

Assessing the Scale of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC

Summary Report

Prepared by Laura Ryser, Alike Rajput, Greg Halseth, and Sean Markey



**Community Development Institute
University of Northern British Columbia**

August 2012

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Acknowledgements	3
Availability	4
Project Reports	4
Contact Information	4
1.0 Project Description	5
2.0 Methodology	5
3.0 Results	7
4.0 Summary	9
Appendix A: Tables	10
Appendix B: Information Letter	19
Appendix C: Community Survey	21

List of Tables

	Page Number
Table 1.1: Timeline	5
Table 2.1: Response rate	6
Table A1: Did any members of this household work out-of-town for an extended period of time following the 2008 mill closures in Mackenzie?	11
Table A2: If yes, describe the age of family member(s) who have worked out-of-town	11
Table A3: If yes, describe the gender of family member(s) who have worked out-of-town	11
Table A4: When did family member(s) begin to work out-of-town?	12
Table A5: Do any family member(s) continue to work out-of-town?	12
Table A6: Please specify when family member(s) stopped working out-of-town	12
Table A7: Where did the family member(s) go to work out-of-town?	13
Table A8: In what sector(s) did they work out-of-town?	14
Table A9: What type of shift schedule did they have?	15
Table A10: How has working out-of-town impacted your experiences in the community?	16

Acknowledgements

This past spring, our research team visited Mackenzie to conduct interviews and a household survey about the impacts of long distance labour commuting on various aspects of the community. We wish to thank all of the residents, community groups, business members, service providers, policy makers, and municipal staff who took the time to help out with this project and to answer our many questions. We were grateful for the in-kind support provided by the District of Mackenzie with the distribution of our household survey and for their assistance with the collection of returned surveys. In particular, we wish to thank Sheila McCutcheon, Anne Loewen, Judi Vander Maaten, and Kerri Borne for all of their help. We also wish to thank the following businesses and organizations for assisting us with the promotion of the survey, including the District of Mackenzie, the Mackenzie Times, 7-11, the Mackenzie Public Library, the Alexander Mackenzie Mall, Hummingbird and Friends, CHMM 103.5 FM, Canada Post, the Mackenzie Recreation Centre, the Ernie Bodin Centre, and the College of New Caledonia. We also wish to thank Pat Harris with the Mackenzie Mall Merchants Association for the in-kind support provided to set up tables to help residents complete and return household surveys.

Funding for this project was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Laura Ryser, Alika Rajput, Greg Halseth, and Sean Markey
Prince George
August 2012

Availability

Copies of this report have been provided to the Mackenzie Public Library, the College of New Caledonia, and the District of Mackenzie. Copies of the report have also been provided to all participants. Copies have also been posted on the UNBC Community Development Institute's website: www.unbc.ca/cdi.

Project Reports

- Hollowing Out the Community: Community Impacts of Extended Long Distance Labour Commuting
- Contrasting Pathways with Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC
- Long Distance Labour Commuting Contributions to Community Capacity in Mackenzie, BC
- Assessing the Scale and Scope of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC

Contact Information

For further information about this topic and the project, feel free to contact Greg Halseth, Director of UNBC's Community Development Institute.

Greg Halseth
Canada Research Chair of Rural and Small Town Studies
Professor, Geography Program
University of Northern BC
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC
V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-960-5826

Fax: 250-960-6533

E-mail: halseth@unbc.ca

Website: www.unbc.ca/cdi

Assessing the Scale of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC

1.0 Project Description

The town of Mackenzie is one of BC's 'instant towns', built in the late 1960s to house the workforce for a new regional forest industry. A significant economic downturn in Mackenzie beginning in early 2008 resulted in the closure of all major forest industry operations (sawmills and pulp and paper mills) in the community. As a result, many forest sector workers had to engage in long distance labour commuting (LDLC). For many of these workers, this was their first experience with LDLC practices.

This project provides the opportunity to explore the implications of LDLC on families and various aspects of the community that are impacted by sending workers to remote worksites for extended periods of time. Understanding the scale and social and economic impacts of LDLC is important if local leaders, businesses, service providers, and community groups are to strengthen the local capacity to cope with on-going change. This report focuses on the results from a household survey to assess the scale and scope of LDLC in Mackenzie.

Table 1.1: Timeline

April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNBC Research Ethics Board process completed.• Research team established.• Project logistics schedule completed.
May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household survey distributed.
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household survey responses collected.
July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed draft project reports.
August 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of draft reports by community partners.
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final reports completed and distributed.

2.0 Methodology

The data and information for this report was collected through a community household survey in May 2012.

Survey Implementation

The community household survey was distributed with the tax assessment notices in partnership with the District of Mackenzie in May 2012. A standard requirement for research conducted by UNBC is that the survey and methodology be reviewed by the university's Research Ethics Board. A key component to this protocol is to provide research participants with a copy of a cover letter (Appendix B) that outlines the purpose of the study, how the research process will protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and that their participation is voluntary.

The survey was administered both online and through a mail distribution of 1,537 household surveys (Appendix C). Residents were also given the opportunity to complete the survey by

visiting a booth that was set up in the Alexander Mackenzie Mall. Drop-off boxes were placed at the District of Mackenzie and the Mackenzie Recreation Centre where residents could return completed surveys. Survey responses were collected until June 22nd. In total, 633 surveys were completed.

Table 2.1: Response rate

Total completed surveys	633

Sample size	1,537
Response rate	41.2%

Source: District of Clearwater Seniors' Needs Survey 2012.

With a total of 633 completed surveys, the response rate was 41.2% (Table 2.1). When interpreting the survey results, it is important to keep in mind that responses are from a sample of the local population. There is always a level of 'sampling error' when you do not have results from every household. With 633 completed surveys, the sampling error for this work is between 2.4 and 4.1 percent, 19 times out of 20.

Questionnaire Content

The purpose of the household survey was to assess the scale and scope of LDLC in Mackenzie. This report assembles results from the community survey which captures key themes through each section of the research project. A detailed description of questions asked in each section is provided in Appendix C. In general, participants were asked questions about:

- their participation in LDLC,
- the demographic characteristics of commuters,
- the length of time that residents were engaged in working out-of-town,
- where they worked out-of-town,
- their sector of employment,
- their shift rotation schedule, and
- how LDLC impacted their community life and experiences.

The survey included both open and closed ended questions. Closed ended questions are those which provide a limited set of response categories and ask the respondent to choose the one most appropriate. For some closed ended questions, respondents were allowed to select all the response categories that applied. Open ended questions allow the respondent to answer in their own words.

Analysis

In general, the survey data reported here give totals for respondent answers to the various questions asked. Responses to closed ended questions were entered into an SPSS database. For open ended questions, a qualitative analysis was done to identify, code, and categorize themes from the data. Once themes were identified, responses were tallied. Qualitative tables consist of theme headings and sub-headings (Appendix A). The theme headings are bolded and have a numerical count beside them of the total number of comments received for that particular topic. Under each theme are sub-headings that are in plain, non-bolded font. Beside each sub-heading is a numerical count of the total number of respondents who raised a specific issue.

For example, in Table A8, participants were asked to identify the sector in which they worked in other communities. The most prominent theme was forestry. For example, while 13 respondents noted that they worked in the forestry sector in general, 6 respondents noted that they worked in a pulp and paper mill and another 4 respondents stated that they worked in the logging sector in other places. When all of the sub-heading comments are added up, the theme of working in the forestry sector was raised 44 times.

3.0 Survey Results

To assess the scale and scope of LDLC in Mackenzie, participants were asked a series of questions about their involvement, location, and experiences with out-of-town work. This part of the report describes the key themes that arose from each section of questions that were posed to the participants.

When respondents were asked if any member of their household worked out-of-town for an extended period of time following the 2008 mill closures in Mackenzie, almost 27% said ‘yes’ (Table A1). In fact, there were a number of households who had multiple household members engaged in LDLC. It is important to note that many of the remaining respondents who answered ‘no’ included former mill workers who took early retirement, as well as new residents who moved to the community following the re-opening of local mills and the opening of the Mount Milligan Mine. Other respondents who answered ‘no’ had no previous connections with the local forest industry.

When we asked respondents to describe the demographic characteristics of household members who were engaged in LDLC, a significant proportion were older workers 50 years of age and older (43.1%) (Table A2). An additional 29% were middle aged workers between 40 and 49 years of age, while another 28% were under 40 years of age. In terms of gender, approximately 85% of the family members who worked out-of-town were male (Table A3).

Just over half (55%) of the family members identified as LDLC workers began to work out-of-town in 2008 when the mills closed in Mackenzie, with an additional 17% of LDLC workers beginning their work out-of-town during the following year (Table A4). Of interest, however, is that almost 10% of the LDLC workers in our study had already been commuting out-of-town for work prior to the 2008 mill closures. When asked if their family members are continuing to

work out-of-town, approximately 40% said ‘yes’ (Table A5). Amongst those who said ‘no’, 32% of the LDLC workers in our study returned to work in Mackenzie in 2010 (Table A6). In this context, roughly 18% of LDLC workers returned to work in Mackenzie in 2009. An additional 17% of LDLC workers returned to work in the community in 2011. It is important to note, however, that approximately 21% of the LDLC workers in our sample had ‘other’ cited reasons for their return to Mackenzie due to job losses, retirement, or temporary breaks from out-of-town work.

Respondents were also asked to identify the locations of places where their family members had commuted for out-of-town work (Table A7). Overall, the most prominent locations were within British Columbia and Alberta. Popular destinations for out-of-town workers in BC included places across the Peace River Region, Prince George, and the Kootenays. In Alberta, many of the LDLC workers in our sample had commuted to places such as Fort McMurray and Grand Prairie. LDLC workers in our study were predominantly employed in three key sectors, including forestry, oil and gas, and mining (Table A8). However, there were also a number of individuals who worked out-of-town in various trades, construction, transportation, and community services.

When asked to describe the shift rotation schedule of LDLC workers in their household, most respondents noted shorter shift rotation schedules (Table A9). In such circumstances, these workers were out-of-town for less than one week at a time. While many respondents expressed that they prefer shorter shift rotation schedules, there were concerns about the time and costs incurred with the more frequent need to travel between home and the job site. However, more than sixty respondents had family members who engaged with longer shift rotation schedules. In fact, fifty-two of the larger rotation schedules listed had family members who were required to work out-of-town for two weeks or more at a time.

Finally, respondents were asked to describe how LDLC impacted their experiences in the community (Table A10). The most prominent issue discussed by respondents was the impact that LDLC had on their family. As workers engaged in LDLC, they were able to spend less time with their spouse and children, and, at times, this led to a strain on family relationships. Respondents also talked about the impact that LDLC had on their community engagement as workers missed community events, could no longer participate in community groups, or became disconnected from the community. Some respondents also noted that it had an impact on their friendships as they had less time to spend with friends. Recreational opportunities that once provided social interaction and a venue to relieve stress were also reduced for both workers and their family members due to time constraints and fewer financial resources. There were also several emotional impacts on the workers themselves and their families, such as worker fatigue, stress, and loneliness. Some also noted that LDLC impacted the health of workers (i.e. through poor diet and sleeping habits) and their families (who incurred stress from extra household responsibilities). While some households were able to draw upon community support for spouses, aging parents, and children who remained in Mackenzie (i.e. from community groups, parents/grandparents, and church members), others felt that more supports were needed for child care, as well as family members who were aging or had illnesses or disabilities. Expanding supports for spouses who remained in town was also recommended.

Participants also described several impacts that this had on housing and household responsibilities. In particular, there were concerns about the additional costs incurred to maintain two or more households, limited access to affordable housing, difficulties sharing household responsibilities between spouses, and difficulty addressing home maintenance and repairs. In terms of transportation, there were concerns about additional costs for fuel and vehicle maintenance, the risk of fatigue and accidents due to the distance between home and the jobs site, and anxiety about winter driving conditions. In some cases, households were required to purchase a second vehicle in order to support out-of-town work. As a result, some respondents felt that LDLC did not provide much additional financial benefits for their household. In fact, some identified other financial costs that needed to be incurred (i.e. extra costs for food and child care) in order to work out-of-town. The financial challenges changed the shopping patterns for some households in our sample. In some cases, there was a greater tendency to shop locally; however, a number of respondents noted that they purchased goods while out-of-town.

4.0 Summary

The purpose of this report is to highlight some of the results that came out of the household survey to assess the scale and scope of long distance labour commuting in Mackenzie. The appendix to this report contains the detailed tables that describe the range of responses to each question. These themes, together with the nuances captured in the appendices, can provide local leaders and community groups with information to inform future decisions about policies, programs, and infrastructure investments. With 633 surveys completed out of a working sample of 1,537 households, the response rate is 41.2%. When interpreting the results, it is important to keep in mind that responses are from a sample of the local population.

Almost 27% of the respondents had a household member who commuted out-of-town for work for an extended period of time. Many of the LDLC workers identified in this study were older (i.e. 50 years of age or older) and were male. Over half of the LDLC workers began working out-of-town in 2008 following the mill closures in Mackenzie. Within this group of residents who had engaged in LDLC, approximately 40% continue to work out-of-town. Prominent destinations for out-of-town work include places across the Peace River Region, Prince George, and the Kootenays, as well as Fort McMurray and Grand Prairie. Many of these LDLC are working in forestry, oil and gas, and mining. While most respondents indicated that LDLC workers were engaged in shorter shift rotation schedules, there were also many households where LDLC workers were away from Mackenzie for more than two weeks at a time. LDLC impacted experiences in the community by reducing the time workers spent with their family and friends; reducing their participation in community and recreational activities; expanding costs for housing, transportation, food, and child care; altering the sharing of household responsibilities, and exacerbating stress for both the workers and their family members who remained in the community.

Appendix A: Survey Tables

Table A1: Did any members of this household work out-of-town for an extended period of time following the 2008 mill closures in Mackenzie?

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
Yes	170	26.9
No	461	73.1
Total	631	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A2: If yes, describe the age of family member(s) who have worked out-of-town

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
Under 30 years	25	13.8
30 - 39 years	25	13.8
40 - 49 years	53	29.3
50 - 59 years	55	30.4
60 years and older	23	12.7
Total	181	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A3: If yes, describe the gender of family member(s) who have worked out-of-town

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
Male	159	85.4
Female	27	14.5
Total	186	100

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A4: When did family member(s) begin to work out-of-town?

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
Before 2008	16	9.5
2008	93	55.0
2009	28	16.6
2010	14	8.3
2011	11	6.5
2012	5	3.0
Other	2	1.1
Total	169	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A5: Do any family member(s) continue to work out-of-town?

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
Yes	69	40.1
No	103	59.9
Total	172	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A6: Please specify when family member(s) stopped working out-of-town

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
2007	1	1.0
2008	5	4.9
2009	18	17.5
2010	33	32.0
2011	17	16.5
2012	7	7.0
Other	22	21.4
Total	103	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A7: Where did the family member(s) go to work out-of-town?

British Columbia (156)

Prince George (25)
Tumbler Ridge (25)
Chetwynd (15)
Fort St. John (12)
Dawson Creek (9)
Mount Milligan (6)
Williams Lake (5)
Sparwood (4)
BC (3)
Fort Nelson (3)
Quesnel (3)
Cranbrook (2)
Fraser Lake (2)
Kemess Mines (2)
Penticton (2)
Pine Pass area (2)
Salmon Arm (2)
Vanderhoof (2)
100 Mile House (1)
Abbotsford (1)
Alaska Highway (1)
Castlegar (1)
Elk Valley (1)
Elkford (1)
Endako Mines (1)
Farrell Creek (1)
Fernie (1)
Fort St. James (1)
Grand Forks (1)
Hudson's Hope (1)
Kelowna (1)
Kimberly (1)
Kitimat (1)
Likely (1)
Logging camp near Bear Lake (1)
McLeese Lake (1)
Merritt (1)
Okanagan (1)
Ospika Arm (1)
Port Alice (1)

British Columbia Cont'd

Pouce Coupe (1)
Princeton (1)
Stellar (1)
Takla Lake (1)
Taylor (1)
Vancouver (1)
Vancouver Island (1)
Vernon (1)
Willow Creek (1)
Wolverine Mine (1)

Alberta (71)

Fort McMurray (21)
Grand Prairie (18)
Alberta (6)
Edmonton (6)
Peace River (4)
Edson (3)
Calgary (2)
Honeymoon Creek (2)
Canmore (1)
Cleardale (1)
Hinton (1)
Lethbridge (1)
Northern Alberta (1)
Peace Country area (1)
Pincher Creek (1)
Red Deer (1)
Slave Lake (1)

Other (12)

Yukon (3)
Saskatchewan (2)
All over (1)
Bermuda (1)
Nunavut (1)
NWT Mines (1)
Remote areas (1)
Saskatoon (1)
Watson Lake (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Note: some people identified multiple locations.

Table A8: In what sector(s) did they work out-of-town?

Forestry (44)

Forestry (13)
Mill (6)
Pulp and paper (6)
Saw mill (5)
Logging (4)
Lumber (4)
Pulp mill (4)
Fiber (1)
Tree planting and clearing (1)

Oil and Gas (39)

Oil and gas (37)
Gas plant (2)

Mining (37)

Mining (32)
Coal Mine (4)
Diamond mine (1)

Trades (14)

Electrician (5)
Carpentry (2)
Mechanic (2)
Gas fitter (1)
Plumber (1)
Trades (1)
Utilities (1)
Welding (1)

Construction (13)

Construction (7)
Oil rig construction (3)
Road construction (2)
House construction (1)

Transportation (12)

Truck Driving (8)
Rail (2)
Driver (1)
Taxi (1)

Healthcare (8)

Healthcare (6)
First Aider (1)
Paramedic (1)

Services (8)

Sales (3)
Service sector (3)
Retail (2)

Road Maintenance (6)

Snow removal (3)
Road Maintenance (2)
Traffic controller (1)

Education (4)

Education (4)

Government (4)

Government (4)

Communications (2)

Communications (1)
Telecommunications (1)

Production (2)

Meat packing (1)
Warehouse (1)

Agriculture (1)

Farming (1)

Energy (1)

Suncor (1)

Public Sector (1)

Public sector (1)

Recreation (1)

Golf Course (1)

Other (5)

Camp (3)
Management (1)
Waste water treatment (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Table A9: What type of shift schedule did they have?

Shorter Rotation (109)

5 on 2 off (36)
4 on 4 off (25)
7 on 7 off (15)
4 on 3 off (9)
6 on 6 off (7)
3 on 4 off (3)
4 on 5 off (2)
2 on 3 off (1)
2 on 5 off (1)
2 on 7 off (1)
3 on 3 off (1)
4 on 2 off (1)
4 on 7 off (1)
5 on 4 off (1)
5 on 5 off (1)
5.5 on 1.5 off (1)
6 on 1 off (1)
6 on 2 off (1)
6 on 7 off (1)

Longer Rotation (63)

21 on 7 off (14)
14 on 7 off (13)
14 on 14 off (6)
10 on 4 off (5)
20 on 8 off (5)
8 on 6 off (3)
15 on 6 off (2)
20 on 10 off (2)
7 on 3 off (1)

Longer Rotation Cont'd

7 on 10 off (1)
10 on 3 off (1)
14 on 2 off (1)
14 on 4 off (1)
15 on 5 off (1)
15 on 15 off (1)
21 on 3 off (1)
21 on 12 off (1)
24 on 4 off (1)
28 on 7 off (1)
28 on 14 off (1)
60 on 5 off (1)

Other (35)

Mixed (7)
Seasonal (5)
Stayed whole time (5)
Months at a time (4)
Contract basis (2)
Not sure (2)
Worked weather permitting (2)
14 days on call (1)
21 day contract (1)
5 weeks contract followed by 12 week contract (1)
Day shifts with little time to come home (1)
Makes own hours (1)
Part time – casual (1)
Regular days and shifts (1)
Rotating from days to graveyard shifts (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Survey 2012.

Note: some respondents identified multiple shift rotation schedules for different jobs.

Table A10: How has working out-of-town impacted your experiences in the community?

Impacts on Family (98)

Less time with spouse / family (33)
Strain on spouse / family relationship (13)
Missed family functions / activities (9)
Family life disrupted (5)
Kids missed father (4)
Missed out on raising young kids (4)
Divorced (3)
Lose sense of family (3)
Missed grandchildren in the community (3)
Absence of father figure for children (2)
Separated (2)
Adult child in house on own (1)
Broke promises to kids on short notice (1)
Can't routinely discuss things with spouse (1)
Commuting while wife was pregnant (1)
Difficult for spouse in Mackenzie to look after kids on own (1)
Functional single parent families with spouse out-of-town (1)
Honeymoon period when husband returned home (1)
Infrequent visits with spouse (1)
Less time with aging parent (1)
Less time with girlfriend (1)
Limited impact on older kids (1)
Lose companionship with spouse (1)
Missed holidays with family (1)
Missed last years of parent's life (1)
Relationship break-up (1)
Spouse did not want to move (1)
Spouse passed away while partner working out-of-town (1)

Housing (45)

Costs of maintaining two households (18)
Forced to commute to maintain household (3)
Difficult to sell house (3)
Additional housing costs in other communities (2)
High housing prices (2)
Almost lost home (1)
Bought house when they were cheap (1)
Cost of insuring two homes (1)
Costs of maintaining three households (1)
Costs of maintaining two offices (1)
Difficult for young adults to own home (1)
Fewer families in apartments (1)
High property taxes (1)
House is rented out while away (1)
Houses returned to financial institution (1)
Lack of affordable housing (1)
Lost home (1)
Many empty houses (1)
Need more homesteading opportunities (1)

Housing Cont'd

New regulations limit mortgage terms (1)
Only one spouse can apply for household property tax exemption (1)
Unable to repurchase a home (1)

Emotional Impacts (37)

Worker fatigue (12)
Difficult to be away from home (8)
Loneliness for workers (3)
Spousal fatigue with worker out-of-town (3)
Missed the community (2)
Stress about being away from home (2)
Anxiety over driving on bad road conditions (1)
Anxiety over job accident risks (1)
Anxiety over long distance commuting (1)
Commuting for work to keep busy (1)
Culture shock to go to larger city (1)
Despair (1)
Loneliness for aging parents in Mackenzie (1)

Household Responsibilities (32)

Home maintenance / repairs not done (11)
No help with shoveling snow (6)
Difficult to share household responsibilities (5)
Less help available for chores (2)
No help with cutting grass (2)
Lost expertise for home maintenance (1)
More household responsibilities for kids in town (1)
More responsibilities for spouse in town (1)
No handyman support (1)
No storage units / space (1)
Worker can't provide help for special needs child (1)

Community Engagement (32)

Missed community events (5)
Disconnected from community (3)
No participation in community groups (2)
Stopped coaching kids sports (2)
Stopped coaching minor hockey (2)
Stopped volunteering (2)
Went to Prince George on days off (2)
Could not continue fire fighting (1)
Difficult to re-engage / re-integrate in town (1)
Disrupted sense of community (1)
Gave up memberships (1)
Less involved in Elks (1)
Less time with church friends (1)
More involved in the community (1)
Need monthly dances to build community spirit (1)
Not able to have any community experience (1)
Only women engaged in community groups (1)
Sporadic participation in community groups (1)

Community Engagement Cont'd

Stopped leadership role (1)
Quit community groups (1)
Quit service clubs (1)

Recreation (28)

Missed out on fishing (5)
Limited diversity of recreation activities in town (3)
Limited diversity of social activities in town (2)
Missed out on recreation (2)
Curling did not restart (1)
Did most leisure activities out-of-town (1)
Fewer sporting activities (1)
Kids couldn't continue with dance due to costs (1)
Kids couldn't participate in activities (1)
Lack of affordable activities for teens (1)
Limited activities for kids (1)
Loss of organized sports teams (1)
Mackenzie Recreation Centre had fewer hours of operation (1)
Missed out on golf (1)
Missed out on hunting (1)
Missed out on playing hockey (1)
Need a marina (1)
Need Wii activities for teens (1)
Need year round bowling alley (1)
No kick boxing (1)

Transportation (26)

Extra costs for fuel (6)
Long distance to commute to work (3)
Commuting costs covered (2)
Had to purchase second vehicle (2)
Winter driving conditions (2)
Also need to commute to see wife in hospital (1)
Extra mileage on vehicle (1)
Family did not leave town much (1)
Gov't did not provide transportation to and from Fort McMurray (1)
Must take multiple modes of transportation to get to work site (i.e. drive, plane) (1)
Need direct flights between Prince George and Fort McMurray (1)
Need to slow down speed limit in residential areas for kids playing (1)
Roads built for winter logging – not summer use (1)
Twelve hour commute to work (1)
Unpaid for travel days (1)
Vehicle expenses not covered (1)

Community Support (23)

Don't access services in town (2)
Need family to pay bills while out-of-town (2)
No assistance for disabled mother / spouse (2)
Community helped parents at home alone (1)
Community provided support for kids (1)

Community Support Cont'd

Fewer community programs in town (1)
Grandparents needed to look after kids (1)
Had family support out-of-town (1)
Lack of amenities (1)
Lack of child care to accommodate female work (1)
Limited support for spouses in town (1)
Need more assistance for workers (1)
Need someone to call spouses in town (i.e. for advice, connect with supports) (1)
No forms available at government offices (1)
No forms available at post office (1)
No social supports for aging parents who remained in town (1)
Relied on family for support (1)
Relied on friends for support (1)
Support from community church members to look after kids (1)
Tough to get 24/7 child care for out-of-town work (1)

Financial Impacts (17)

Strained financial resources (3)
Extra costs for food out-of-town (2)
High debt load (2)
Difficulty working with the bank (1)
Expensive daycare to cover two weeks away from home (1)
Fewer taxes collected by local gov't (1)
Lack of support for former forestry workers (1)
Living pay cheque to pay cheque (1)
Lost credit (1)
Lost vehicles (1)
Need tax deductions for out-of-town expenses for workers (1)
Needed to complete a consumer proposal (1)
Two household incomes needed (1)

Shopping (21)

Shop in Prince George (5)
Continued to shop in Mackenzie (2)
Could not use services / business that were not open on weekends (2)
Shopped when out-of-town (2)
Have more income to spend in Mackenzie (1)
Less money spent on groceries (1)
Loss of gas stations (1)
Purchased fuel out-of-town (1)
Purchased groceries out-of-town (1)
Rumours of store closure affected business (1)
Shop in Alberta due to lower taxes (1)
Shopping kept to a minimum (1)
Stores closed in town (1)
Watched for sales to support local businesses (1)

Employment (16)

Good income (2)

Employment Cont'd

Advance notice for holiday scheduling provided (1)
Commuted for work while running local business (1)
Job uncertainty (1)
Lack of employment opportunities in town (1)
Lost out-of-town job (1)
Need positive feedback mechanisms to support worker development (1)
Need to expand small business access to timber (1)
Need to pursue more mining opportunities (1)
Need to support cabin construction industry (1)
Need to support pioneer log home industry (1)
No camaraderie (1)
No sense of community in out-of-town job site (1)
Short shifts more difficult with commuting (1)
Spouses were on different shifts out-of-town (1)

Impacts on Friendships (12)

Less time with friends (5)
Friendships dispersed (3)
Became an outsider with friends (1)
Difficulty making friends out-of-town (1)
Limited social interaction (1)
Strained social connections (1)

Out-migration (11)

Decided to move out of Mackenzie (7)
Friends moved away (1)
Leaving Mackenzie to be closer to family (1)
Population became female-dominated (1)
Population decline (1)

Education (7)

Can't afford training programs (1)
Children attending school out-of-town and also commuting back to Mackenzie on weekends (1)
Classes are loud (1)
Completed apprenticeship while out-of-town (1)
High school courses required for post-secondary are not routinely offered (1)
Limited literacy skills (1)
Loss of elementary school (1)

Health (7)

Poor diet (2)
Deteriorating health with extra duties to raise kids alone (1)
Good food provided (1)
Lost weight (1)
Not sleeping right (1)
Wife became ill (1)

Communications (5)

Able to pay bills on-line (1)
Difficult to keep in touch with family / friends (1)
No access to Internet while working in the field (1)
No cell phone reception in the field (1)
Used satellite phones (1)

Animals (4)

Missed pets (2)
Need someone to look after pets (2)

Safety (4)

Break and enter into house (1)
Companies provide training on recognizing fatigue for due diligence (1)
Had an accident while commuting on icy roads (1)
Home vulnerable when empty (1)

Changed Perception of Community (3)

Appreciated community more (1)
Buildings in Mackenzie in poor condition (1)
Mackenzie had less landscaping (1)

Agriculture (2)

Need more support for agriculture industry (1)
No agriculture industry to obtain / share beef (1)

Climate (1)

Long cold winters (1)

Informal Economy (1)

Hunted to support household (1)

Other (15)

None (13)
Not sure (1)
Rarely returned to Mackenzie (1)

Appendix B: Information Letter

May 1, 2012

Assessing the Scale of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC

Mackenzie was built in the late 1960s to house the workforce for a new regional forest industry. A significant economic downturn beginning in 2008 meant that many workers had to engage in long distance labour commuting. This community survey will help to learn more about the scale and experiences of residents in Mackenzie who work out-of-town for extended periods of time. This survey is being carried out under the direction of Dr. Greg Halseth of the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia.

This survey is being mailed out to all property owners in Mackenzie, BC. Each survey package contains this letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage paid return envelope. However, residents may also complete an on-line survey by visiting www.district.mackenzie.bc.ca. Input from as many residents as possible will help to better understand the scale and impact of long distance labour commuting on the community.

Your participation is voluntary and if you examine the survey you will see that there is no way to identify individual respondents. Ideally, we would like you to answer all of the questions that apply to you, but please feel free to ignore any questions you would rather not answer. All information shared in this survey will be held in strict confidence and no results will be presented such that any individual could be identified. The survey information will be stored in a secure research room at UNBC and will be accessible only to the research team. The survey information will be kept only until the project is completed later this fall. After that, all surveys and data will be destroyed. The project has been evaluated by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. The research team considers that this survey poses no risk to participants.

When you have finished filling out the survey, please put it into the enclosed pre-paid postage envelope and return it by mail. You may also choose to drop off the completed survey into one of the locked boxes located at the District of Mackenzie or the Recreation Centre.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact Greg Halseth at UNBC (tel. 250-960-5826, halseth@unbc.ca). Any complaints about this project should be directed to the Office of Research, UNBC (250) 960-6735, or e-mail reb@unbc.ca.

Once completed, our final report will be available on the District of Mackenzie's website: www.district.mackenzie.bc.ca and the UNBC's Community Development Institute's website: www.unbc.ca/cdi.

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

Greg Halseth
Geography Program, UNBC
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Tel: (250) 960-5826

Fax: (250) 960-5539

Email: halseth@unbc.ca

Appendix C: Community Survey

**Assessing the Scale of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC
Community Survey: May 2012**

Mackenzie was built in the late 1960s to house the workforce for a new regional forest industry. A significant economic downturn beginning in 2008 meant that many workers had to engage in LDLC. This survey will help to learn more about the scale and experiences of long distance labour commuting that has taken place in Mackenzie, BC.

1. Did any member of this household work out-of-town for an extended period of time following the 2008 mill closures in Mackenzie?

- Yes (please go to Question 2)
- No (please return in enclosed envelope)

2. If yes, describe the age and gender of family member(s) who have worked out-of-town.

	Age	Male or Female
Person 1		
Person 2		

3. When did the family member(s) begin to work out-of-town? _____

4. Do any family member(s) continue to work out-of-town?

- Yes
- No (please specify when they stopped working out-of-town) _____

5. Where did the family member(s) go to work out-of-town?

6. In what sector(s) did they work out-of-town? (Example: health care, government, pulp & paper, oil & gas, logging, etc.)

7. What type of shift schedule did they have? (Example: 7 days on, 7 days off)

8. How has working out-of-town impacted your experiences in the community? (Example: household, community groups, use of businesses / services, etc.)

Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey. We appreciate your assistance.