



*New Alternate
Richard Williams*



*New Director
Cecil Brown*

NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR LABOUR MARKET

You probably will be hearing some talk about our local labour market this month. That's because the Gwaii Trust, along with several partner organizations, is undertaking a new labour market survey to tell us more about what kind of employees local employers want to hire, what kind of jobs there will be on Haida Gwaii in the future, and what kind of careers, skills and training islanders are interested in.

This kind of information is vital for our islands communities. We all know that our population has been declining over the past 20 years, with younger residents and families moving away, often for better job opportunities or education. We also know that, despite the relatively high rate of unemployment here, local employers are sometimes unable to find qualified local applicants to fill job vacancies. Going forward, we're hoping to help build a healthy local economy that can provide good jobs and training opportunities for all residents. It's not an easy task, but the first thing we need is solid information about what our labour market looks like right now.

From previous studies we know that the islands have had, for many years, a mainly resource-based economy, with forestry playing the main role. But as opportunities for logging are reduced, marine tourism and other marine-based sectors are becoming more important. Government services are also significant, providing more than one-third of all jobs on Haida Gwaii. We also know much of the work available on-island is part-time and seasonal. Once we gain a clearer picture of the local labour market, we will examine what kind of partnerships and capacity building can help build a stable population and sustainable economy on Haida Gwaii.

Our partners in this exciting project are Hecate Strait Employment Development Services, the Marine Plan Partnership (the Council of the Haida Nation and the province of BC), Gwaalagaa Naay Corporation, Old Massett Village Council and HaiCo. Together, we've hired local facilitator Co+Host. The Co+Host team will be gathering information this month through interviews and surveys, talking to

as many major employers, small businesses and individual islanders as possible. Your answers and knowledge are valuable, and islanders are warmly encouraged to participate in this survey. We need to hear from a wide range of people to make sure we gain a clear understanding of labour force and training needs. And while the results of the study will be made public, all individual information will be kept confidential.

For part two of the labour market study, we've hired Vancouver-based Operations Economics Inc. They will be analyzing the data collected in part one, identifying skills and training gaps, and producing a thorough report that will include strategies and an action plan.

Meanwhile, the Gwaii Trust board has welcomed two new directors. Cecil Brown will be representing the Old Massett Village Council as a director, and Richard Williams will be his alternate. A heartfelt thank you to the previous director and alternate for Old Massett Village Council, Lisa Bell and Ken Rea, for their contributions to the board.