

2011 COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER MORICETOWN BAND - KYAHWOOD FOREST PRODUCTS, BC



Moricetown is located along the Bulkley River Valley approximately 30 km west of Smithers, BC. Moricetown is home to approximately 636 on-reserve members and as has a total population of 1923 people. Due to its geographic location and like many other remote Aboriginal communities, the Moricetown Band faces greater challenges in identifying economic opportunities than those communities who are located close to major urban markets. Remote communities are often left to rely on the utilization of natural resources for economic development, which is often in conflict with traditional

values of stewardship. The Moricetown Band has long aspired to achieve a level of sustainable economic self-sufficiency and the provision of employment opportunities on reserve without forgoing their traditional values. In an effort to balance these needs, Moricetown Band has worked hard to incorporate traditional values into their approach to business and economic development and it is clear that these efforts have really paid off. Moricetown is an excellent example for other communities who strive to pursue economic opportunities that reflect the values of the community and earn the support of the members, while creating jobs and self-generated revenue. The pride and sense of community is strong in Moricetown, it is with great honor that Cando presented them with the ED of the Year Award in the Community Category. Congratulations Moricetown Band!

Kyahwood Forest Products

Kyahwood Forest Products is a finger-joint value added mill that is wholly owned by the Moricetown Band and operated on reserve lands. Due to a declining lumber market and productivity challenges, the mill was forced to halt operations in 2008. As the largest employer of the community, the closure of the mill had a devastating effect on the community which saw unemployment rates skyrocket to nearly 90%. The band recognized that the only feasible way to get the plant operational and get members back to work was to cut production costs and improve efficiency. It was clear that an investment in technology was required, and in order to finance the upgrades they needed to be innovative in their approach. Moricetown pulled up their sleeves and got to work. The band created a new economic development structure that allows the band to establish a tax effective way of building and operating business on reserve. Moricetown also forged partnerships that assisted with securing the capital needed for the crucial technology upgrades, and provided access to markets in China where they would now export their product. More impressively, the Kyahwood Mill would become a green operation; they utilize scraps from external sawmills to create a marketable product. 25% of the sawdust created from the Kyahwood mill is used to heat the facility, and the remaining "waste" is shipped to China. Overall, Kyahwood has achieved a 98% decrease in air pollution from preventing the burning of scrap material.

Community Benefits

Once the upgrades were complete, Kyahwood Forest Products reopened during the global recessions and began exporting its product. Since 2010, Kyahwood has successfully operated at full capacity and may need to expand operations through an additional shift, indicating the success of the company. Kyahwood currently employs 71 people from the community and is the largest employer of Band members on reserve. Effectively, the jobs created at Kyahwood have resulted in a 70% decrease in the reliance on social assistance payments within the community and has instilled great pride among the trained employees. Kyahwood is an environmentally conscious business that has created jobs for community members, and provided revenues for the Moricetown Band who has made great strides towards the goal of economic self-sufficiency.

"Incorporating traditional values in our approach to business and economic development" –
Moricetown Band, 2011 Cando Conference