

For immediate release.....

New Women's Resource Sector Network to support opportunities for women in Canada's resource sector

October 20, 2008 – Courtenay, BC - In response to the success of the first three Women of Resource Communities Conferences held in Parksville (2005), 100 Mile House (2006) and Kamloops (2007), the Women's Resource Sector Network was recently formed to foster cooperation and collaborative opportunities for women within and between resource industries and sectors.

"The Women of Resource Communities Conferences have been a great venue for women working in resource industries like aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, oil and gas, other related sectors and all levels of government; or for women who live in resource-based communities to meet and learn from each other," said Barb Walker, president of First Dollar Alliance, and conference co-organizer.

The Women's Resource Sector Network (WRSN), founded with seed funding from First Dollar Alliance, will help to nurture these connections through an online community, and hosting regional events and conferences.

"I am delighted that we are able to continue to build on what we have started with the Women of Resource Communities Conference," said Catherine Egan, WRSN President. "The conferences demonstrated a real interest and need for women involved in our diverse resource-based economy to have a common place to share in lessons learned, and to help mentor others."

The Women's Resource Sector Network will be guided by the following objectives:

- Networking – To offer networking opportunities for women in but not limited to agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, habitat management, mining, oil and gas, tourism and other related service industries, academia, all levels of government and First Nations.
- Mentorship - To encourage mentorship and empower more women to become effective leaders at work, and in their communities. As well as promote avenues of opportunities for women interested in careers in the resource sectors.
- Education - To support and promote education, training and communication about the resource sector.
- Communication – To enhance knowledge connectivity and exchange via a web-based information portal.



Barb Walker and Leanne Brunt of First Dollar Alliance present Catherine Egan and Linda Hiemstra of the Women's Resource Sector Network

"We encourage membership from all resource sectors, the different levels of government, First Nations and resource-based communities, and related associations," said Linda Hiemstra, WRSN Vice-President, "as well as welcoming women who have an interest in resource-based economies, mentorship and education."

As founding board members, Claire Thomson, Senior Director of Knowledge and Information Resources at the Mining Association of BC, Madeline Maley, RPF, Regional Staff Manager with the Southern Interior Region of the Ministry of Forests and Range, and Leanne Brunt with First Dollar Alliance bring a wealth of experience, skills and networks to the association.

"The Women of Resource Communities Conferences have provided a wonderful venue for learning and sharing of experiences and knowledge," said Jessica McIlroy, Project Director at the Ocean Renewable Energy Group and a presenter at the 2007 Conference. "The time spent with other women in the resource sector is always empowering, and I look forward to involvement with the Network to keep those connections alive and growing."

The 2007 Conference also introduced the first "Outstanding Resource Women of Honour Awards" where nine women were recognized for their contributions to their industry and community.

On Thursday, November 27th at the Coast Discovery in Campbell River between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm the first WRSN "Meet & Greet Mixer" will be held to official launch the new organization. For more information on the Women's Resource Sector Network, to find out how to join, to view last year's award recipients visit www.wrsn.org and/or for details or to RSVP for the November 27th "Meet & Greet" call 250-338-2492.

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Photo caption:
Barb Walker and Leanne Brunt of First Dollar Alliance present Catherine Egan and Linda Hiemstra of the Women's Resource Sector Network with a cheque for \$7000 as seed funding for the new network.