



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

**FROM BURNS LAKE NATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,
VILLAGE OF BURNS LAKE, and the REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**

FIRE AT BABINE FOREST PRODUCTS IN BURNS LAKE, BC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2012 at 5:00 pm

BURNS LAKE – A Community Meeting to provide updated information to members of the public will be held on Monday, January 23rd, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Island Gospel Fellowship Church at 810 Highway 35, south of Burns Lake. Community members are encouraged to car-pool to the church due to limited parking space. Representatives from Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, Burns Lake Band, Lake Babine Nation, the Village of Burns Lake, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Burns Lake Volunteer Fire Department, the Burns Lake RCMP, Northern Health, Nechako Lakes MLA, and Hampton Affiliates will be in attendance at the Community Meeting.

Premier Christy Clark visited the community today to acknowledge all those who responded to the fire at Babine Forest Products on the evening of Friday, January 20th, 2012 and to provide support and condolences to those affected on behalf of the Province of BC. At the Burns Lake and District Hospital and at the Margaret Patrick Memorial Hall, Premier Clark and MLA Rustad committed to working with the community to recover from this unfortunate situation.

Burns Lake Band Chief and Burns Lake Native Development Corporation President Albert Gerow acknowledged the dream of the late George Brown to build a sawmill in Burns Lake. Babine Forest Products was constructed in the early 1970's through a partnership between Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, industry and the community at large. "I have hope that this dream will continue with the re-construction of the Babine sawmill" said Chief Gerow.

The RCMP have closed and secured the scene at Babine Forest Products and are conducting an investigation. A structural engineer is expected to arrive on scene to assess the situation and will assist in determining investigation and search efforts.

"Our support continues to go out to the families of those injured and especially the two families of the employees unaccounted for," said Village of Burns Lake Mayor Luke Strimbold "We are working with the Province of BC, First Nations, and Hampton Affiliates on two key issues related to the future of our community: transitional funding support and timber supply."

Northern Health released an information bulletin this afternoon with information regarding the location of patients still receiving care. Five patients are continuing to receive care within the Northern Health jurisdiction, three have been transferred to Vancouver, two have been transferred to Edmonton, and one transferred to Victoria. Northern Health also thanked everyone, including physicians, nurses, and emergency responders who worked tirelessly in response to this incident.

Donations to the Lakes District Tragedy Fund can be made at any Canadian Imperial Bank of Canada (CIBC) branch in BC or at the Village of Burns Lake Office. For any questions about donations, please contact Cindy or Angelika at 250-692-6683.

There is grief support available to the community through Northern Health (250-692-2400), Carrier Sekani Family Services (250-692-2387), and Lakes District Community Services (250-692-7577). Margaret Patrick Memorial Hall will remain open 24 hours a day to provide support to the families of those injured and concerned residents. Volunteers willing to provide assistance and support in any way are encouraged to contact Bertha Michell at 778-669-0062.