

news

Pipe firm says stake worth \$280M

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No First Nations have signed onto Enbridge Inc.'s ownership offer on its proposed \$5.5-billion Northern Gateway oil pipeline, but the company is working to get the offer out to 40 eligible First Nations within weeks.

"No one has signed on the dotted line yet," John Carruthers, the president of Enbridge Northern Gateway, told The Citizen on Wednesday.

Enbridge says the 10-per cent ownership stake is expected to gen-

erate \$280 million in profit over the next 30 years. That would provide \$233,000 a year to each of the 40 First Nations.

Carruthers said he believes Enbridge has put together a significant benefits package, one where the company will provide the financing for First Nations.

The company is effectively lending money to the First Nations to buy into the project.

Carruthers said the company heard from First Nations they did not have the ability to finance the project, nor did they want to take on risk during construction.

It's why the financing is not trig-

gered until the pipeline starts operation, said Carruthers. The First Nations will receive payments immediately when the pipeline begins operating.

Enbridge has also sweetened their offer with a promise of a 15 per cent portion of the temporary construction jobs and 21 permanent jobs.

"We're pretty excited — it's creating good dialogue," Carruthers said of the ownership offer. "We do want long-term partnerships with aboriginal communities. We're hopeful."

The company expects First Nations to get contracts on the pipeline as well. The construction and job benefits add up to an estimated

\$400 million in northern B.C. and Alberta, says Enbridge.

The company says it's also working on a \$200 million benefit package for First Nations on the B.C. coast.

First Nations will also be eligible to tap into a community trust expected to generate \$100 million during the next 30 years, or \$3.3 million a year. The trust is also meant for the benefit of non-aboriginal communities.

Carruthers said the offer has already been presented to about two-thirds of the 40 First Nations. Those First Nations are considered eligible by the company because their com-

munities are within 80 kilometres of the 1,170-kilometre pipeline.

The pipeline, which will pass just north of Prince George, is meant to open up new markets in Asia for crude from the Alberta oilsands.

Carruthers acknowledged that closer to the coast of British Columbia there is less interest. He added the company would have to be invited to a First Nation's community to present its offer.

A majority of 22 First Nations west of Prince George have little appetite to accept the ownership offer.

The First Nations oppose the pipeline largely over concerns of a pipeline or tanker spill.

Deal too low: Carrier Sekani

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council chief David Luggi said he finds Enbridge's ownership offer inadequate.

Luggi is opposed to the pipeline project, but noted it only seems fair to critique the offer from a business perspective.

"The numbers seem low — quite low," said Luggi.

Luggi noted that a benefits package First Nations signed on to for the \$1.2-billion Pacific Trails natural gas pipeline in northern B.C. gives 15 bands a 30 per cent ownership option that would provide benefits of \$540 million to \$570 million over 29 years.

That's twice the amount of money to less than half the number of First Nations, on a pipeline half the length of Enbridge's, noted Luggi.

Many First Nations consider the natural gas pipeline more benign, particularly, they say, because the gas would dissipate if there is a spill.

First Nations would also have to be provided funding — with no strings attached — to conduct their own due diligence on an ownership offer, said Luggi.

That's what happened with the Pacific Trails natural gas pipeline project.

The First Nations were provided money that allowed them to hire accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a preliminary review of the ownership offer in the natural gas pipeline, followed by a more detailed review by accounting firm KPMG.

First Nations in northern B.C. would also want to see their share of the project prorated to the amount of traditional land the pipeline crosses, said Luggi.

— Hoekstra, Citizen



FORTIFIED — Ecole Lac des Bois students Noah Pement, 7, left, and Max Schonewille, 9, added more snowballs to their fort in the school yard during the Carnaval and Sugar Shack Friday afternoon. Many outdoor events were happening, including the making of the maple taffy for students.
Citizen photo by David Mah

Liberal candidates back new ballot

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B.C. Liberal leadership hopefuls are reiterating their support for a new weighted voting system to be decided at today's extraordinary convention.

Christy Clark, Kevin Falcon and Mike de Jong issued statements Thursday saying they back the weighted voting system.

If delegates vote in favour of the new system, it will give equal weight to each of the 85 provincial ridings regardless of how many party members vote. That would provide more weight to votes from B.C.'s less populous rural and northern areas.

Initially it appeared the vote was a foregone conclusion — it has been endorsed by the party executive — but de Jong campaigner and former Liberal MLA Gulzar Cheema introduced doubts when he said he would be voting against the resolution and that support was not universal.

The new system needs the endorsement of two thirds of the delegates.

Christy Clark, a former Liberal MLA turned radio talk-show host, said she encouraged all delegates to vote in favour of the weighted system to ensure all regions are equally heard.

"On Saturday, I will put my hand up in public and vote for the regional weighted voting system because it is the right thing to do and will help bring the party and province together," said Clark.

De Jong, who stepped down as attorney general to run, said the next leader of the B.C. Liberal Party needs the backing of members throughout the province, not just in heavily populated ridings in the Lower Mainland.

"From the very beginning of this race, I have been clear in my support for a weighted vote. And I continue to support the concept and urge my supporters to vote for the proposal at this weekend's convention," said de Jong.

Falcon, who stepped down as health minister to run, said he believed any new leader must demonstrate they can secure support from every part of the province.

"As I have travelled across BC over these past three months, meeting BC Liberal members from big cities and small towns, from urban areas and rural communities, from every region, and I have been continually reminded of how diverse our province is," said Falcon. "We need to hear from them all on Feb. 26, and the weighted system is the best way to do that."

UNBC political scientist Jason Morris said, while there's no doubt a weighted voting system would give northerners a bigger voice in choosing the Liberal leader, he's concerned it gives an artificial importance to the North.

"Should the North matter because you create a weighted voting system, or should it matter because it's important politically, socially and economically?" questioned Morris.

He wonders if northerners can be sure that leadership candidates take the North seriously, or they are appealing to northerners because that's how to win the leadership.

Meeting set on growing forest

Mark Nielsen
Citizen staff

Expansion of the Prince George community forest will be the focus of an open house next week.

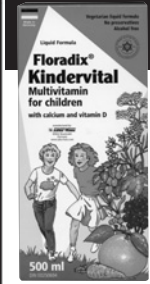
Hosted by he Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, City of Prince George and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, it will be held on Thursday, 7 p.m., at the regional district office, 155 George Street

The city holds a probationary community forestry license that allows it to clear brush and dead trees from Crown land within the city and it's due to expire in a year.

The idea is to replace that with a 25-year license that would cover an additional 38,000 hectares of mostly agricultural development area and Lheidli T'enneh settlement reserve land surrounding the city. From there, the goal would be to increase the amount of agricultural land around the city and lessen the chances of catastrophic wildfire in the process.

Under a typical forest licence, each tree that's taken out must be replaced with a replanted one. Under the proposal, the money generated by the sale of the timber would be used to burn off the stumps and so forth to clear the land for agriculture.

PRIMETIME programs on TV tonight 2/12/11							
	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM 10:30
CTV	17 Days (N)		The Listener "Lady in the Lake"		Law & Order: Los Angeles		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Rescue"
CBC	NHL Hockey Calgary Flames at Vancouver Canucks. From Rogers Arena in Vancouver, B.C. (Live)				Hockey Night in Canada: After Hours (Live)		News
Global	Show of Hearts Telethon: II Divo Live at the Greek (L)			Show of Hearts Telethon: Bon Jovi the Circle Tour (L)			
NBC	Northwest Backroads	Inside Edition Week-end	Harry's Law "Wheels of Justice" Chunhua is attacked.		Law & Order: Los Angeles		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Rescue"
CBS	Entertainment Tonight (N)		NCIS: Los Angeles The team learns an agent is in danger.	CSI: Miami "Manhunt" Horatio's wife's killer escapes.			48 Hours Mystery The murder of a celebrity dog trainer. (N)
ABC	Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	Wipeout Obstacles include Egg Ball-ville.	*** Hairspray '07, Musical Comedy! John Travolta, Nikki Blonsky, Amanda Bynes. Premiere.			
PBS	Over 40 & You're Hired With Robin Ryan The career counselor offers advice.			Over 40 & You're Hired With Robin Ryan		Leonard Cohen Live in London	
FOX	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Grey's Anatomy An inmate jeopardizes her health	How I Met Your Mother	How I Met Your Mother	Q13 FOX News at Ten (N)	Washington



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Please reply to: Helen Domshy,
PGLiteracyOutreach@shaw.ca
or 250-564-4288 to register.

Feel free to bring a document to work on – a newsletter, a program flyer, communication items needed on a regular basis...something important to you.

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