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## Northern Communities Poised For Election Year

**Prince George** - As the dust settles from the North Central Local Government Association's (NCLGA) recent four day convention in Dawson Creek, community leaders from across north-central BC are primed to ensure their region receives unprecedented consideration over the coming twelve months, culminating in a Provincial election on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Newly minted NCLGA President, Laurey Roodenburg, points to strong efforts over the past two years to give northerners the best possible advantage. "With just seven percent of the provincial population covering 70% of the provincial landmass, we have to look for strategic advantages where we can find them", said Roodenburg. "In just the last year, for example, we've ratified MOU's with UNBC, the Fraser Basin Council, Northern Development, two Beetle Action Coalitions and we've built strategic alliances with many others".

As they continue to fulfill their role as "The Elected Voice of North Central BC", the NCLGA has stressed a non-partisan, conciliatory approach in dealing with stakeholders like the Provincial Government. "Our primary role is to promote the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of northern communities", said NCLGA Past President, Brian Frenkel. On that front, finger pointing and grandstanding get us nowhere; we see other levels of government as partners, not opponents."

Roodenburg added that the resolution process coupled with ongoing dialogue with stakeholders leaves the NCLGA well positioned to ensure northerners are not forgotten in the political discourse. "Our communities might be small, but as a whole, our region accounts for 80% of provincial exports, 60% of BC's aboriginal population, 80% of agricultural land and we're home to the vast majority of this Province's major resource development projects. We're far from insignificant."

"Over the next twelve months, we'll be meeting with as many decision makers as possible- in senior levels of government, industry and with other influential NGO's, said Roodenburg, a three term Councillor from Quesnel. Since the last municipal elections, we've heard from 265+ elected leaders that fall under the NCLGA umbrella and can summarize their thoughts in a single phrase: capacity building. We're ready to do amazing things in this corner of the world. We're ready to show everyone that economic development and environmental stewardship are not mutually exclusive. We've got the plans, the expertise and most importantly, the will. We just need the tools." The tools Roodenburg is referring to run the gamut from increased broadband communications to the replacement of decaying infrastructure and, in many cases, legislative change.

A list of current and past resolutions, newsletters, and a list of the 2016 – 2017 NCLGA Board can be found at [www.NCLGA.ca](http://www.NCLGA.ca)

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For additional comment and information, please contact:

NCLGA President, Laurey Roodenburg: (H) 250-747-7406, (C) 250-255-5394  
NCLGA Past President, Brian Frenkel: (C) 250-567-8620  
NCLGA Executive Director, Oliver Ray: (C) 250-612-9801