

Pontiac Solstice hardtop is a sight for sore eyes. Read all about it in Thursday's Driver's Seat feature, only in The Citizen

## Wood highrise in works, MLA says

Frank Peebles  
Citizen staff

Prince George, one of the forestry capitals of the world, hasn't a single highrise built out of wood and it is virtually impossible to find one anywhere else, either.

That is about to change, The Citizen has learned.

According to sources, a wooden building possibly as tall as six storeys is slated to be built in Prince George to advance the provincial government's Wood First initiative. No time frame was disclosed, nor any definite design features, but multiple contacts close to the project confirmed it was happening.

"I haven't heard anything announced, but I have heard the idea brought up, and it would bring

some needed attention to the city because we would be the first to have a building of that magnitude," said Chamber of Commerce president Adele Yakemchuck.

Minister of Forests and Range Pat Bell explained - without divulging what the building might look like or where it might go - that it is directly linked to the UN-BC-affiliated Wood Innovation and Design Centre, a proposed facility meant to promote new expertise in advanced wood-building systems. The demonstration building would house the program.

"It is part of one large project and we want to show the world what you can do with wood," said Bell, Prince George-Mackenzie MLA. "If you live in Sydney, Australia, you'll come to Prince George, B.C. to see what can be

done and learn from the people there who know exactly how to build structures on the cutting edge of the wood industry."

The fact the creation of the Wood Innovation and Design Centre has been specifically mentioned in successive throne speeches this year is strong evidence, said those involved, that in spite of budget constraints in some areas this project is definitely going ahead.

Bell's local colleague in government, Prince George-Valemount MLA Shirley Bond, said that such a building would be a strategic investment.

"We are in the heart of where the devastation has taken place, so we think this is a perfect opportunity to capitalize on initiatives like the Wood First policy, and using

the Wood Innovation and Design Centre as a catalyst for future prosperity in the industry that leads our community. It was one of the only specific initiatives targeted in the throne speech and that was for a reason."

Bond said a showcase building would be useful for advancing the government's agenda to stimulate the forest sector in new ways that would chart a new future for the timber sector. That would take help from the private sector, municipal government, First Nations and she is excited about the spirit the federal government is showing for the concept.

"There will be lots of discussion about that kind of building, and when Minister Raitt (federal Minister of Natural Resources Lisa Raitt) was in Prince George there

was discussion about that sort of initiative going national, so that will benefit our province especially, and makes us leaders once again in developing the national agenda and our northern economy at the same time."

"We saw a barrier as being leadership," said Bell.

"In North America it is already well known how to use wood to build homes, but building larger commercial and residential buildings out of wood is not thought of. How do we crack that new market or markets and achieve that objective for the forest industry and the communities that are so connected to the forest industry? The answer is, someone had to do it first, so what better place to show the world how to build something out of wood than Prince George, B.C."

## Canine cadet

*Brisk may only be 10-weeks-old but she's already in training for a career in law enforcement*

Frank Peebles  
Citizen staff

Brisk may not look intimidating now, and hardly professional chasing a sock around and rolling over for a belly rub, but Brisk is on her way to being a fleeing crook's worst nightmare.

Brisk, a 10-week-old puppy and purebred black-and-tan German Shepherd, is already an RCMP canine cadet. Const. Kerry Mazur is her partner. Mazur is in the Mounties' dog handler process, and Brisk is one of her assignments.

"Being in the puppy program is one of many parts to becoming a dog handler," said Mazur. "You quarry for a year: taking bites, laying tracks for the dog handlers and their service dogs. Once you show that commitment you become eligible for the puppy imprinting program. You usually have to take four to six puppies before you can move on to the handler program. I want to become a dog handler."

Brisk and Mazur are helping each other reach those goals in the RCMP. Brisk's aspirations are already evident. She might lolly-gag around like all puppies do, but when Mazur calls on the little fuzzleball to pursue the sock target on the end of a rope, or follow an instruction before she gets a lot of positive attention, play time or a treat, Brisk is all business.

"The imprinting basically teaches them 'if I work hard, if I do the task, then I get my reward,'" said Mazur. "My primary job is socializing her and familiarizing her with all

the things she might encounter in her police job. She lives with me and works with me."

Pups in the RCMP development regime are therefore exposed to elevators, big spaces, confined spaces, stairs, water, traffic, groups of people, other animals, slippery floors, trashy surroundings, fences, anything that might present itself in future police work.

The puppies are tested at regular intervals to see how they are progressing in different fields of expertise. Some excel at a variety of jobs and get assigned to general police duty. Some are keen in areas like sniffing drugs or detecting explosives, and they become specialists in those areas. Some show certain aptitudes, but don't behave in the necessary manner for police purposes so they could be sold to other non-RCMP agencies that could use the dogs' skills. Others simply show themselves to be great pets, as their best path in life.

Mazur was assigned Brisk two weeks ago and she is already showing signs of being a good candidate for general duty work, Mazur said, but it is still early in the process.

Another pup, Brey, is assigned to Const. Nathan Poyzer on D-watch, while Mazur is on B-watch. Neither get paid for this work, or get any dedicated work hours for this part of their handler aspirations.

"My watch has been super supportive, and you can't do this without the consent and support of your supervisors," Mazur said. "I still have to do my real job, maintain my regular workload. And she's a full-time job too." Mounties in Prince George are assigned



RCMP Const. Kerry Mazur is teaching 10-week old German Shepherd Brisk what it takes to be a police dog.

Citizen photo by David Mah

schools for which they are responsible for visiting and meeting the kids. Mazur's is Quinson elementary "and I can't wait for school to start so I can bring Brisk over," she said.

Brisk is Mazur's second pup. Aysha was with her for eight months before moving on

in the program (the RCMP service dog program is headquartered in Innisfail, Alberta but administered throughout Canada). She misses Aysha, but is pleased with the personality and professional development of the new partner, and looks forward to the others she expects in the months ahead.

## Police staying quiet on results of search

Frank Peebles  
Citizen staff

Police are saying nothing further now that they have concluded their probe of two Prince George properties in the search for clues in Nicole Hoar's disappearance.

Provincial and local Mounties spent the better part of four days on the five-and-a-half acre property on Pinewood Road in the Isle Pierre area west of the city. They also spent some time at a local dumpsite about a kilometre from the property.

Provincial spokeswoman Cpl. Annie Linteau said the RCMP was

not in a position to either confirm they found any clues during the operation, or dismiss the search.

"It typically takes some time for investigators to determine the significance of any items collected," Linteau said.

However Linteau did speak about the bag of bones one neighbour presented to Prince George RCMP that came from the dumpsite. Provincial media quoted Isle Pierre resident Wal-



LINTEAU

ly Anderson who explained his

concerns about Leland Switzer, the former owner of the property in question when Hoar disappeared in 2002, and those concerns led him to find the bones.

"The bones were turned over to police in 2008," said Linteau. "They were examined by an anthropologist who determined they were animal bones, and Mr. Anderson was informed of that."

Meanwhile RCMP are still looking for information about a person who came to their attention while their Prince George property probe was underway. More than 100 new tips were called in or personally delivered to investigators,

including this one, said Linteau.

"Police have received information that an unknown male may have information that may assist in this investigation. We believe this man may have information about Nicole's whereabouts during the week-end of June 21 to 23, 2002. We do not have information at this time to suggest that he is a suspect in the disappearance of Nicole Hoar."

The man was described as look-

ing like this in 2002: A Caucasian male, in his mid 50s, black shoulder length hair, very skinny face, sunken eyes, scruffy appearance, thin glasses, a smoker and had a pronounced jagged scar on the left side of his neck.

Anyone with information about this man or any other aspect of Nicole Hoar's disappearance is asked to call the Prince George RCMP detachment at 250-561-3300, the Operation E-pana investigators at North District RCMP headquarters (250-561-3100), or give the information anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS / www.pgcrimestoppers.bc.ca.



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