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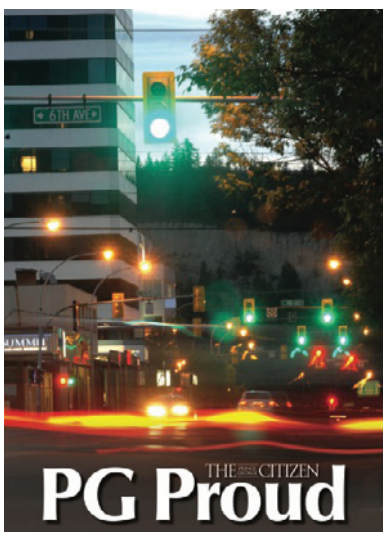

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Your city featured in today's Citizen

Teen dead after crash

P.G. NEWS 3

All signed up

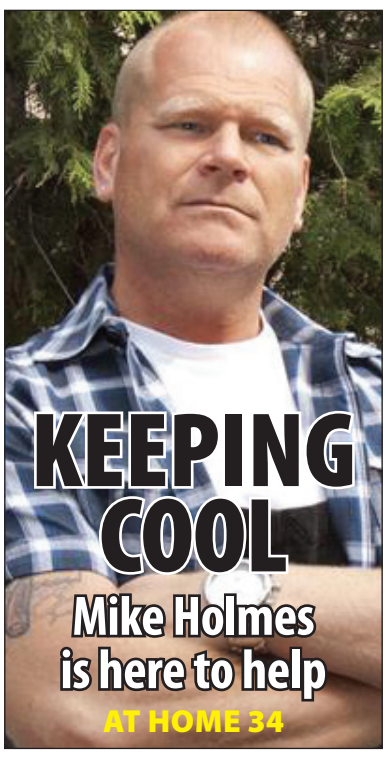
BC 7

Inquiry for mall tragedy

CANADA 13

Take a trip back in time to Barkerville

TRAVEL 21



CITIZEN PHOTO BY DAVID MAH

Vanderhoof Airshow organizers Glenn Pearcet, David Fehr, and Peet Vahi, look at old airshow posters at the Hobson History Museum in Vanderhoof.

Taking to the skies

Vanderhoof air event ready to take flight again

Frank PEEBLES *Citizen staff*
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Air entertainment is coming again to the Vanderhoof Airport.

Organizers stress that it is not a full airshow, like the small town used to do, but the Aug. 11 event is the appetizer for the banquets they hope to serve in the coming years.

"We're having a hangar party and a flight demonstration," said Peet Vahi, who was involved in the epic airshows Vanderhoof once hosted and is now involved in the effort to restore the airshow.

"We want to develop it into a full airshow in 2014 with a couple of baby steps," said David Fehr, another of the new organizers who brought the dormant Vanderhoof International Airshow Society back to life.

Someone new to the committee is Glenn Pearce, a retired Air Canada international pilot and a new resident of Vanderhoof.

> **"We want to develop [the event] into a full airshow in 2014 with a couple of baby steps.**
>
> *— David Fehr*

"I have been speaking with the military, and they are happy to hear that Vanderhoof is starting up again. And they are happy to take part, but they need a couple of years' lead-time, so 2014 or 2013 at the earliest," he explained.

"We have a lot of interest from civilian acts, it will be a good time for people as we get on our feet."

The headline acts already confirmed are Ron Bender in his Pitt Special aerobatic biplane and John Mrazek in his L29 Delphin, a Cold War-era training jet for the Soviets.

Organizers are also working on a skydiving demonstration, static displays and other planes.

"We are expecting some surprises," said Vahi. "A lot of interest will come our way from the acts who used to perform here. It was a highly-regarded airshow all over North America. The last proper one Vanderhoof had was 1994 and at the time it was the largest camp-in airshow on the continent."

Wayne Deorksen remembers it well. Now retired from event promoting, Deorksen was a main figure in the old Vanderhoof show and he brought it to Prince George for several annual editions when the Vanderhoof airport was too small to handle the massive crowds. He now lives back in Vanderhoof, which has a substantially revamped airport, and he can't wait to see the resurgence.

In addition to the aircraft components, this summer's one-day event also features a dinner at the hangar, music by pop musician Bryant Olender and dancing with classic rock band BANG!

The 2012 Hangar Party and Flight Demonstration happens August 11 at the Vanderhoof Municipal Airport.

The daytime air features are $5 (under 16 years are free), the barbecue dinner is $25 and the dance is $20. Tickets are limited, and available only at the Hobson History Museum and Café (250-567-3399) in Vanderhoof.

Lakeland planer mill back in business Tuesday

Ted CLARKE *Citizen staff*
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After a two-week shutdown to investigate the source of a methane gas leak, Lakeland Mills will restart its planer mill and the district energy system on Tuesday.

Already reeling from the April sawmill explosion and fire which killed two mill workers and left 23 others injured, Lakeland shut down its planer operations last Friday as a precaution when a test hole found unacceptably high levels of methane at the northeast corner of the mill site.

"Suspending operations in the interests of the safety and well-being of our employees was the right thing to do," said Greg Stewart, president of Sinclar Group, which owns Lakeland Mills.

Additional soil testing and air sampling after the closure revealed no unsafe gases and Prince George Fire and Rescue officials determined there were no safety concerns.

STEWART

"We're confident that the safety of our employees is not at risk and we feel it's appropriate to get back to work," said Stewart. "The monitoring we've been doing since last week has found no significant readings of explosive gases, and both WorkSafeBC and the Prince George Fire Department have confirmed our findings."

Soil and air testing will continue, and Lakeland will be monitoring the mill site for any subsequent methane leaks as work resumes Tuesday. The 28 planer mill employees will be working one daily shift until the three-week supply of timber runs out. At the time the downtown sawmill exploded April 23, the planer mill was operating at all hours of the day and employed three shifts.

The Lakeland Fire Assistance Fund has now grown to more than $400,000. Sinclar Group spokesperson Cam McAlpine was unable to provide details on how many Lakeland employees have applied for support from the donor-generated fund.

"Because it is administered through the Prince George Community Foundation we don't have any idea how the funds will be distributed, Sinclar Group and Lakeland Mills don't have any of those details," said McAlpine. "That was done intentionally so there wouldn't be any perception of bias or interference from the company."

Officials from the Community Foundation could not be reached Friday for comment.

SCHOOL VOTE

Teachers say yes to new contract

Ted CLARKE *Citizen staff*

The province's 41,000 public school teachers have agreed on a new deal with the province, ending a bitter labour dispute that began more than a year ago.

Teachers voted 15,809 to 5,192 in favour of accepting terms of a new contract that will expire on June 30, 2013, avoiding the government's plan to impose a contract if a negotiated settlement was not achieved. There were 21,044 ballots cast with 43 spoiled.

The BC Teachers Federation and the BC Public School Employers' Association ended weeks of negotiations with mediator Charles Jago Tuesday evening when they announced a tentative agreement, which was then taken to BCTF members for approval.

"I kind of expected a yes vote," said Matt Pearce, president of the Prince George District Teachers Association. "I'm surprised it was a three-to-one margin. I thought it would be closer than that."

— see 'Things, page 2

Today's Weather

Hi +17°
Low +6°

See page 2 for more details and short-term forecasts

ANNIE'S MAILBOX	37	CLASSIFIEDS	25-27	SPORTS	9-12
BRIDGE	37	BC NEWS	7	CITY	17
HOROSCOPE	2	CANADA NEWS	13-16	TRAVEL	20-21
COMICS	38	WORLD NEWS	18-19	WORKLIFE	28-29
CROSSWORD	38	OPINION	6	AT HOME	33-35

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