

## NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

June 18, 2010

### **Milestone reached in Fort St. John Hospital and Residential Care project**

Dignitaries gathered today to celebrate another milestone in the Fort St. John Hospital and Residential Care project. Today's event highlights the wood being used in the construction of the residential care facility, meeting the Province's Wood First initiative.

"The new hospital and residential care facility will address population growth demands and improve the quality of health care for residents in the north east," said Peace River North MLA Pat Pimm. "The engineered laminated timber made from beetle-killed pine wood is providing an added boost to the local economy, supporting the Province's focus on sustainability and highlighting B.C. wood."

The Wood First Act requires provincially-funded building projects to consider wood as their primary construction material. The residential care project will use 300,000 board feet of lumber purchased locally from Canfor, with the wall panels pre-manufactured at Winton Global in Prince George. The Province wants to encourage a cultural shift that sees wood as the first choice for construction, interior design and daily living.

Recently, significant progress has been made in the construction of the two structures that make up the residential care element of the project. "House A's" main slab is complete and wall assembly is being put in place. "House B's" progress includes completed pilings, with main concrete slab and wall panel assembly to follow.

"The Fort St. John Hospital and Residential Care project is working towards gold certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)" said Mike Hoefer, Executive Director of Capital Planning for Northern Health. "Purchasing and prefabricating the wood in close proximity to the project aided us in creating sustainable green site development."

Wood buildings have a proven performance history of safety, comfort, strength, durability and lasting value. With wood currently used in just 19 per cent of non-residential construction across North America, there's tremendous potential to expand the market for B.C. wood products.

The project is a public private partnership between Northern Health and ISL Health, with a total project cost of \$297.9 million. This includes \$98 million from the PRRHD comprised of a contribution of \$95.7 million to the project and \$2.3 million of PRRHD financing costs. The project is targeted for completion in spring 2012.

“These two new facilities will be a welcome addition to our local community,” said PRRHD chair Karen Goodings. “The increased patient capacity, improved working environment, and provisions for academic space will ensure they become a model of excellence in rural health care.”

The new Fort St. John Hospital and Residential Care project is a key element of the Province’s commitment to revitalize health care services in the north and part of a three-year, \$2.6-billion health sector capital plan.

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