



HEART OF THE HAZELTONS

upper skeena recreation centre

MEDIA RELEASE

October 13, 2017 - Hazelton, BC

The Owners Partnership Committee for the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, along with officials from Province of B.C. held an official ground breaking ceremony for the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre earlier today.

This new recreation centre is being made possible by the unique partnership of communities in the Upper Skeena region, including the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, the Village of Hazelton, the District of New Hazelton, the Skeena Ice Arena Association, the Gitksan Government Commission, the Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en.

“The Regional District, on behalf of the Owners’ Partnership Committee for the Upper Skeena Recreation Center is very excited to collaborate with our Federal and Provincial funding partners on this incredible project”, said Chair Phil Germuth, Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. “This new recreation center will provide many years of sports and recreation, social activities, healthy living programming, and economic stimulation for the communities of the Upper Skeena region. On behalf of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, the Owners’ Partnership Committee would like to thank all our government, First Nation, corporate and community contributors for making our dream a reality.”

Since 2007, many local and regional volunteers accepted the challenge to raise funds for the recreation centre. Funding for the project has been raised through contributions by the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Village of Hazelton, District of New Hazelton, Gitksan Government Commission, Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs and donations raised by the “Heart of the Hazeltons” Campaign, including an anonymous foundation, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Ltd. Partnership, Bulkley Valley Credit Union, a host of other corporations and individuals and through a contribution of \$8M from the Government of Canada’s Federal Building Canada Fund and Federal Gas Tax Fund and \$4M from the Province of British Columbia.

“Investing in recreational infrastructure is essential to developing individual well-being, community vitality and economic growth,” said the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. “The Government of Canada is proud to support the new Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. This ‘Heart of the Hazeltons’ will be a critical new hub for community gatherings, educational and sports activities, and wellness programs that help residents thrive for generations to come.”

This new facility will provide year round recreation, including an ice surface, a full size gymnasium and space for other recreational programs. The recreation centre programming will focus on programs to promote the health and wellness of all residents and visitors to the Upper Skeena region. The project is expected to be complete by November 2018.

“Today we celebrate an important achievement for this community. It is wonderful to see all their hard work pay off with the ground-breaking of a multi-purpose recreation centre, where residents and visitors will have an inclusive space to gather and connect,” said the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “The ‘Heart of the Hazeltons’ is a good example of how partnerships between First Nations, community members and all levels of government can help deliver meaningful infrastructure that makes life better for people.”

In July, the Government of Canada delivered the first of two annual \$132.97 million federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) installments to British Columbia. In total, the province will be provided with over \$265.94 million this year through the fund. The funding, which flows through the Union of B.C. Municipalities to all of its communities, is now available to support local infrastructure projects, like this one in Hazelton.

“Recreation centres are the heart of B.C. communities,” said Union of B.C. Municipalities president Wendy Booth. “The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will provide a gathering place that will draw residents from across the region for sport, fitness and social gatherings. I am very pleased to see the significant federal and provincial support provided to this project.”

“Northern Development is proud to be a partner in the development of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. Projects like these are vital to the economic growth of our communities all across northern B.C. The new facility will be a great asset to the community and should provide many opportunities for the community to draw in visitors to the region”, said Joel McKay, CEO, Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The event concluded on a final highlight with the presentation of a \$1M cheque by the Gitksan Government Commission on behalf of Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell, Kispiox and Gitanyow for the construction of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre.

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