art and Patsy plan to have a “you pick” opportunity available in the coming year, making the crop available to family and friends. However, it will take

time before they begin thinking of a commercial operation.

This kind of venture is certainly not one that happens over night. First, Art and Patsy had to learn everything there is to know about growing blueberries. When it came to finding trees, Art looked in the Fraser Valley, but eventually found himself in Portland, Oregon where, he says, the trees are disease free. The trees were imported and the hard work of planting and caring for the crop began. Art and Patsy’s grandchildren helped with this demonstrable task solidifying the family oriented business they had envisioned. Starting with 600 trees from four different varieties, it will take time to see which trees will successfully “get their feet in the ground”. As Art states, “the best time to plant is 10 years ago”.

The Sterrit’s decided against a loan as at this point in their lives they did not want to be burdened with debt. As Art says, “we have old equipment, but it works.” They also save money on the land taxes as their hay crop allows them farm status.



Patsy Sterrit stands with her grandchildren after a hard days work.

Both Art and Patsy have been involved in business development, but never for themselves, “it feels good to build something for our family” says Art. He credits SNDS for adding to the excitement through instilling confidence and offering encouragement. “Without SNDS we likely would have limped along”, says Art.

Stay tuned for the official launch in the near future. We eagerly look forward to a basket of blueberries this summer and wish the Sterrit’s many happy returns!

S. Omejc Janitorial Services

Four years ago Stan Omejc took advantage of janitorial contracts in order to earn extra income for his family. What began as a small family venture has grown over time and Stan now has six employees.

Stan approached SNDS to assist with the development of a



business plan to determine whether a janitorial business was feasible and if there was a market for such a service. Going through the planning process reinforced the information he had. Stan knew what he was getting into, made sure the finances were in order and had the equipment needed. Stan had to make a personal investment in his business and admits start

up was expensive, but necessary. He adds, there was a short window to get everything in place. His advice to others considering going into business for themselves is to “explore what you are getting into, consider different avenues, do your research and be sure that what you want to do is feasible.” We look forward to the expansion of Stan’s business.

S. Omejc Janitorial Services focuses exclusively on commercial contracts. Call 250-632-7968 or email: somejc@telus.net

Setting His Sights Further Down the Line

TJ Nyce completed his electrical apprenticeship last October with J.A.C Kennedy Electrical. Having taken Physics as far as he could throughout high school, he was intrigued by the science and math involved in the trade.

TJ was in college and had a young family to support when the opportunity to pursue this career arose. Throughout his apprenticeship TJ had the privilege of working with four different journeymen, which allowed him to gain experience in a variety of different settings from residential and commercial to condos and service buildings. To TJ, maintaining a humble attitude opens the door to learning, he states "I knew nothing...I needed to be open



minded."

Electrical apprentices require more formal classroom training than any other trade (10 weeks at a time). As with many apprentices

with young families the biggest challenge while going to school was being away from his children. Aside from entrenching himself in his studies, TJ credits a lot of calls home, maintaining a positive attitude and keeping himself busy to

cope with this time away. Being open and making new friends in the school setting also helped. Creating a new support network of individuals going through the same experience has been a common success strategy for many of our apprentices.

In looking back on his experience, TJ says the opportunity to pursue a trade gave him independence and he "wouldn't change a thing".

TJ feels that it is important to find security in a chosen trade, it "should be a stepping stone to further yourself" he says. This mantra is reflected in his current business plans with his company **Further Down the Line Electrical** (services include commercial and residential). He feels it is important to continue learning and is looking forward to pursuing formal training in business. TJ credits his children as being his greatest motivation. We know with that kind of dedication he will have success with all of his endeavours.

For more information on Further Down the Line Electrical call 250-631-6923 or email: tjnyce@hotmail.com

Haida Bucks Re-Invented

Who could possibly forget the small company that could? When a well-known coffee giant tried to sue what was then known as **Haida Bucks Coffee House** for copyright infringement an international community rallied behind the business, and the four young entrepreneurs involved. The case was settled out of court and the small business in Masset BC, now the **Haida Bucks Lounge & Gallery**, looks forward to a host of interesting visitors each tourist season.

The SNDS Business Development department initially assisted Darrin Swanson and his partners to develop their business

plan for the original **Haida Bucks Coffee House**. Since then the partnership has dissolved, but Darrin maintained the name for the lounge currently located in the Masset Airport.

Having received his carpentry apprenticeship with the military, Darrin needed a plan to secure consistent employment when the armed forces left Haida Gwaii in 1998. Finding work as a carpenter with his construction company **Dadens Industry Inc.**, he decided perhaps he should build something for himself - a venture that could also act as a retirement plan.

In a small community heavily impacted by the fall and winter

months **Dadens Industry Inc.** is Darrin's full time gig with the lounge as his secondary occupation. Darrin continues to look forward to the development of both businesses by keeping a keen eye on local market trends. Being the owner of two ventures he advises others that you need to "be prepared to have no personal life...you have to keep the ball in the air." With all of this hard work and dedication we are sure **Haida Bucks Lounge & Gallery** will be a comfortable retirement plan indeed. **For more information on either Haida Bucks Lounge & Gallery or Daden's Industry Inc. call: 250-626-5540**



Life Long Learning Leads to Success

The Short Term & Certificate Training Department was able to assist Anita Smith with her *Adult Education Certification* through the University of Victoria. “SNDS is an extremely important resource for First Nations



people”, she states, “my funding request was refused with other organizations, SNDS was the only one to give me a chance.” With her training Anita has been able to obtain employment with the Kitselas Band Office as an Adult Instructor.

At 54 years of age, Anita’s journey to a higher education has been a long one. She quit school in grade 10, but admits that having been pushed through the system she was likely at a grade 5 level.

For this reason, when she went back to school at the age of 33 she had re-learn basic phonics to assist with her literacy skills. Over the years Anita continued to pursue her education between jobs. Her life experience, especially as an adult

learner, has certainly made her qualified to understand the needs of her students and she is very passionate and relatable. She has been involved in education for the past fifteen years and has worked with eight different First Nations bands. During this time Anita has developed a program called, “The Holistic Approach within the Circle of Learning”. Traditional teaching methods fail to address barriers to success experienced by many First Nations people. The “Holistic

Approach” takes into account the personal needs of an individual to develop a learning program that provides a formal education and life skills strategies to ensure their success. Addressing issues such as: self-esteem/self-worth, time management, anger management, budgeting, parenting, addictions, codependency and so forth. Participants work to complete their Dogwood Certificate and the goal is to see these students progress into and complete a post-secondary education. Anita’s students comment on what a positive experience the program has been and how it has changed their views toward learning. Anita is deeply committed to her students, and makes herself available after hours for extra support if needed. She is more than willing to share the details of this program and can be reached at 250-635-5987. Great work Anita, we admire your commitment and dedication!

Mapping a Future in GIS

Trevor Amos completed his *GIS Certification* at the Okanagan College in Salmon Arm this January. He had worked in the field for four years when Eco Trust Canada was involved with the Kitimaat Village government administration. He received hands-on training at the time, but did not pursue any formal credentials. After spending the past eight years in a variety of different jobs he decided he would like to get back into GIS as he found it enjoyable and recognized that it is a growing field. The technology has certainly changed from the time he was first introduced but his interest has not.

Trevor appreciated the challenge

of learning the technology again. Going back to school after an extended period away has given him new found confidence and he looks forward to bringing his skills back to the northwest.

He has had to temporarily move away from his family in order to pursue his training, a reality facing many of our apprentices. While he admits to feeling overwhelmed at one point, he knew school was a great opportunity and didn’t want to fail. In order to cope with the time



away from his family he stayed active playing soccer and “did a lot of soul searching”. Trevor’s advice to others is to keep your goals in mind and stay well-rounded in order to recognize when you are straying off path. His future plans involve moving on to specialized training and the possibility of a consulting business.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capture, store, analyze, share and display geographic information used in resource management, archaeology, environmental impact assessments, urban planning etc.

Youth Role Model: "Hey We Know Her!"

At the tender age of 24, Morgan Green is a multi-talented dynamo. She has received oodles of media attention for her fashion designs and native art, having been featured on CBC, APTN, CTV's "First Story" and was the focus of a documentary by Kelvin Redvers entitled "A Look at the Life of Morgan Green" (currently being shown in high schools in BC and Alberta). She humbly sloughs off the excitement many have when meeting her and maintains a very real and approachable demeanor. Our relationship with Morgan goes back to 2004 when SNDS, in a cosponsorship arrangement with Lax Kwalaams Band, was able to assist Morgan with her *Fashion Design Diploma* at the Blanche McDonald Centre.

Growing up in an artistic home - mom is potter and art teacher Jean Gardiner and dad is master carver Henry Green - Morgan's fascination with art began in her earliest years. She has worked closely with both of her parents learning as much as she can about the different art mediums. As a



teen, Morgan was constantly sketching clothing designs, and spent many hours sewing pieces on the bus to school.

Morgan is passionately interested in every form of artistic expression. Her desire to learn and her dedication to perfecting each new skill shines through in her work. She aims to add casting, welding and jewelry making to her already lengthy repertoire of fashion design, leather working, carving, pottery, drawing, painting and knife making. Learning new skills brings her closer to her vision of having all of the art forms she uses come together in order to create high-end, one-of-a-kind pieces, be it fashion or otherwise. Her recent travels abroad have brought a new perspective to this young artist as she is a lover of history and finds inspiration in historical pieces as well as modern art.

Aside from being extraordinarily involved in her art, Morgan is also very dedicated to sharing her skills with others and giving back to the community. She was involved in the "Spirits Rising Memorial Pole Project" that honors the missing and murdered women in east side Vancouver. Through her participation in this initiative Morgan was also able to teach others carving and regalia making. Teaching is one of her goals as she feels that everyone should express themselves through North West Coast art, not just individuals looking to make it a career. However, for those interested in turning their artistic inclinations into a career, Morgan's advice is to "focus and be committed to being




poor for awhile...when you put in the time, you will get better."

At the moment Morgan is heavily focused on carving and has plans to release a pottery line this summer with her mother. Her first major piece is currently on display at the Edzerza Gallery in Vancouver (www.EdzerzaGallery.com). Building a clothing line requires a great deal of time and capital and so she is not currently creating new pieces. She is, however, considering some designs for commercial production. Whatever Morgan pursues we know she will have every success she deserves. For now we will stay tuned to this up and coming artist and look forward to what she does next!

Photos courtesy Morgan Green, view her work and get in touch at www.myspace.com/muksmool






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Congratulations Toron!

Toron has just recently completed his first level Ironworking program and is now seeking his field hours as a first year apprentice. While it was his intention to take part in the RioTinto Alcan upgrade (prior to the unfortunate global financial crisis), he successfully gained employment through the Ironworkers Local 97 in Vancouver. Toron is one example of many who had to relocate out of the pacific northwest for employment reasons, and we give him a “high five” for this decision.

Skeena Native Development
Congratulates last years
Youth Business Development
Program Participants:
Kleanza Cathers
Brendon Etzertza
Patrick Morgan
Dalyce Woods

...this program will run again this year!



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