



**2012 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Category Worksheet**

**LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION
Small**

*Please note there is a separate application form for the Climate Action sub-category

Name of Local Government: District of Elkford

Project/Program Title: Elkford Community Conference Centre

Community Size: *Small*

Project Summary Paragraph

In 2006, the District of Elkford purchased a 2.4 hectare property, the former Elkford Elementary School, from School District No. 5 to open a new Community Conference Centre. In 2007, a fire destroyed the property. Before re-building, the District looked to the community for input on how to best structure the centre for optimal community use.

Officially opening in June 2012, the \$6.4 million energy-efficient Community Conference Centre is constructed of structural wood and conserves maximum energy and reduces the Centre's environmental footprint. The 1,800-square-metre building features a Visitor Centre, playschool, commercial kitchen, banquet hall with a stage for the performing arts, multi-purpose meeting rooms as well as historical displays. The building is being widely recognized for its innovative use of wood products, as it is the first commercial application of Cross Laminated Timbers (CLT) wall panels in North America.

Project Analysis

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

1. ENVIRONMENT

How does the program/project protect BC's environment?

The Elkford Community Conference Centre is constructed with cross-laminated timber, which is a large multi-layer wooden panel as large as 10' X 50' made of lumber, and engineered for strength through laminations of different layers placed cross-wise to the adjacent layers. The use of cross-laminated timber (CLT) wall panels in the Elkford Community Conference Centre is the first commercial application in North America. CLT panels are used as the shear walls to resist the high wind load for the building, demonstrating CLTs strength and stiffness, and proving it to be a valid alternative to concrete and steel as the panels are lighter, more environmentally-friendly and easier to install. This project has also used glulam and laminated veneer lumber beams supported on the CLT walls or perimeter columns. Glulam is an engineered wood product comprised of

wood laminations that are bonded together with strong, waterproof adhesives, creating an ideal structural component. SIP panels have been used on the roof and external wall cladding due to their highly efficient insulating property. This project also demonstrates the effectiveness of off-site prefabrication using state-of-the-art design/ fabrication technologies, such as computer numerically-controlled equipment to ensure absolute precision of structural components.

The District of Elkford wanted to embrace the use of new wood technology due to its environmental benefits, as well as the benefits of utilizing a resource that is so significant to BC's economy.

2. PROCESS

Please provide a brief outline of the steps involved in the program/project and the status of each step.

The Elkford Community Conference Centre has been a vision of Council since 2002. The Community Conference Centre was built as a way to create a 'social heart' for the community, and help the community move towards sustainability. The Elkford Community Conference Centre Project officially began in December 2006 when the District of Elkford purchased the closed down Elkford Elementary School. Council established a Committee to work on this project, and the original scope of the project was to renovate the closed down school and convert it into the Elkford Community Conference Centre. In August of 2007, the closed school was destroyed by fire, and the scope of the Committee was then changed to design a new Elkford Community Conference Centre. The Committee held countless formal and informal meetings, a number of open houses were held, and opinions and surveys were gathered from citizens and organizations within Elkford.

Construction of the Elkford Community Conference Centre commenced in May 2010 and was strongly supported on a local and provincial level and was also strongly supported by industry stakeholders within the community. Significant funding was obtained through insurance funds (approximately \$3.5 million), and by donations and grants: Teck Coal (\$1 million), Columbia Basin Trust (\$400,000), Towns for Tomorrow (\$400,000) and the Canadian Wood Council (\$45,000).

3. RELEVANCE

Tell us how your submission is relevant to current environmental issues.

With growing pressure to reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment, building designers are increasingly being called upon to balance functionality and cost objectives with reduced environmental impact. The use of wood in the construction of the Elkford Community Conference Centre has helped the District of Elkford achieve this balance. Wood costs less – economically and environmentally – while delivering more in terms of its beauty, versatility, and performance. Innovative new technologies and building systems that were used in the Elkford Community Conference Centre enabled longer wood spans and taller walls. Wood is a renewable and responsible building material.

The wood products used in the Elkford Community Conference Centre helped to significantly minimize the building's environmental footprint. The volume of wood

products used in the building was 658 cubic metres. 512 tones of CO₂ are stored in this amount of wood, 198 tones of CO₂ were avoided as greenhouse gas emissions and BC forests can grow this much wood in 11 minutes. These environmental reductions are equivalent to either 136 cars being off the road for one year or enough energy to operate a home for 60 years. The building is also constructed in such a way that it holds heat in the winter months and reduces heating costs.

4. LEADERSHIP

How does the project reflect leadership and excellence in the advancement of community development?

As a centre that is intended to foster community pride and function as a social hub for the community, the Community Conference Centre will greatly benefit the leadership potential within Elkford. Elkford has a diverse demographic, and our Community Conference Centre has been structured to accommodate all age groups. The 50+ Club, Elkford Early Childhood Development Committee, and Visitor Information Centre, just to name a few, will utilize the Community Conference Centre as a home base for meetings, events, and any other usages that may be deemed necessary. The ability to incorporate so many groups, ages, and activities within one building will provide a strong and vibrant arena for current leaders to evolve and grow, as well as encourage the cultivation of new leaders. The Community Conference Centre allows many active, visionary, and dedicated individuals to work out of a centralized and accommodating location, and this type of environment will unquestionably encourage the continuous development of leadership within Elkford.

5. ECONOMICS

a. How was the project a good use of budget and resources?

The District of Elkford received approximately \$3.5 million in insurance funds following the fire that occurred in 2007. The total cost of the building was \$6.4 million; however, the District has only had to spend \$1 million of tax payers' dollars to construct this amazing facility due to efficient budgeting, insurance funds and donations and grants. The donations and grants that the District of Elkford received were:

- Teck Coal Limited - \$1 million
- Columbia Basin Trust - \$400,000
- Towns for Tomorrow - \$400,000
- Canadian Wood Council - \$45,000
- East Kootenay Community Credit Union - \$22,500
- Mike Sosnowski (Area A Director, Regional District of East Kootenay) - \$10,000
- Tire Stewardship BC Grant Program - \$10,000
- Falkins Insurance - \$5,000
- Elkford Project Society - \$5,000
- Columbia Basin Trust Community Initiatives Grant - \$4,000
- Fortis BC – Outdoor BBQ

It is evident from the vast amount of donations and the various organizations and businesses that were involved, the Elkford Community Conference Centre was a vision that was not only realized by the District of Elkford, but by the community of Elkford and the Elk Valley as a whole.

- b. How does the project encourage economic sustainability? (e.g. *life cycle analysis, internalizing costs and alternative financing, economic instruments*)

The new Elkford Community Conference Centre provides the desired social and economic stimulus that the community needs as it works towards its goal of sustainability. We fully expect the centre to increase tourism and to promote social and economic development in Elkford. Available space in our existing facilities is too small and inadequate to host larger functions such as conferences etc. The banquet hall on the Elkford Community Conference Centre can seat 420 people – this is the largest capacity of a community building in the entire Elk Valley. This allows for these functions to be hosted locally, and this will attract more visitors to Elkford, thus increasing tourism and providing economic benefit to the local businesses.

The building was clearly built for the main purpose of community use and the space provides a much needed location for community functions. From weddings to funerals, the building now provides a beautiful and accessible space for any and all functions that occur within the community. It will serve the growing population of our town for decades to come.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

- How does the project encourage social sustainability? (e.g. *stakeholder engagement, public participation, equity and diversity, health and safety, knowledge sharing, capacity building, community identity and marketing*)

The Elkford Community Centre will continue to enhance and promote a more active lifestyle within the community, and will act as the 'social heart' and gathering place for the citizens and visitors to Elkford. It is a public place for people to walk, sit, meet, participate in and watch activities, socially visit, or to just relax. It serves citizens and visitors of all ages and abilities, provides multi-generational programs and universal accessibility. It is a community landmark and as such, a destination location. It provides a variety of spaces for offering programs and activities to residents of all ages and abilities. The design will also provide (at times) designated spaces for specific user groups. Special attention was given to meet the needs of all ages, but especially young children, youth and seniors. Spaces and programs will be accessible for people of all abilities, including those with physical limitations.

The multi-purpose areas serve as classroom and meeting spaces that will be provided for a wide variety of life-long learning opportunities. While specific spaces attract certain age groups, community gatherings also serve to bring generations together. It is a place that is open and accessible to residents of all ages and provides a broad range of social, recreational, cultural, and educational activities and services. By encouraging residents to come together and interact in one place, a stronger sense of community within Elkford has occurred. Even in the short time that the Centre has been open, it has been fully embraced by community and has

created a renewed sense of pride within Elkford. To have a state of the art facility in such a young and small community will allow Elkford to continue to prosper.

The District of Elkford is currently working on marketing the Community Conference Centre as a destination for conferences, meetings, banquets, weddings and much more. We are blessed to live in such a picturesque and natural location and this building will only help to further develop our goals of increasing tourism and community services.

7. INNOVATION

What makes your program/project innovative?

As previously mentioned, the Elkford Community Conference Centre is the first building of its kind in North America. The building demonstrates a blend of leading-edge international technologies and BC design concepts. The project has helped to further accelerate wood design and construction in BC to the forefront of the global experience.

8. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

The use of wood in any building is not only an environmentally conscious choice, but also directly beneficial to BC's economy. The Elkford Community Conference Centre is a building that would serve any community – large or small – across BC to help foster community pride, interaction and programs.

9. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

As with the construction of any major structure, there was many struggles and learning curves involved in this project; however, the project was a positive, challenging and successful experience. The use of new wood technology would be useful to any municipality that is considering constructing any building on a large scale. The energy efficiency of the building, as well as the reduction of our carbon footprint in its construction, is useful information to any municipality when constructing a building.

The ability to gain community support, from both residents and businesses, was vital to the success of this project. Without the moral and financial support from our residents and local stakeholders, this project would not have been possible.

10. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

The pure beauty and functionality of this building cannot be expressed enough and is a project that the District of Elkford is immensely proud of. The building is useful

to both locals and tourists, residents and businesses. It is both striking and well-designed, supported and admired. It brings a rejuvenated sense of energy to the downtown core of our community, while reducing our environmental footprint. The Elkford Community Conference Centre is an exemplary example of smart and conscious building construction.

To view a short video of the project, please visit the District of Elkford's YouTube site (<http://www.youtube.com/user/DistrictofElkford?feature=mhee>).

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