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For Immediate Release

CRD Chair Al Richmond Delivers Year-End Report

Cariboo Chilcotin, B.C. – Cariboo Regional District (CRD) Chair Al Richmond presented a review of 2016 during his year-end address at today's Board of Directors meeting in Williams Lake. The full transcript of his address follows.

"Members of the Board, Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I have the distinct pleasure of reviewing the Cariboo Regional District's key accomplishments and successes for 2016. Looking back over the past year, our region can be proud of its achievements. The CRD experienced many successes in 2016.

The year started with a focus on strengthening our relationships with First Nations. Early in January, we held a Community to Community Forum with the Tsilhqot'in National Government. In February, we signed a tripartite protocol agreement with the Williams Lake Indian Band (T'exelc) and City of Williams Lake. Both of these events were important steps in working together to identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work collaboratively, while gaining a better understanding of our respective cultures and governance models. This focus carried throughout the year as several CRD Directors and staff members attended a Nation2Nation forum in November to join the conversation about economic development and doing business with First Nations. We look forward to continuing these discussions in the coming year.

On February 10, the Cariboo Regional District Board adopted a bylaw to enable the CRD to take over operation of the 103 Mile Water System. Upgrades and improvements to the system have been ongoing throughout the year. On February 27, 108 Mile residents voted to undertake borrowing for improvements to the 108 Mile Water System. The project has been in the design phase this year and construction is expected to start in the spring of 2017.

Early in the year, we launched two Official Community Plan review processes for the South Cariboo and Lac La Hache areas. Throughout 2016, we held advisory committee meetings and open houses. We also surveyed residents and attended community events to raise awareness and obtain feedback about the projects. Both of the OCPs are now in the draft phase and will be finalized early in 2017.

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This spring, we broke ground on two recreational projects – the North Cariboo Arena Replacement project in Quesnel and the Sam Ketcham Pool Upgrade project in Williams Lake. Excellent progress has been made on both of these projects this year and both are on track for completion in the fall of 2017. Notwithstanding the support these facilities will be to local efforts to retain and attract young families and professionals, these projects are already paying dividends in our communities through the use of local contractors and suppliers.

In May of 2016, the CRD attended the North Central Local Government Association Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) which were held in Dawson Creek. Delegates and their partners were able to attend some great workshops, business sessions and, of course, some spectacular entertainment and social events. I would like to take this opportunity to again thank the many volunteers who dedicated their time and efforts to put on this conference. The hospitality which was offered to delegates and their partners was second to none.

At the beginning of June, the CRD attended the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference and AGM in Winnipeg. A highlight was the success of our resolution calling for the federal government to officially declare September 30th as National Orange Shirt Day. We were extremely proud to present this important resolution on the national stage at the conference.

On June 9 and 10, the CRD Board of Directors attended the first of our two annual Board on the Road events. About 90 residents attended the Board on the Road BBQ in Bouchie Lake with all the proceeds going to the Bouchie Lake Community Association. We saw an even larger turnout for our second Board on the Road which took place on September 22 and 23 in Wells. We had 136 residents attend the BBQ and the funds went to the Wells and Area Community Association. The Board also had the privilege to tour the newly opened Wells Primary Care Clinic, which the Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Hospital District helped fund.

Thankfully, this summer was quiet in terms of wildfire activity and we did not open our Emergency Operations Centre at all this year. Nevertheless, our summer remained full as we forged new partnerships between the CRD and the People's Republic of China. In mid-June, we hosted a group of Chinese business investors in coordination with our member municipalities, the Cariboo Chilcotin Tourism Association, Barkerville Historic Town and Park and the Chinese Consulate General in Vancouver. They were able to visit our communities, experience Cariboo hospitality and learn about business and investment opportunities in our region. The partnerships continued later in the summer when we hosted a group of elite Chinese martial artists from the Shaolin Epo Martial Arts School, which attracted another Chinese business delegation to our region. The performance series was a huge success and the group's following increased as they travelled with a sold-out show in Prince George to finish the tour.

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Early in September, we announced a new specialized 9-1-1 text service for residents who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard-of-Hearing or Speech Impaired (DHHSI). Text with 9-1-1 enables our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and families to communicate in the same way that anyone else can in an emergency situation.

From September 26 to 30, the Cariboo Regional District Board of Directors attended the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention and AGM which took place in Victoria, B.C. Throughout the convention the CRD met with provincial ministers and staff, attended workshops and spoke to CRD resolutions, which all received endorsement. It was especially momentous to have the Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Hospital District receive the UBCM Excellence Award in Partnerships for our collaborative efforts on the Quesnel Primary Care Clinic Project. The clinic opened in May 2016 and is a model interdisciplinary medical care facility and a great asset to our northern communities.

Throughout the year, we have also been building a foundation for our new Cariboo Strong economic development initiative. Early in 2016, we formalized a partnership with the Community Development Institute from the University of Northern British Columbia with the goal of growing a strong region through strong communities. We have gathered significant funding for the project from the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition, West Fraser and the BC Rural Dividend Fund and we have successfully gained support from all our member municipalities, the Village of Clinton and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. To date, preliminary work has begun in all three of our sub-regions and we are seeing the beginning of on-the-ground action through the formation of the first Action Group, which met for the first time this week. We are excited to see the continued progress on this initiative over the next few years.

Some other highlights from 2016 have been:

- assisting 18 non-profit groups and supporting \$745,000 worth of funding requests for community initiatives through our grant writing program;
- celebrating the CRD's 150 Mile House Volunteer Fire Department's 35-year anniversary;
- being named as a 2015 Climate Action Community;
- successfully applying to a number of different provincial and federal funding programs such as Destination BC's Co-operative Marketing Partnerships program, Northern Development Initiative Trust, BC Rural Dividend fund, BC Air Access and Canada Summer Jobs for a total of approximately \$141,000; and
- receiving approximately \$1.7 million from the Community Works Fund to support green initiatives and energy efficiency projects.

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So often we forget how far we have come and the challenges and issues we have overcome or resolved along the way. Part of the reason for this report is to remind you of our accomplishments, and to compliment you on your successes.

Creating new partnerships, enhancing services, undertaking capital projects, informing the public and responding to residents' needs is what building this region is all about. Our organization will continue to respond to community and residents' needs thereby achieving our goal of ***Building Communities Together***.

I would like to thank all the Board members and staff for your dedication, perseverance and support throughout 2016. Thank you."

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