



# **Community Readiness for Labour Mobility & Mining Expansion in BC's Interior**

**Laura Ryser, Greg Halseth, Kourtney Cook,  
and Sean Markey\***

**University of Northern BC**

**\*Simon Fraser University**

**CRRF 2014**

# Outline

- Background
- Study results
- Key labour mobility issues in Williams Lake
- Practice and policy implications



# Labour Mobility in Williams Lake

---

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2006</u>
# of residents commuting	385	585
Influx of workers to WL	4520	3780
<b>Net difference</b>	<b>4135</b>	<b>3195</b>

---

Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2006.



# LDLC Study

- Preliminary investigations to set stage for multi-year study
- Key informant interviews
  - 25 stakeholders in Williams Lake
  - Impacts on community
    - Key pressures and responses
    - Initiatives with industry / governments
    - Barriers / gaps



# Results

- 1) Labour force
- 2) Infrastructure
- 3) Services
- 4) Communications
- 5) Operations
- 6) Organizational culture
- 7) Collaboration



# Labour Force I

- Shortage of human resources
  - Can't compete with industry wages
- Capacity
  - Young workforce with limited management skills / experience
- Operations
  - Increased workloads due to staff shortage
  - No succession plans
  - Horizontal structures have challenged capacity building



# Labour Force II

## New approaches:

- Communication
  - Provide accurate information about amenities, cost of living, climate, etc. to applicants
- Create a positive environment
  - Make people feel valued
- Family-friendly certification program
- Incentives (financial, fitness, donations, equipment / supplies, training, etc.)
- Plan for turnovers / mentor people



# Infrastructure I

- Availability / affordability of housing
  - Mines purchased / lease homes, trailers, apartments
    - Services, tourists, professionals, low-income
  - Aging housing infrastructure
    - Private sector not reinvesting
  - Lack of social housing
- Aging recreational infrastructure
- Aging transportation infrastructure





# Infrastructure II

## Response:

- Planning ahead
  - Avoid forecasts skewed by “proposed” projects
  - Cheaper to work with existing infrastructure
  - Diversify housing stock
- Industry investments / agreements
  - With hotels / apartments
  - Camp policies



# Services I

- Decline in funding
- Services lost are not regained
- Increased demands for services
  - Transient population creates more pressure
  - Unprepared and unemployed workers



## Services II

- Lack of daycare
- Temporary residence status to access services
  - (i.e. library, recreation pass, etc.)
- Changing expectations
  - Integrated / shared model
  - Business model
- Response: Central Interior Community Services Co-op



# Communication I

- Stakeholder organizations / committees
  - Leaders Moving Forward
  - Social Planning Council
- MOU with First Nations communities
- But.....
  
- Conversations not initiated with mines
  - Uncertain how to develop relationships with industry
- Limited effort to assess what is needed for workers and their families



“We really have not clearly explored what the family composition is. **We have talked about the labour market, but we haven’t really talked about the families**, who’s coming and who’s going. What are the demographic characteristics of the mining community? That would be very helpful to know. Then we can design services that are fitting for them and be able to put the pitch forward.”



## Communication II

- International labour not aware of purpose of services / programs
- No proactive approach to reach workers
  - Meetings / presentations at mine / HR departments
  - Providing business / service profiles



# Operations

- Limited hours of operation



“Because of shift work, people can’t attend something that is static. It’s difficult to address that problem. **How do you offer programs to people who don’t have consistent days off** because of their work schedule? Trying to meet people when and where they’re available is a challenge in a small community because people just end up being on call which is tricky.”





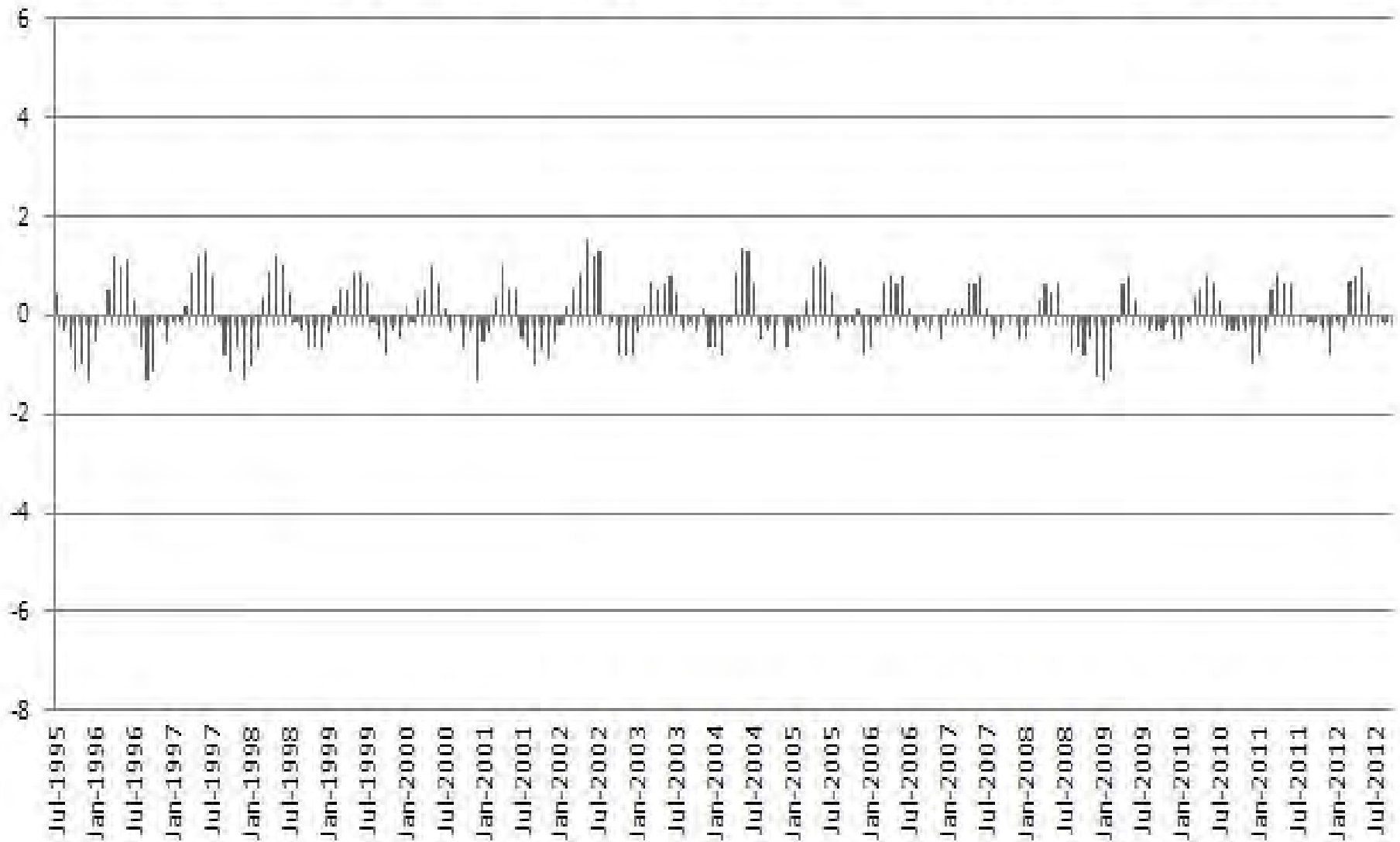
# Operations

## The New Normal:

- Complexity of operations
  - Multiple stakeholders
  - Multiple levels of government
  - Staying on track
- Uncertainty
- Responding simultaneously to boom and busts of different sectors

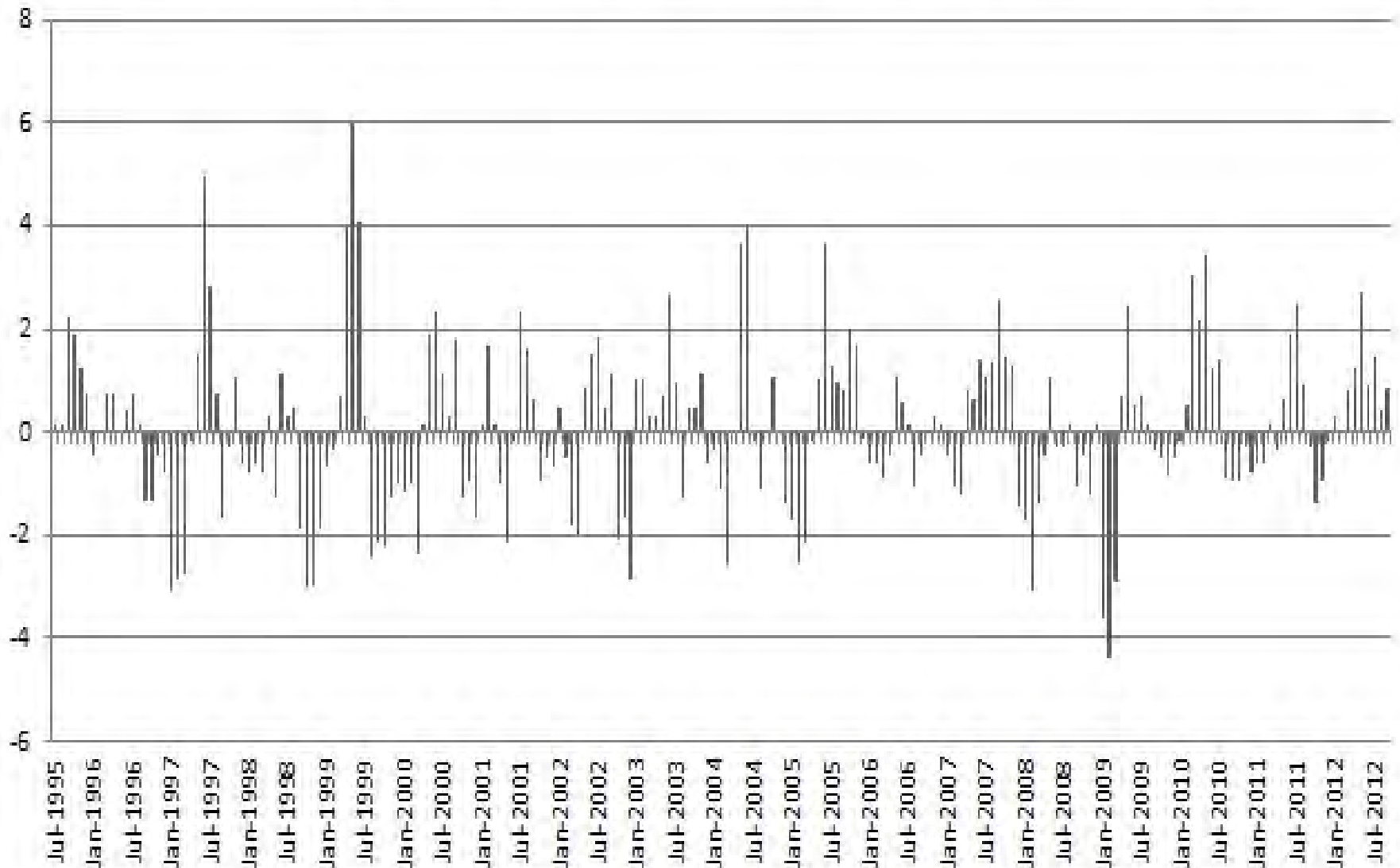
**Figure 2: British Columbia**

Percent change in employment rate compared to previous month (3 month moving average)



# Figure 1: Cariboo Economic Region, British Columbia

Percent change in employment rate compared to previous month (3 month moving average)





# Organizational Culture

- Resistance to change
  - Degree of resignation
- Outdated mandates
  - Organizational roles not renewed
  - No clear / conflicting vision
- Loss of relevance
- Revisit / renew mandate, roles, expertise, policies, procedures, tools



# Collaboration I

- Cooperation can be scattered
  - Conflicting schedules
  - Difficult to move from sharing information to action
  - Lack of stable resources to support collaboration
- Different expectations



## Collaboration II

- Spend time getting to know your partners' capacities to avoid frustration
- Ensure responsibilities / resources fairly distributed
- Building the capacity of your partners
  - Pursue joint training / development



# Looking Forward

- Mobile workforces re-shaping labour environment across many sectors
- Need to understand how these new labour arrangements impact organizational operations
- Look to build long-term capacities and assets

The logo for UNBC Community Development Institute is located in the top left corner. It consists of a teal circle containing three smaller images: a modern building with a curved facade, a glass-walled structure, and a building with a green roof. To the right of the circle, the text 'UNBC Community Development Institute' is written in a bold, teal, sans-serif font.

**UNBC** Community Development Institute

3333 University Way  
Prince George, BC, Canada  
V2N 4Z9

<http://www.unbc.ca/cdi>

**On the Move Partnership Project**

<http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca>