

## OPINION-EDITORIAL

### INVESTING IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE CREATES JOBS

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(Approx. 500 words)

No matter where you live in B.C., you've probably felt the impact of what's happening in the global economy in one way or another. People are worried about their jobs, their homes, their futures. Although the factors driving this economic downturn are beyond our control, there are measures that can be undertaken to protect jobs, families and communities.

In February, the B.C. government announced a \$14 billion capital infrastructure program that will create as many as 88,000 jobs over three years. As part of this major initiative, on March 17, Premier Gordon Campbell announced close to \$800 million in funding for public infrastructure projects in housing, education and public safety. These projects will create over 4,800 jobs in communities across British Columbia. Getting new projects started quickly and keeping people working throughout B.C. is a critical objective.

In Northern B.C., a number of key infrastructure projects have already been identified and are moving forward.

Here are just a few examples of how some of that money will be spent throughout the region. Fort St. John will receive \$1.7 million for upgrades to the Fort St. John South Lagoon wastewater treatment plant, which will result in increased system efficiency and improved effluent quality.

Near Fort Nelson, \$187 million is being invested in upgrades to the Sierra Yoyo Desan Road to provide industry and resource access to the Horn River Basin area. The result will be an upgraded and safer road that will support industry investment and enable a shift in the nature of oil and gas activity in the region, from conventional to shale gas development. In Buckley-Nechanko, \$375,000 has been earmarked to implement a regional 911 emergency response system.

The Fraser-Fort George Regional District will receive \$400,000 in federal and provincial funding for the construction of the Beaverly Fire Rescue Hall, an energy-efficient building that will be able to house up to eight emergency vehicles and administration. And Fraser Lake is receiving \$352,732 in federal and provincial funding to upgrade the Fraser Lake arena.

These five projects alone will create over 1200 direct jobs in Northern B.C.

There is perhaps no better time for B.C. to be investing in new capital infrastructure projects. Interest rates are at historic lows and B.C.'s triple-A credit rating provides financial flexibility. Building on a record of sound fiscal management, B.C. will fund its infrastructure

spending and stimulus initiatives at the best possible terms. This will ensure the provincial debt burden remains among the lowest in Canada.

Building stability and confidence during tough times is no easy task. But there are measures that can be undertaken now that will benefit British Columbians in all regions of the province. Moving quickly to advance infrastructure projects that create thousands of jobs while improving the quality of life for British Columbians is a vital part of achieving this goal.

**Note:** to view a list of infrastructure projects currently planned or now in development throughout B.C., please visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/infrastructure](http://www.gov.bc.ca/infrastructure)