## **Update to Lake Babine Membership on the August LBN-BC Visioning Session**

## **Visioning Session**

On August 3-5, 2016, Lake Babine Nation participated in a Visioning Session with Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Rustad and other BC representatives. LBN agreed to do the Session because the Reconciliation Agreement negotiations have not been progressing satisfactorily for LBN. BC's mandates have been too limited. LBN was represented at the Session by Chief and Council, elder Damien Pierre, youth Ethan Michell, staff members Barbra Tom and Betty Patrick, and key LBN advisors.

Five LBN Hereditary Chiefs opened the Visioning Session with a moving ceremony, which emphasized the Nation-to Nation relationship and LBN's strong and distinctive identity. Following the ceremony, LBN and BC collaboratively developed a vision for LBN's future.

## What the Visioning Session Achieved

LBN and BC reached agreement on a 25 Year Vision. The basic components of that vision are the following, deeply interrelated, elements:

- 1. Strong LBN BC relationship
- 2. Strong LBN culture and communities
- 3. Recognition and implementation of LBN Aboriginal title

BC and LBN agreed to implement the 25 Year Vision. The first step is to develop a "Letter of Understanding" that sets out the Vision in more detail, overall objectives for achieving it, and initial commitments to implement it (e.g. transfers of lands and forestry tenures to LBN). BC and LBN will then develop an Agreement that identifies a 25-year plan for implementing the Vision, through clear deliverables and timelines. Minister Rustad and Chief Adam intend to reach this Agreement by December. BC is making its negotiations with LBN a high priority.

## **Immediate Next Steps**

LBN's negotiating team is already working on the Letter of Understanding and the Agreement.

LBN was clear in the Visioning Session that it seeks to implement its Aboriginal title by securing more control over land and resource decisions in its Territory and more economic opportunities in its Territory (especially through forestry and tourism). LBN also expressed the need to grow and service its traditional communities, and to look after its members' social and cultural needs (e.g. child and family protection, better infrastructure in the communities, Carrier language training). In the next couple of months, LBN must prioritize these community/social/cultural objectives to ensure that the Agreement includes strategies for achieving those goals. Council members will be seeking members' input and providing direction to the LBN negotiating team.

Members will receive an update on the progress of negotiations at the LBN Annual General Assembly in October.