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## **Bell off to China**

Forests Minister Pat Bell is on his way to China to sign a memorandum of agreement for construction of six-story wood frame apartment blocks. It's his fourth trip there in two years, and Bell says they're paying off -- last year, the province exported 1.63 billion board feet of lumber to China, worth \$327 million, or close to a fifth of B.C.'s total lumber exports. Bell also commented on a report about the impacts of future drops in timber supply in a few years, saying the projections of mill closures are what could happen if government doesn't move to address the issue.

## **Coal mine on hold**

The B.C. Supreme Court has ordered a 90-day halt to work on a coal mine project near Chetwynd, ruling that the B.C. government failed to sufficiently consult with the West Moberly First Nation or accommodate its concerns about caribou habitat near Chetwynd.

Justice L. Paul Williamson ordered a 90-day stay of First Coal Corporation's advanced exploration program to "permit and to mandate a proper accommodation of West Moberly's concerns" over the endangered Burnt Pine caribou herd. Native hunting rights are guaranteed under Treaty 8, and the band argued that only about 11 caribou remain in the threatened herd because of the impact of resource development and hydro dams.

In a recent newsletter, we reported that WorkSafe BC is offering training seminars over the next two months – the group actually offering the training is the Employers' Advisers Office, a branch of the Ministry of Labour. To see the seminars they offer, go to <http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/eao/easr.htm>



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## **Ministry sharpens focus, goals**

Following up on commitments in its long-term Service Plan, the Ministry of Forests and Range is making major changes to how it intends to do business, and to its management structure.

Its vision statement now reads "A prosperous forest and range sector based on sustainably managed resources that provides benefits now and for generations to come." It's a welcome shift from the former vision, "Diverse and sustainable forest and range values for BC."

The Ministry's mission now is "To provide superior service to resource stakeholders by supporting competitive business conditions and by managing forest and range values." That replaces the previous "To protect, manage and conserve forest and range values through a high performing organization." Committing to enhancing prosperity for the sector and strengthening customer service means major operational changes that include streamlining processes, co-ordinating services, identifying clear outcomes and strategies for MoFR resource investments, improving efficiencies and measuring success. It also means structural and staffing changes.

The revamped Ministry will have either four or six business divisions, depending on how you count: Ministry field operations (BC Timber Sales, etc.); Forest and Range tenure planning (and resource stewardship); Competitiveness and innovation (and resource management co-ordination); and corporate services. It will have five assistant deputy ministers.



The Central Interior Logging Association's Weekly Log-Harvesting Industry Update

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This is a massive undertaking; a major culture shift, and it will take time to become established and grow into 'normal procedure' and 'how the Ministry does business.'

Various critics will paw and poke at it, and if they come up with better ways to get the job done, fine -- but getting this job done is Number 1. A more efficient, smoother-running Ministry with a focus on enhancing the well-being of forestry businesses and providing them with better service is a very welcome initiative. *Roy Nagel*

### ***News from around the industry***

**West Fraser** now has the province's permission to buy a tree farm and forest licence from Weyerhaeuser in the Kamloops TSA. Talks started in 2008, and the process went through competition and First Nations reviews. The AAC is about 682,000 m3, including a 200,000 m3 temporary beetle-wood uplift.

**The provincial** forest fire control headquarters is being moved from Victoria to a new \$4.5-million Wildfire Co-ordination Centre near the Kamloops airport. All of the province's wildfire resources including aviation, weather forecasting and air tanker dispatch will be handled from there. The Coastal Fire Centre stays in Victoria.

### ***Conifex closing deal for Mackenzie mill***

Conifex has a deal to purchase bankrupt AbitibiBowater's sawmill operations, timber rights and a shuttered newsprint plant in Mackenzie. If conditions are met, the purchase will be complete sometime this spring. Conifex, which is privately-held company based in B.C., says it plans to combine the two sawmills in Mackenzie into one expanded and upgraded plant.