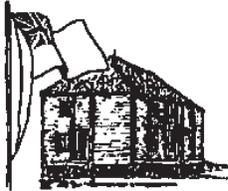




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## Binche moves to improved future

### Community celebrates new community bus, radio, phone and internet

Tim Collins/Fiona Maureen

On Mon. Feb. 26 Binche Whut'en celebrated the ribbon cutting ceremony of their new Community Bus at the Binche Community Center.

The Community Bus service provides safe, reliable and affordable transportation to the communities of Binche, Tl'azt'en, Nak'azdli, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James.

"A trip will only cost you \$2 to get from Tachie to Fort St. James or Fort St. James to Vanderhoof, for one way. It's here to help everybody, all the communities, all of those who have no drivers licence to get to work. We are going to try to open up a service to the mills to get the young people to get a job at Conifex, Apollo and KDL or wherever else," said Binche Councillor, Joshua Hallman, at the launch of the new service.

Hallman expressed his appreciation of



"No more hitchhiking!" Binche elders and leadership at the ribbon cutting launch of their new Community Bus. Photo Fiona Maureen

the financial support received from the partnerships and investments by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Tani-zul Timber, Tl'azt'en Nation, Northern Spirit Transportation, Dunkley Lumber and Conifex.

He went on to explain that many residents of the community of Binche do not have access to personal modes of travel.

"This much-needed service provides access grocery stores, medical appointments,

workplaces and other services only available a 30 min drive south west to Fort St James and in some cases a further 60 km along Highway 27 to Vanderhoof. For those previously without transportation, they will be able to return to their homes without hitchhiking and stay out of extreme cold weather," he said.

"Now the family members of those who used to hitchhike may be able to put their minds at ease, knowing their family mem-

bers are getting safely to the places they need to go," says Chief Alexander McKinnon of Nak'azdli Whut'en.

Binche has been the site of a series of other, exciting, announcements affecting the community.

The process of de-amalgamation and the transition to self governance is underway and Binche has recently started its own radio show, broadcasting from the new Community Centre.

There have also been infrastructure improv-

ments, including a water system upgrade, the availability of high speed internet and a community phone.

A press release from the community of Binche promoted the community phone, saying "We will take care of the long distances charges. Phone a potential employer, confirm your medical appointments, talk to an education institute about programs."

That press release went on to promise even greater things in the future.

"The sky is the limit and we are just getting started. Binche Keyoh is investing in our future. Binche knows they cannot rely on government programs alone to close the infrastructure and socio-economic gaps. The current system is ineffective; a new approach is needed to support community ownership. By investing and building capacity, we enhance employment opportunities and create a skilled work force. There is potential to

make real progress on closing the social and economic gap."

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