
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

CHINA TRADE MISSION ENDS SUCCESSFULLY

TOKYO – British Columbia’s largest ever forestry trade mission to China ended on a high note with new orders to close off another record-breaking sales year, announced Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell.

“Companies participating in the China mission estimate they have generated sales of 156 million board feet of lumber to China for November and December,” said Bell. “We’re on track to hit 1.5 million board feet this year, roughly double last year’s record. If we keep our focus, we can reach 4 billion board feet by the end of 2011.”

Recent figures for January to August 2009 show that British Columbia exported 975 million board feet of softwood products to China, well over the record 784 million board feet exported in all of 2008.

Key site visits for delegates on the trade mission included a China National Building Materials warehouse at the Taicang Port in Shanghai, re-roofing projects, remanufacturing facilities using B.C. hemlock and spruce-pine-fir, and a recreational housing development outside Beijing. Tour delegates also participated in events to launch a new wood-frame construction building code for Shanghai and to celebrate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Shanghai to use wood-frame construction in affordable housing.

Bell and forest industry CEOs also attended a key meeting with the Vice Minister of China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the central government body responsible for the nation’s residential construction, including earthquake redevelopment. Afterward, Bell and the CEOs visited the China International Exhibit on Housing Industry, China’s largest building materials trade event. Other trade mission delegates met with officials to discuss Hebei Province’s re-roofing projects, the largest use of wood truss systems in China to date, and the potential use of wood-frame technology in other applications.

“Forest industry delegates were able to build on previous business contacts and make some new contacts on the trade mission,” said Rick Jeffery, Chair, Canada Wood Group. “Some of the biggest market opportunities we see lie in rural and urban affordable housing, including the mid-rise structures that will be part of the affordable housing MOU. Companies are seeing real growth in structural, landscape and finishing use of B.C. wood products, and a clear increase in the grades and value of products being sought by our Chinese customers.”

The Province through Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd. and in conjunction with the Canada Wood Group has been working over the last several years to diversify B.C.'s markets by demonstrating new uses for softwood products.

After spending four days in China, Bell and industry delegates are in Japan for two days before returning to B.C. Photos from the trade mission are available online in the Ministry of Forests and Range media room www.for.gov.bc.ca/pab/media/.

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