

# Partnership off to a great start

## Village of Granisle and LBN's community forest moving forward

BY REBECCA BILLARD

A new community forest venture between the Village of Granisle and Lake Babine Nation is heading in a positive direction for both communities.

According to Gary Page, Lake Babine Nation's forestry operations director the venture is now ready to go.

The group has recently been awarded a community forest licence after a one and a half year process.

"It is a new form of tenure, the licence is unique in that two communities are working together to develop a community forest," said Page.

It is hoped that the venture will provide an economic boost to the communities of Granisle, Tachet and Lake Babine Nation.

Once officially up and running, the community forest will be controlled by a board of eight directors, four from the Village of Granisle and four from Lake Babine Nation.

"It's a win win," said Page, adding that it has been beneficial for both Lake Babine Nation and the Village of Granisle to branch away from a political

relationship into a business relationship.

The community forest will fall under the non profit, Babine Lake Community Forest Society and it is hoped that revenue streams will quickly flow back into both communities.

"We are hoping to put the profits back into the commu-

experiencing our culture, singing and dancing and also local fisheries. We have one of the biggest spawning channels in the world," she said.

Mayor of Granisle, Frederick Clarke agreed that it was innovation that the two communities are seeking when getting the community forest off the ground.

Minerals mine [near Granisle] gets up and going that the arena will recover, and others that don't think it will. The Granisle arena has been suggested as a place that we could locate the innovation centre, but we will have to poll people to see what their comfort level is [with the idea]. Failing that we will have to find another location," he added.

Clarke went on to say that the innovation centre would allow other communities in the area to get involved and to foster ideas.

"If we are just looking at selling dimensional lumber [from the community forest] we are never going to make any money as we can't compete with big businesses, we have to look toward niche markets," Clarke said.

"The time has come to strengthen our economy and to get smaller businesses going," he added.

"The clock is ticking .... we now have to wait 120 days for the process [community forest final approval] to complete," Clarke said adding that the partnership between Lake Babine Nation and the Village of Granisle is working great.

**“WE HAVE ONE OF THE BIGGEST SPAWNING CHANNELS IN THE WORLD.”**

nities of Granisle, Tachet and Lake Babine Nation and help move small businesses from these communities forward," Page said.

"We are looking for ways to improve local opportunities with a focus on forestry, fisheries, culture and tourism," Page added.

Verna Powers, Lake Babine Nation councillor said that Tachet and the historical Old Fort could also be a drawing card for overseas visitors.

"We could have bus loads of tourists visiting Old Fort,

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