

# Newcomers' Guide to VANDERHOOF



the *heart*  
of it all

*An introduction to  
Vanderhoof for newcomers,  
new immigrants and  
prospective businesses.*



*Janice - Volunteer Ambassador*

About the Newcomers' Guide.....i  
 Welcome Message.....1  
 Good Neighbours Committee .....1  
 Location and Access.....2  
 Government Services.....3  
 Services for Businesses.....4  
 Professional Services .....5  
 Retail and Hospitality .....5  
 Trades and Manufacturing.....5  
 Education and Daycare .....6  
 Community Services and Clubs.....7  
 Health Care Services .....8  
 Supportive and Assisted Housing.....9  
 Sports and Recreation .....10  
 Arts, History and Culture .....11  
 Media and Internet Services.....12  
 Environment .....12  
 Newcomers' Check List .....13  
 Contact Numbers.....13

Reg, Sarah & Lan - Volunteer Ambassadors



## ABOUT THE NEWCOMERS' GUIDE

This newcomers' guide is intended to give an overview of the services, resources, and economy of Vanderhoof and area for people who are:

- new to the community and come from outside of British Columbia and/or Canada.
- considering moving to our area.
- considering starting a new business in our area.

There are a number of resources available to further assist newcomers to Vanderhoof:

- The **Community Resource Guide** provides more detailed information on the topics covered in this guide, and has a complete listing of businesses and services offered in Vanderhoof.
- **Translation services** are available in a number of languages.
- **Volunteer Ambassadors** provide support and assistance to visitors, newcomers, new immigrants and new businesses to the Vanderhoof area by being available to answer questions. Volunteer Ambassadors also act as greeters, hosts and hostesses for visiting delegations, promote Vanderhoof and the Stuart Nechako Region as a good place to live and do business, and support other volunteers and community members who promote our community.

Contact the **Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce** for a copy of the Community Resource Guide, translation services, or to be connected with a Volunteer Ambassador:

Phone: 250-567-2124 or 1-800-752-4094  
 Location: 2325 Burrard Street  
 Mail: PO Box 126, Vanderhoof, BC, V0J 3A0  
 Email: [admin@vanderhoofchamber.com](mailto:admin@vanderhoofchamber.com)  
 Website: [www.vanderhoofchamber.com](http://www.vanderhoofchamber.com)

## WELCOME MESSAGE

As Mayor of Vanderhoof, I welcome you, the new resident, new immigrant, or new business to our community.

Vanderhoof is a welcoming and inclusive community, known for its friendly residents and reputation for being a great place to live, raise a family and do business. We pride ourselves on the “Vanderhoof Advantage,” building on the strengths of our people, their work ethic and our collaborative spirit.

The District of Vanderhoof, as part of the Good Neighbours Committee, is an organization that is here to serve the needs of residents and businesses alike. We will promote the community, facilitating a positive environment for existing businesses and residents, as well as encouraging new business development, immigration from other parts of Canada and around the world. We will continue to advocate for new and improved local infrastructure, and establish programs and partnerships that contribute to a sustainable and diversified economy and population.

With growth in industry in the Stuart Nechako Region, we are the **“heart of it all”** offering affordable housing, reasonable tax rates, great education, superior health services, access to government services and a strong retail and service sector. We are rich in culture, history, natural resources and are home to a range of year round recreational opportunities.

Located on Highway 16 at the Geographical Centre of the Province, we are an ideal spot to raise a family, operate a business or, if you are ready, to retire! Please read through this information brochure for an introduction to our community, and contact us if you would like to learn more.

*Sincerely, Mayor Gerry Thiessen*

## GOOD NEIGHBOURS COMMITTEE

The **Good Neighbours Committee** is a partnership of the District of Vanderhoof, Saik’uz First Nation, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, College of New Caledonia, School District #91, Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Club. The Good Neighbours Committee’s mission is to have a society where racist behaviour is unacceptable and mutual respect between individuals is honoured. This group developed the **Community Accord** that declares Vanderhoof as a “welcoming and inclusive community”. They have been working on various projects to support this declaration. For more information go to the Good Neighbours Committee website: [www.goodneighbours.wordpress.com](http://www.goodneighbours.wordpress.com).

*“Vanderhoof is located in the heart of the province of British Columbia, and is home to a diversity of people and cultures, social services and clubs, and business and recreational opportunities.”*



*Gerry - Mayor*

## LOCATION AND ACCESS

Vanderhoof, the geographical centre of the province of British Columbia, the western most province of Canada, is situated in the Stuart Nechako Region in traditional Saik'uz First Nation territorial lands. Saik'uz First Nation Reserve, or Stoney Creek, is 15km south of Vanderhoof. Vanderhoof is located between the communities of Fraser Lake and Fort St James, offering a variety of services and amenities to these communities and the surrounding area.

Being situated on **Highway 16**, approximately 100km west of Prince George and 620km east of Prince Rupert, we offer easy highway access to the CN Intermodal Port in Prince George, the Prince George International Airport, as well as the Port of Prince Rupert. **CN and Via Rail** travel through our community providing both passenger service and cargo shipping. **Greyhound Bus** has a depot in Vanderhoof that also provides regularly scheduled passenger and freight service north to Fort St James, and east and west along Highway 16.

**Vanderhoof Airport** boasts a new 1,524m asphalt runway, runway lighting, GPS, an automated weather station, and an aircraft tracking system. A local aviation business provides charter services, flight training, aircraft maintenance, aircraft structural repair, welding and fabricating services. We also have the benefit of a **helicopter service** and a **float plane base** offering easy access to remote areas for industry, business and tourists alike.



## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Our local **Municipal Office** provides a range of services to our community including public works, recreation programs and economic development along with a local building inspection service and other easily accessible administrative services.

Vanderhoof is a part of Rural Area F of the **Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako** (RDBN). RDBN provides services to Vanderhoof residents including waste management and regional economic benefit initiatives as well as providing funds for equipment, renovations and new construction related to St. John Hospital through the Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District.

The **Saik'uz First Nation Band Office** provides government services to their community.

*“Vanderhoof is the centre of the province, and the hub for government services in the Stuart Nechako Region, providing support for industry, business and people.”*



*Arlen - Forest Protection*

In addition to a local **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** detachment and Canada Post Office, the Federal Government provides a myriad of services from the Vanderhoof **Service Canada Office** including Employment Insurance, Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Social Insurance Numbers, Pleasure Craft Licences etc.

A number of **Provincial Government Offices** are located in Vanderhoof: Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; Ministry of Labour, Citizen's Services and Open Government; Ministry of Child and Family Development; Ministry of Social Development; Community Corrections; Court Services; Motor Vehicle Branch; Conservation Office; Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; and Weigh Scales.

**Service BC** has a location in Vanderhoof and is a source for frontline government services and information. It delivers hundreds of programs and services to residents, businesses and visitors in person, online or over the phone.

Our **Member of the Legislation Assembly (MLA)** maintains an office in Vanderhoof for local area constituents.

### Relevant Government Related Websites

District of Vanderhoof: [www.vanderhoof.ca](http://www.vanderhoof.ca)

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako: [www.rdbn.bc.ca](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca)

Service BC: [www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/about\\_servicebc/](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/about_servicebc/)

Service Canada: [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca)

*“The wide range of business and professional services available in Vanderhoof are key to our economic sustainability.”*

## SERVICES FOR BUSINESSES

Vanderhoof’s local economy is driven by wood manufacturing, forestry, government services and agriculture. However, tourism and mining are expected to play a much larger role in the years to come. The **District of Vanderhoof** updated the Community Profile in 2010, which provides valuable information about our economy, demographics and local business structure that is useful to potential business investors. This report and other business related information (business licences, bylaws, utility services etc.) can be accessed on the Municipal website, or by contacting the Economic Development Officer at 250-567-4711.

The **Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce** offers a myriad of programs and services to businesses in Vanderhoof, such as business related tips, workshops and seminars.

**Community Futures Development Corporation of Stuart Nechako** (Community Futures) has their main office in Vanderhoof. Staff provide business counseling and financial support to new and existing businesses.

**Progressive Employment Services Ltd.**, and the **Work Zone**, with funding through the Province of British Columbia, provides financial support and advice to new entrepreneurs who are defined as unemployed. Their offices in Vanderhoof provide assistance with resume writing, skills enhancement, and self-employment.



*Kathie - Economic Development Officer*

### Relevant Business Related Websites

District of Vanderhoof: [www.vanderhoof.ca](http://www.vanderhoof.ca)

Chamber of Commerce: [www.vanderhoofchamber.com](http://www.vanderhoofchamber.com)

Community Futures: [www.cf-sn.ca](http://www.cf-sn.ca)

Progressive Employment: [www.pesl.ca/index/resources.html](http://www.pesl.ca/index/resources.html)

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The community of Vanderhoof offers a range of professional services. **Environmental Services:** Forestry consulting firms, archaeological consultants, veterinarians, biologists, surveyors and those specializing in environmental assessments. **Financial and Legal:** Property appraiser, bookkeeping and accounting firms, lawyers, notary public, financial advisors and lending institutions.

## RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY

Our **retail sector** is diverse and thriving. We have a range of stores that sell supplies for work, home or industry, including work-wear and casual clothing, groceries, hardware and building supplies, furniture, paint and decorating supplies, and sporting goods. There are convenience stores, fueling stations and car washes, real estate agents and insurance brokers, an industrial expediting company, photography studios, media and design services, farm and industry suppliers and everything in between. There are several hotels and motels, restaurants, catering businesses, and meeting room facilities to service corporate **conferences and gatherings**.



*Frank - Archaeologist*

## TRADES AND MANUFACTURING

Vanderhoof is home to several **manufacturers and fabricators** that supply goods around the globe. These include sawmills, planer mills and value added wood products plants such as wood pellets, post and poles, and finger-jointed lumber. In addition there are sheet metal fabricators, furniture and cabinet makers, and a log trailer and light equipment manufacturer.

Vanderhoof offers a full assortment of **trade businesses** that serve both home and industry. Everything from welding, machining, mechanical and heavy duty repair, plumbing, heating, electrical, carpentry, excavating, traffic control, road construction and excavating, bulk fuel, trucking, concrete finishing, aircraft maintenance and more.



*Luis - Welder*

## EDUCATION AND DAYCARE

The **School District #91 Board office** is responsible for the administration of five elementary schools, and one high school in the Vanderhoof area. In addition there are continuing education and career preparation programs, French immersion, special education programming and the very popular **EBUS** program that provides electronic access to education for students from all parts of the globe. There are also several private schools in and around Vanderhoof.

The **College of New Caledonia-Nechako Campus** offers a variety of academic, general interest and trades training. A new offering in 2011 is the Aviation Business Diploma program that will attract those interested in combining a business administration degree with a commercial pilot's license. It is anticipated that not only will this program draw new students to our community but will also encourage aviation related businesses to consider locating here.

We have several private and government supported **pre-schools and daycares**, including StrongStart BC Outreach sites offering free, drop-in early learning programs for pre-schoolers accompanied by a parent or caregiver.

The **Vanderhoof Public Library** has books, DVDs and CDs for loan. The Mary John Collection consists of 800 books on First Nations related topics, and the Bill Silver Collection is a digitized archive of the local weekly newspapers from 1920 to 1983.

Charlyne - Coordinator



Lori - Teacher

*“Living in Vanderhoof is a rich experience, with many opportunities to learn through direct education, community groups and clubs, or volunteering.”*



## HOUSING AND PROPERTIES

A 2011 residential assessment concluded that Vanderhoof is well positioned to meet the anticipated demand for **residential housing** in the next 5–10 years with an estimated 700 residential building lots available based on existing supply and subdivision plans that are in the works. The average selling price for a residence in 2010 was \$167,416, which is very affordable when compared to other communities in Northern BC and the Province as a whole.

This same study indicates that there is a 10% vacancy rate in **rental accommodations** (excluding hotels/motels) as of 2011. The average gross monthly rental rate was \$603 according to the 2006 Census.

We are fortunate to be well served by **real estate representatives** in our community including the traditional firms that are affiliated with the Multiple Listing Service across Canada and the United States, as well as services that help you sell your own property.



*Kiff - Carpenter*

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CLUBS

Vanderhoof has some very energetic and enthusiastic **volunteers and volunteer service groups**. The Elks Club, Kinsmen and Kinettes hold fund raising events each year to raise money for those in need, as well as community projects, scholarships etc. Other service groups and organizations include the Knights of Columbus, Masons, Order of the Eastern Star, Women's Institute, Vanderhoof Community for Kids, various churches and church youth groups, Royal Canadian Air Cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides, and 4-H.

Vanderhoof is home to a range of **clubs and societies** that cover all aspects of community life. They include sporting and recreation, games, arts, crafts and theatre, culture and history, book clubs, women's groups, and groups dedicated to local sustainability, nature and the environment.

*“Vanderhoof offers a wide range of health care services, as well as access to an array of social services and supportive and assisted living facilities.”*

## HEALTH CARE SERVICES

We are very proud of the extensive health care services available in our community. **St. John Hospital** has 24 acute care beds. Services include a 24-hour emergency room, anesthetics and obstetrics with C-section capability as well as extensive surgical services including minor orthopedic, plastic, urological, ear, nose and throat, and general surgeries. Other specialty services include x-ray, laboratory, in-patient recreation, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and oncology. In addition, 24-hour ambulance services are provided by **BC Ambulance**.

The **Omineca Medical Clinic** offers a full range of medical care and specialty services. The clinic has a Group Appointment room, unique to the area, that provides patients the opportunity to meet with a doctor for a prolonged session to ask questions in a safe and friendly group environment.

The **Northern Health Authority Health Unit** provides public health services including drug and alcohol counseling services, mental health counseling for adults, prenatal and parenting classes, home visits for newborns, immunizations, health education, vision screening in schools, hearing testing for newborns, heart health and diabetes education, speech and physical therapy for children.

There are a number of **private practitioners** such as dentists, chiropractors, massage therapists, physiotherapists, and pharmacists, as well as health food and holistic health service providers in our community.

**Carrier Sekani Family Services**, with the guidance of First Nations Elders, is committed to the healing and empowerment of Aboriginal families by taking direct responsibilities for: health, social and legal services for First Nations people residing in Carrier and Sekani territory.



*Davy - Anesthesiology and Family Practice*

## SUPPORTIVE AND ASSISTED HOUSING

The **Stuart Nechako Manor** is a care facility attached to St John Hospital providing full-time resident care, therapeutic and medical services, a Snoezelin room, respite services and a hospice suite.

**Riverside Place** provides modified rental apartments to seniors and/or people with disabilities who need some assistance to live independently. There are both assisted living and supportive housing units.

The **Nechako View Senior Citizen's Home Society** offers affordable self-care living units for senior citizens in Vanderhoof.

The **Omineca Safe Home Society** provides accommodation in supportive housing complexes to women and children fleeing abusive situations. In addition they offer crisis counseling and education.

**BC Housing** manages an apartment complex and other residences for low income families.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Vanderhoof provides a range of services related to the social needs of the community, including:

- The **Nechako Valley Community Services Society** provides a variety of programs including: life trauma counseling; care workers for children at risk; mental health services for victims of sexual abuse; fetal alcohol outreach; youth justice; victim's assistance workers; home support workers.
- The **Omineca Lakes Mental Health and Addictions Services** offers support for individuals and families affected by mental health and addiction issues, and provides outreach to schools and other groups.
- Other social support groups include Alcoholics Anonymous, NeighbourLink (food bank, thrift shop and community lunch), Hospice Society, Vanderhoof Stroke Recovery Club, Special Needs Parent's Support Group, and Success by Six.



*Valerie - Occupational Therapist*

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

Our community's **recreational facilities** are diverse and include:

- The Vanderhoof Arena that is home to numerous hockey leagues, figure skating and speed skating through the winter months.
- The Nechako Valley Exhibition Grounds and riding arena offers access to equestrian and agricultural recreational opportunities. In addition, the Exhibition Society hosts the annual Nechako Valley Exhibition.
- The Nechako Valley Sporting Association has clubs in cross country skiing, biathlon, hand-gun sports, archery, and trapshooting.
- A sports field and track capable of hosting provincial level competitions in soccer, rugby, football and track and field.
- Bike Park that provides challenging courses for bikers of all ages.
- Other venues include an 18 hole golf course, spray park, bowling alley, curling club, tennis courts, ball diamonds, fitness clubs, squash and racquetball courts.
- Murray Ridge in Fort St. James is a short drive from Vanderhoof and offers excellent downhill skiing.
- A committee is exploring the feasibility of an aquatic centre for Vanderhoof.



Nicole - Equestrian

*“Art, culture, physical talent and sport abound in Vanderhoof through our performing and visual arts, music, crafts and recreational opportunities.”*

**Outdoor enthusiasts** will enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, canoeing, swimming, tubing along the beautiful Nechako River that runs through Vanderhoof, and on the many lakes, rivers and Provincial Parks close by. **Riverside Park and Migratory Bird Sanctuary** offer exceptional bird watching opportunities in the spring and fall.

The **Vanderhoof Community Trails** is a network of walking trails through the community. A local Nature Guide and self-guided Tour Cards in a range of topics are available at the Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre.

## ARTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Arts Unlimited** offers the opportunity to learn, create and showcase visual art from pottery and sculpture to canvas paintings and photography.

Our community is rich with a talented array of **music** groups from country and blue grass to gospel, rock and folk, as well as award winning choirs and the **Northern Orchestra**. In addition, the **Nechako Valley Concert Committee** arranges for a variety of musical performers to come to our community each year.

The performing arts are big in Vanderhoof. **Dance** classes include ballet, ballroom, belly dancing, tap, square dancing and more. Sell-out crowds are drawn to **theatre** in our community with a very active children's theatre group, a community theatre group and many school productions.

**Arts and crafts** including quilting, scrapbooking and more are available at various venues in the community.

In the centre of Vanderhoof is the movie theatre that offers regular showings of recently released films. In addition, **Reel Alternatives** shows a variety of non-mainstream films throughout the year.

The **Vanderhoof Community Museum** showcases, restores, and maintains a typical 1920's village and offers seasonal restaurant service that bakes some of the world's best homemade pies. The museum also has an extensive collection of artifacts. The **Hobson History Museum** will open in 2011, and will offer an extensive look into the lives of US Rear Admiral Richmond Hobson and his son and local legend Rich Hobson.

The **Saik'uz First Nation** provides opportunities to increase the awareness and understanding of their Dakelh (Carrier) traditions through events hosted at their Potlatch House, and performances by the Stoney Creek Dancers.

Vanderhoof is home to a number of faith communities that practice in 20 **churches** in and around Vanderhoof.

Culture, dance and art are highlighted during the **Canada Day celebrations** held at the Vanderhoof Community Museum each year.



*Florence - Saik'uz Elder and craftsperson*



*Asha - Dancer*

*“Vanderhoof may be a small town, but here you will find current technology, media and communications, and forward thinkers dedicated to sustainable living for our community.”*

## MEDIA AND INTERNET SERVICES

Businesses have several avenues for advertising in Vanderhoof: on the **radio** with The Valley Wolf; or in **print publications** including the Omineca Express newspaper, the Gander, and Northern Light publications. Graphic design, web development and sign printing services are also available here. Vanderhoof is home to internet, cable and satellite businesses, as well as computer technical support and home and business networking services.

**Free internet access** is availability at various locations in Vanderhoof.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Nechako Healthy Community Alliance is one of many groups in Vanderhoof that support initiatives aimed at **healthy living** including waste reduction, local food networks, community gardens. Through the Nechako Waste Reduction Initiative, there are **recycling facilities** for paper products, bottles and milk jugs, tin cans, and batteries directly in town, as well as opportunities to recycle other materials.

Groups leading the way for a more **sustainable community and ecosystem** include the Farmers’ Market, the Nechako Valley Land and Water Stewardship Society, Nechako Valley Food Network, and the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative.



*Trinda - Nechako Waste Reduction Initiative*

# NEWCOMERS' CHECK LIST

- ❑ **Apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN).** Go to Service Canada at 189 Stewart Street East.
- ❑ **Register for the Medical Services Plan (MSP).** Go to Service BC at 189 Stewart Street East. They have application forms and will help you to submit appropriate paperwork. NOTE: You will not have MSP for at least 3 months. Be sure to buy private medical insurance for that time.
- ❑ **Open a bank account.** Vanderhoof has 2 banks and 1 Credit Union to serve you.
- ❑ **Buy insurance for your home and belongings.** There are two insurance brokers in Vanderhoof.
- ❑ **Apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit for children under 18 years old.** To apply call 1-800-387-1193, go to the Service Canada Office, or go to the website: [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca).
- ❑ **Register your children in school.** The School District #91 office is located at 153 Connaught Street. They will assist you in registering your children at a school in your area.
- ❑ **Get a BC Drivers License.** You must apply for a BC Drivers License within 90 days of arriving in BC. Contact Hub International Barton Insurance in the Co-op Mall (188 Stewart Street East) for more information.
- ❑ **Arrange for a Post Office Box or Rural Route Delivery.** The Canada Post Office is located at 192 Stewart Street West.
- ❑ **British Columbia Newcomers' Guide.** The provincial Newcomers' Guide is available at this website: <http://www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/immigration/diversity/newcomers/index.page>.

Police .....250-567-2222  
 Ambulance .....1-800-461-9911  
 Fire .....250-567-2345  
 Omineca Medical Clinic.....250-567-2201  
 St. John Hospital.....250-567-2211  
 Public Health Unit.....250-567-6900  
 District of Vanderhoof.....250-567-4711  
 Saik'uz First Nation .....250-567-9293

Chamber of Commerce  
 & Visitor Centre.....250-567-2124  
 School District #91 .....250-567-2284  
 College of New Caledonia ...250-567-3200  
 Adult Learning Centre .....250-567-4744  
 Vanderhoof Public Library...250-567-4060  
 Ministry of Employment  
 & Income Assistance.....1-866-866-0800  
 O Canada .....1-800-622-6232

CONTACT  
 NUMBERS

Further resources available at the Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce:

## COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR TRANSLATION SERVICES



For further information, please contact:

### THE DISTRICT OF VANDERHOOF

160 Connaught Street  
PO Box 900, Vanderhoof, BC, V0J 3A0  
Phone: 250-567-4711  
Fax: 250-567-9169

*Economic Development Officer:* Kathie LaForge  
Email: [edo@district.vanderhoof.ca](mailto:edo@district.vanderhoof.ca)

Website: [www.vanderhoof.ca](http://www.vanderhoof.ca)

### VANDERHOOF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2353 Burrard Avenue  
PO Box 126, Vanderhoof, BC, V0J 3A0  
Phone: 250-567-2124 Toll Free: 1-800-752-4094  
Fax: 250-567-3316

*Office Manager:* Erin Siemens  
Email: [manager@vanderhoofchamber.com](mailto:manager@vanderhoofchamber.com)

Website: [www.vanderhoofchamber.com](http://www.vanderhoofchamber.com)

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