Centre of it all!

Additional information may be obtained from the City of Dawson Creek's website

www.dawsoncreek.ca
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The Dawson Creek Community Profile & Investment Guide and In the News are produced by:
Dawson Creek Catholic Social Services
1209-105 Avenue
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 2L8

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Dawson Creek Catholic Social Services
January 2008
### Northeastern BC Unemployment Rates

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* The unemployment rate for Northeastern BC has been suppressed due to high sample variance.

In May 2009, the unemployment rate in BC is 7.8% and 6.5% in Alberta. In May 2008, the unemployment rate in BC was 5.0% and 3.4% in Alberta.

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### NOW’S THE TIME INITIATIVE

A broad coalition of construction organizations in BC has launched a new initiative to fill the gap left from a predicted wave of retirements.

The group is advocating the use of an intensified apprenticeship training program.

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) provincial report estimates that 6,400 new workers will need to be hired in BC to meet increased construction activity from now until 2017.

This is in addition to 26,000 new workers that will be required to replace retiring baby boomers.

The Industry Training Authority and its partners launched an information campaign called Now’s the Time to demonstrate to employers that there is a solid business case for taking advantage of the current recession to retain and hire apprentices, as well as encourage apprentices to catch up on their technical in-class training.

The Now’s the Time campaign stresses that while the recession is temporary, future labour shortages are not.

Close to 5,000 of B.C.’s second-year apprentices have yet to take any in-class components of their training required for trades certification.

Construction associations are on board.

“We want our members to continue supporting our trades skills development because work is fairly accessible now and things are going to pick up or get better” said Jack Davidson, president of the BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association.

“In our industry, the average age is 55 years. We need young people to come into the system that these guys can mentor. You can train someone, but you need overlap so they can benefit from 30 years of experience.”

The coalition includes the B.C. Chamber of Commerce; the Business Council of British Columbia; the Independent Contractors Business Association; the Vancouver Board of Trade; the B.C. Construction Association; the B.C. Road Builders; the B.C. and Yukon Building Trades Council; the Automotive Training Standards Organization; the Residential Construction Industry Training Organization; Hort Education B.C.; the Transportation Career Development Association; the Resource Training Organization; the Piping Industry Apprenticeship Board; Propel; the Trades Training Consortium of B.C.; Camosun College; the College of the Rockies; Northern Lights College; Selkirk College; Vancouver Community College; and Thompson Rivers University.

The Industry Training Authority is the provincial crown agency responsible for overseeing B.C.’s industry training and apprenticeship system.
Labour Force

- The province’s jobless rate increased 0.2 percentage points to 7.6% (seasonally adjusted) in May, as a 0.3% increase in the size of the labour force was greater than the rise in the number of people with jobs (+0.1%). Last month marked a tough start for students looking for summer work in the province, as young people between the ages of 15 and 24 faced an unemployment rate of 11.7%, substantially higher than for their older counterparts (6.8% for those aged 25 and up).

  However, overall, BC’s unemployment rate was the third lowest in the country and remained below the national average. Canada’s unemployment rate climbed to 8.4% in May, reaching its highest rate in eleven years. The 42,000 job losses were fuelled in part by further declines in the manufacturing sector, particularly in Ontario, where the unemployment rate jumped to 9.4% (up 0.7 points from April). Although Manitoba’s jobless rate rose 0.3 percentage points to 4.9% in May, it remained the lowest in the country (tied with Saskatchewan). Alberta (6.6%) was the only other province where the jobless rate was lower than in BC. Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Among BC’s regions, Vancouver Island/Coast (6.9%, 3-month moving average) posted the lowest unemployment rate. However, this rate masks big differences in the incidence of unemployment in this region. Victoria’s unemployment rate was 6.2%, while residents of Nanaimo (7.4%) were comparatively much more likely to be unemployed.

  The jobless rate in Mainland/Southwest (7.2%) was also lower than the provincial average. Conversely, the northern and interior regions had the highest unemployment rates, ranging from 8.4% in Northeast to 9.9% in Thompson/Okanagan and 12.9% in Cariboo. Among municipalities, Kamloops (9.7%), Chilliwack (10.7%), Kelowna (11.5%), Prince George (11.6%) and Dawson Creek (15.2%) all had unemployment rates that were well above the provincial average. Data Source: Statistics Canada

Skills Program

The Province is investing $17 million in 10 projects around B.C. to improve the skills of people who are either unemployed or under-qualified, providing small businesses with new training resources to meet their labour demands.

Three projects will be offered in the Northeast.

Skilled Trades Employment

The British Columbia Construction Association is offering this project to help unemployed people and workers with low skills enter and advance in construction careers. It will also strengthen small businesses in the construction sector. The program will be offered through 11 locations: Abbotsford, Campbell River, Fort St. John, Nelson, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Vancouver and Victoria. (www.bccassn.com)

Residential Construction Training

Under this project, the Canadian Home Builders’ Association of British Columbia will expand its delivery of eight residential construction courses to new areas of the province, improving the technical or business skills of unemployed people or workers with low skills. The courses will be available in 14 new locations: Campbell River, Castlegar, Cranbrook, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Invermere, Nelson, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Powell River, Prince Rupert, Sechelt, Terrace and Williams Lake. (www.chbabc.org)

Forestry Labour Force Development

This project, provided through the Truck Loggers Association, will develop specific training plans to help people prepare to return to the forest industry of the future. The program will be offered on Vancouver Island and the North Coast, and in the Cariboo, Nechako and the Northeast.
BUILDING PERMITS

For the month of May 2009, there were 14 building permits issued. Total value of construction was $1,889,267. The permits were issued for six single family dwellings, one duplex, six garage/renovation, and one commercial. Year-to-date figures show there were 34 building permits issued. Total value of construction is $17,590,639. The permits were issued for 8 single family dwellings, two duplexes, two multi-family, 13 garage/renovation, eight commercial and one institutional.

City of Dawson Creek

SOUTH PEACE DISTRICT ROADWORK

Dawson Creek Area 33.45 km Roads

Resurfacing, through level course and overlay paving, approximately 33.45 kms of road in the South Peace District, including the following candidate roads: 1.8 km of Alaska Ave through Dawson Creek; 0.75 km of Hwy 2 near the Dawson Creek Multiplex; All 24 km of the Sweetwater/Mathews Park Rd; the East 4 km of Parkland Rd; 1.4 km of the Old Hart Hwy; the South 1.0 km of the Sunset Prairie Rd (to McLeod School); 0.5 km of Brookbank Sub Rd near Pouce Coupe.

AWARD

Peter's Brothers Constr Ltd
716 Okanagan Ave E
Penticton BC V2A 3K6
Phone: 250-492-2626
Fax: 250-493-4464
$6,751,121

HIGHWAY 52E ROADWORK

Airport road to Wapiti Forest Service Road

Using kilometer markings along Boundary Road: Section 109.7 to 110.9, Section 115.7 to 130.9, Section 137.4 to 141.2. Pulverize existing asphalt, place geogrid and 25mm well-graded base course aggregate, pave and place shoulder.

AWARD

Peter's Brothers Constr Ltd
716 Okanagan Ave E
Penticton BC V2A 3K6
Phone: 250-492-2626
Fax: 250-493-4464
$6,402,406

NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE ALTERATIONS

Health Sciences Building Upgrade, Dawson Creek

Proposed renovation & upgrade to the health sciences building.

$2,500,000 estimated construction cost

PRE-BID

Journal of Commerce

Photo by Peace PhotoGraphics
**Oil & Gas Sale**

The June 2009 sale of oil and gas rights in Northeastern BC brought in $178.38 million for 21 parcels covering 63,611 hectares at an average price per hectare was $2,804. In June 2008 sale of oil & gas rights brought in $213 million for 89 parcels covering 58,835 hectares at an average price per hectare of $3,623.

BC has held six sales thus far in 2009 and sold 163,144 hectares, which is 111,719 fewer hectares compared to the same period in 2008. The year-to-date average price remains very strong at $1,510 per hectare. In the same period of 2008 BC collected $963.13 million for 262 679 hectares at a per-hectare average of $3,667.

The key parcels in the sale included:
- Eight drilling licenses that totaled over $173 million. Bids ranged from $2,100 to $11,765 per hectare with one parcel bringing in over $62.5 million. These parcels are located in the Horn River Basin approximately 30 km north of Fort Nelson.

June 2008 $213 million  
June 2007 $11.87 million  
June 2006 $151.25 million  
June 2005 $100.49 million  
June 2004 $30.23 million  
June 2003 $19.1 million  
June 2002 $16.74 million  
June 2001 $15.34 million  
June 2000 $15.18 million  
June 1999 $2 million  
June 1998 $5.1 million  
June 1997 $21 million

**EnCana**

**EnCana Corp** in the B.C.’s Peace region is looking to get a head start on the province’s 2016 gas flaring ban by starting a vapour recovery unit. Gas flaring or the burning of surplus combustible vapours from a well as a means of disposal or to relieve pressure in a well is considered a big environmental problem because it emits carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas.

EnCana plans to install the unit this year as part of a new compressor station to be built near Dawson Creek.

On nine of 27 EnCana sites in the Farmington area, the company will use electric compressors to reduce the amount of vapours potentially released.

The move comes after landowners around Farmington formed the Peace Environment and Safety Trustees group earlier this year.

They’re advocating for increased use of vapour recovery and larger setbacks between gas infrastructure and a nearby elementary school.

The BC Energy Plan calls for flaring to be reduced by 50% by 2011, and eliminated by 2016.
As one of BP Canada Energy Company’s first greenfield developments in Northeastern British Columbia gets underway, a major priority is ensuring more sustainable development.

That includes the use of electricity rather than natural gas, solar panels at wellsites, multi-well pads and a central control centre in Dawson Creek.

Over the next 10 years, BP plans to spend $1.5 billion developing the tight gas project on its 100 sections of land in the area near One Island Lake about 60 kilometres southeast of Dawson Creek.

The first 10 of the planned 130 wells have been drilled in the past year. The first of three compressors sites will start up at the end of 2009 with the other two in operation in early to mid-2010.

BP is developing two formations at Noel: the Cadomin with horizontal wells and multi-stage fractures and the underlying Doig.

The company captures spring run-off water in pits but if more water is required it will try to obtain water from aquifers in the area. Initially, BP trucked in water from Dawson Creek but that was expensive and ineffective.

The company wants to achieve as close to “zero emissions” as possible at its well sites and has reduced its carbon footprint by just over 10%. With electricity from BC Hydro, it does not need to use natural gas to run its pumps and motors, reducing the amount of methane vented into the atmosphere.

Constructing a line to bring in electricity to the site was a large upfront capital investment. Electric motors are easier to maintain than gas. The estimated 30 to 40-year life of the project also helps to justify the cost.

Solar power will provide an estimated 80% of the power for the site. The automated control centre where the operator will be able to monitor the performance of wells and remotely control the valves will reduce the need for BP employees to be travelling back and forth.

BP conducted its stakeholder engagement through 2006 and took the comments it received into account when designing the project. One of the concerns was about pipeline proliferation and that is one of the reasons BP signed up for capacity on the Westcoast Energy Inc. (Spectra Energy Transmission) South Peace Pipeline which will transport gas from the Noel area to Spectra’s McMahon gas plant beginning in the third quarter of 2009.

Nickle’s Energy Group

The Triassic Montney tight sand formation will provide the majority of the natural gas for the proposed Groundbirch gas pipeline in British Columbia and Alberta, TransCanada Corp.’s Nova Gas Transmission Ltd. told Canada's National Energy Board.

Of Groundbirch's projected throughput of 7.5 tcf, about 6.8 tcf would come from the Montney out of an estimated 40 tcf of marketable gas expected to be available from the formation.

Conventional resources in the project drainage area would contribute the other 0.7 tcf. Nova noted that conventional gas production in the project drainage area comes from the Cadomin, Doig, Gething, Baldonnel, Halfway, Bluesky, and Charlie Lake formations above Montney and the Kiskatinaw below the Montney.

Construction on the 77-km, 36-in., 1.66 bcf/d Groundbirch line is to start in the third quarter of 2010, and the expected service date is Nov. 1, 2010. The line is to run from Groundbirch, BC, to Gordondale, Alta., passing north of the Dawson Creek area.
**Active Oil Rigs**

As of June 23, 2009, there were 23 rigs drilling, 6 rigs released and 5 rigs prepped to spud.

Oil & Gas Commission

**Huron Energy**

Huron Energy Corporation, that operates numerous wells in the Farmington area, is aiming to move a planned compressor station site one ridge further away from Parkland Elementary School, after ongoing talks with local advocates.

The company’s application was sent in for review by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the company hopes to hear back by Christmas. If approved, the new compressor site would mean an emergency planning zone (EPZ) oriented in mainly uninhabited land, rather than including the school, as would be the case under the original dispersion model.

Huron is working on establishing an air monitoring system for the school in the unlikely event of a sour gas leak, and the company has been in touch with Parkland Elementary since the start of the school year.

Huron shares the compressor and metering site with Pienza Petroleum, since both companies have wells drilled in the Doig and Montney formations and have similar processing needs. A third party may also be looking for some capacity at the site. Pienza will operate the metering station, while Huron will operate the compressor.

Dawson Creek Daily News

**Minister Lekstrom**

Peace River South MLA Blair Lekstrom is getting back to the business of balancing BC’s profitable energy industries with the needs of communities.

Lekstrom held onto the reins of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR).

“A major issue I’m working on is ensuring we have the balance in the oil and gas industry with our landowners and the industry working together,” he said. “We’re going to work on the issue of flaring and setbacks — we’re working on it right now within the ministry. We want to make sure we work with factual data, and come up with something that’s going to work.”

Lekstrom previously indicated he’s awaiting the results of field-based trials initiated by Alberta’s Energy Resources Conservation Board before undertaking a review of setback requirements between homes and gas well infrastructure. Those results would show how sour gas leaks would be dispersed under different environmental conditions and are expected by late summer, but “there may be the possibility that we can move sooner than that,” he said.

Low natural gas prices continue to pose “a significant challenge” to the industry but prices are expected to rebound, Lekstrom said.

“For every dollar we lose off the price of natural gas, it means close to $300 million to the treasury of BC.” he said. Aside from income tax, gas royalties and land rights comprise the province’s single largest source of revenue.

The province received more than $3.6 billion in industry revenues in 2008, and this year’s budget includes $1.5 billion in provincial government subsidies to the oil and gas industry over the next three years — an increase of 57% over the previous year’s subsidies.

The farmer’s advocate position, announced in April as a means of improving relations between rural landowners and the oil and gas industry, is now being worked on by ministry staff, Lekstrom said.

Dawson Creek Daily News
**WIND PARK**

It’s been two years since site preparation work began at the Bear Mountain Wind Park, and the first towers are set to silhouette the ridgeline.

Over the summer, Dawson Creek residents can expect about a dozen of the turbine towers to become visible from the downtown area as they are erected. From the ground to the tip of a vertical blade, they’ll measure 118 metres tall — about the same height as a 30-storey building.

All of the blades and most of the machinery for 10 of the 34 turbines are on the 25-hectare site at the Brocor staging area on the Dangerous Goods Road. Construction is proceeding smoothly and a full turbine should be erected soon.

The 34-turbine, 102-megawatt project remains on schedule to deliver power to the BC Hydro grid by the start of November. Each of the turbine blades will be able to shift its pitch to regulate the wind force upon it, and each tower will have a rotating base enabling it to face the wind most directly.

More tower sections will be trucked up to the ridge once road weight restrictions are lifted at some point in June. The Radar Lake Road will continue to be the main access road for the project and will continue to be radio-controlled as construction continues over the summer and fall.

So far, the wind park has employed more than 60 people in the Peace Region and has engaged the services of more than 20 suppliers over the last two years of construction. Another five to eight contractors will be hired to complete construction, and an additional two operators have been hired to work on site once the park is finished.

Dawson Creek Daily News

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**ALASKA HIGHWAY STILL TOURIST ATTRACTION**

Tourism Dawson Creek staff have predicted the draw of the great Alaska Highway adventure will ensure a steady stream of tourists drop in on Dawson Creek this summer, despite a slow economy.

The truth in this statement is already evident by the steadily increasing number of RVs that can already be found slowly negotiating the traffic circle or stopped at the Northern Alberta Railways (NAR) Park throughout the day.

“One thing we’re fortunate about in this area is that people from the south who decide to make their Alaska Highway trip plan this two years ago,” said Tourism Dawson Creek, Dustin Bodnaryk

This isn’t the first time a drop in tourism might have been expected.

Bodnaryk recalls similar concerns during the 2008 season when gas prices were at an all-time high and the country that provides a large majority of the Alaska bound travelers, was heading toward a presidential election. He said they were told Americans tended to stay close to their homes during election years but there was little or no decrease in tourists to the area registered last season.

Any second thoughts about making the trip will also be outweighed by the fact that the 49th State is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, said Bodnaryk.

Dawson Creek Daily News
Energy Saving Competition

Dawson Creek is well ahead in a contest between communities in British Columbia to reduce energy consumption.

The community is one of 17 competing in the Energetic Olympics, created by One Sky: Canadian Institution of Sustainable Living, a non-profit organization based in Smithers, BC.

The contest was started in January of 2008, and divides communities into two groups based on their size: heavyweights, with populations more than 5,000 and lightweights, with less than 5,000. Municipal governments and individuals earn points for their communities in five “events” — goods and services, food, heating, transportation and electricity — by taking actions to reduce energy consumption, such as recycling, reusing and reducing waste, buying environmentally-friendly, locally-made products and reducing electricity and fuel use.

As the contest is drawing to a close, Dawson Creek is the front-runner to win in the heavyweight group with 415 points overall, compared to Ladysmith, with 320 points, and Comox, with 265. However, those numbers don’t take into account the individuals who have scored points for their communities, and the actions done by residents in the “contending” communities could decide the winner.

Dawson Creek could also be the first municipality in BC, and one of the few in the country, to implement a Local Improvement Charges (LIC) strategy to help homeowners finance energy retrofits to their homes.

The contest closes June 30, but a winner won’t be announced until early next year, before the start of the 2010 Olympics. An international panel of judges will tour the contender communities this fall and evaluate and rank each based on a set of criteria.

Northeast News

Olympic Torch

The Olympic torch stopped in Dawson Creek and residents could touch it or have their picture taken with it.

This torch is one of 12,000 that the Olympic Torch Run will use. The next time a torch comes through the city on January 31, it will be burning the Olympic Flame and be carried by select torch bearers.

The torch is a long white staff that reminds one of the lines carved in the snow by a skier or the cut of a blade on ice and was unveiled in February in Whistler.

Anyone 13 and older is eligible to enter the contest to carry the torch. Torch bearers will be selected based on their pledge to make the communities stronger or the environment healthier. One can also come up with his or her own personal pledge.

Dawson Creek Daily News
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

RCMP aim to crack down on dangerous driving in the South Peace this year as traffic fatalities and accidents have spiked in recent years.

“Dawson Creek and the South Peace area normally have three to four crashes per year,” Sgt Kurt Peats, the officer in charge of the South Peace Traffic Services and the Dawson Creek Integrated Road Safety Unit, told Dawson Creek Council.

“Last year [Dawson Creek] had 10, Fort St John had 14 and Fort Nelson had another 10. As a result, because you’ve increased by 200 plus percent, significant attention is being paid to this particular issue.”

Peats’ territory includes more than 1,000 kilometers of highways, extending north on Highway 97 to the Kiskatinaw Bridge, south on Highway 52 to Tumbler Ridge, east on Highway 2 to the Alberta border, and west on Highway 97 to Powder King.

After reviewing the fatalities, Peats said, his unit will focus on the three main factors causing the accidents — failing to wear a seatbelt, aggressive driving and alcohol consumption.

Northeast News

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The City of Dawson Creek was looking for input from the public on the direction of land-use development and planning in the municipality.

The Mayor, councilors and staff hosted an Official Community Plan (OCP) update at the Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre. The law requires that the OCP be updated at least every five years.

Residents had a chance to give their approval or disapproval to policy directions under five broad themes — housing, green space and the environment, infrastructure, the economy, and transportation. Residents put green sticker dots next to the policies they agreed with, red ones next to the policies they disagreed with, and yellow ones next to policies they weren’t sure about or needed more information on.

Many of the recommendations centred on how the city might revitalize the downtown core. Much of the large-scale commercial and residential development has been focused along the two major corridors in the city — Alaska Avenue and 8th Street. City planner Emanuel Machado explained that as development expands outwards to the boundaries of the city, the necessary infrastructure like roads, water and sewer become more expensive, and the cost must be considered. He added that downtown, most of the infrastructure is already built, so taking advantage of that is critical.

Machado said there are opportunities to develop the downtown area, but there are also challenges, because most of the larger projects need a large amount of space and access to the highways.

The city expects that if growth continues as it has, Dawson Creek will add 45 new homes each year over the next 20 years. Finding affordable options for those new residents will be challenging, as the average price of a home has risen to more than $200,000, and the average rent has gone up by $200 a month in the last two years. Machado said that feedback from residents on the type of housing they want to see in their neighbourhoods will be crucial.

One of the more popular proposals was connecting neighbourhoods in the city via the Green Ribbon, the network of walking trails and parks following Dawson Creek.

Machado said the creek is also crucially important for storm water management, because it’s essentially where the city’s watershed drains into. He said that by developing and maintaining wetlands, it will allow more water to stay in the area, reduces the chances of flooding and provides habitat for wildlife.

Transportation is another issue the OCP addresses, which includes encouraging alternatives to motor vehicles. Machado said while public transit is a costly service, it is one the city is committed to maintaining. He added that expanding bike trails and walking paths is another option, but ultimately, it will be up to residents to choose more efficient modes of transportation.

Northeast News
SD 59 BUDGET

School District 59 is shooting for a total budget of $46.4 million for the 2009-2010 budget. Ministry of Education grants will provide about $44.2 million of projected revenue, while other revenue, rentals and leases, and investment income should mean about $1.3 million for the school district. The board will dip into $919,000 from the previous fiscal year’s operating surplus to make ends meet.

SD 59 employees salaries and benefits will consume close to $37.4 million of the budget, while services and supplies are expected to run up to $8.86 million.

Capital expenditures will total $201,000 and includes a $25,000 lawn mower. Despite the cost of that piece of equipment, the front-mounted cutting blades will mean lawns get cut more than twice as fast.

Dawson Creek Daily News

FALL FAIR & RODEO

Locals and visitors at this year’s Dawson Creek Fall Fair and Rodeo will see many of the familiar attractions that keep bringing them back to the annual fair every year, along with a sprinkling of new events.

One of the big changes this year will see the Canadian Wild Horse Racing Association compete just before the chuckwagon races in the evening performance. The wild horses involve both adult and kid races and feature teams that try and saddle a horse and ride it to the finish line.

The Crazy Girls Trick Riders will also entertain fans before the chucks, and a couple of young local girls will train with the Crazy Girls and learn how to trick ride.

The 16 wagons of the Western Chuckwagon Association are back. The Dawson Creek event will be the organization’s championship final. All the competitors are locals and race in the Peace River area and are looking to move up to the professional level. They will race for $5,000 and a GMC truck in Sunday’s Dash-for-Cash.

The 36 rigs from the World Professional Chuckwagon Association are back. They will compete for Sunday’s $10,000 Cascade Services Partnership Dash-for-Cash. The Herman Flad Memorial $3000 Dash-for-Cash sponsored by Arrow Insurance also takes place Sunday. Organizers expect the competition to be hotly contested, as the Dawson Creek show is the second-last show before the WPCA finals in Edmonton.

Some of the other attractions at this year’s fall fair include:

- Clint Black concert on Tuesday.
- The western art show in the mezzanine of the EnCana Event Centre facility.
- The agriculture trade fair takes place in the EnCana Events Centre arena.
- This year’s Fall Fair poster will feature late Mayor Calvin Kruk driving Chad Harden’s chuckwagon. Proceeds raised will go towards the Calvin Kruk Trust Fund.
- The Cattle Division will be hosting the BC Angus Gold Show for the second year.

Dawson Creek Daily News
**Charley Pride**

Call him a country legend. Call him a good person. But call him a source of inspiration and Charley Pride is likely to give you an argument.

“People are always asking me about my influence on others and breaking down barriers, but all I really wanted to do is make music and that’s what I did,” said Pride recently.

Pride is considered one of the most successful country musicians in history. He’s had 35 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart, performed for presidents, prime ministers, kings and queens, and at 71-years of age, has no plan to discontinue his career any time soon.

Pride will take the stage at the EnCana Events Centre in June.

_Dawson Creek Daily News_

**Bear Mountain Nordic Ski Association**

Next ski season will feature wider trails with fewer potential danger trees at the Bear Mountain Nordic ski area, after the club completes more than $173,000 worth of improvements this summer.

The work is set to begin soon at the 500-hectare site, and will be carried out by six workers over the summer and well into the fall. By the time the trail maintenance is done, cross-country skiers can expect to see the 25 kilometers of trail widened in spots, blown-down trees and brush removed, and dangerous trees selectively fallen within 40 metres of each side of the trail.

Trees killed by the pine beetle figure prominently into the work being done, as the Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR) seeks to reduce forest fire hazards by getting rid of the standing dead trees. A few buildings in the area (three shelters and one cabin) will get fresh coats of paint and be placed on concrete rather than wooden bases, in order to reduce the fire risk.

The ski area’s 44 culverts will be cleaned out, new trees will be planted and grass will be seeded in some areas. About eight new picnic tables will be assembled.

The grants were applied for under the provincial Community Development Trust’s Job Opportunities program aimed at unemployed forest workers, and comes on the heels of other work completed at the ski area by the MOFR last spring.

_Dawson Creek Daily News_