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28th Annual NCRC - June 8-13 2009
hosted by CKUT 90.3 FM Montreal

March 1, 2009

Re: Application No. 2008-1539-2, Smithers Community Radio Society

Dear Secretary General,

1. The National Campus and Community Radio Association/l'Association nationale des radios étudiantes et communautaires (NCRA/ANREC) supports the application by the Smithers Community Radio Society for a license to operate an English-language FM Type B community radio programming undertaking in Smithers, British Columbia.
2. The NCRA/ANREC is a not-for profit National Association working to recognize, support and encourage not-for profit, volunteer-based, public access campus and community-based broadcasters in Canada. We provide advice and advocacy for individual stations, and conduct lobbying and policy development initiatives with a view to advancing the role and increasing the effectiveness of our sector.
3. Smithers is a town located in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in northwestern British Columbia, approximately halfway between Prince George and Prince Rupert. The town has a population of approximately 5,000.
4. Promising to be "The Voice of the Valley", The Smithers Community Radio Society has demonstrated substantial and deep support from their community. As a measure of their success, they have attracted a very diverse group of volunteers, including representatives from regional schools and educational institutions, government, non-profit associations, and the private sector. The group recently ran a very successful fundraising and public awareness campaign where \$7,000 was raised from within the community. If their application is successful, Smithers Community Radio will be the most northern community station in B.C.
5. The Society's dedicated start-up board has identified First Nation programming as a priority for the station, and are working directly with the Hereditary Chief of the Wetsuweten people, Andrew George, and the office of the Wetsuweten to that purpose.
6. The Society has attracted local individuals with the technical competence necessary to set up and run a radio station, and they have also proactively sought advice about best practices from other community stations.
7. Smithers Community Radio values commercial-free, independent radio programmed by volunteers that provides musical diversity and local, issues-oriented programs. Their stated mission is to strengthen and enrich their valley in this way. They intend to provide a strong roster of spoken word programming relevant to, and produced within its own community. In addition to their own diverse, locally-produced material, Smithers Community Radio plans to air spoken word programs sourced from other community radio stations.
8. Smithers has a vibrant local music scene, and the radio society intends to showcase and support this. They plan to play mostly Category-3 music, with a specific focus on musical genres under-represented by the region's local adult contemporary commercial station, "The PEAK", and with intention of complimenting, and not competing with that existing station's programming.
9. The station's volunteers have been in contact with a number of other community stations in both Canada and the United States during their planning and development, and have found the opportunity to network and share information within the sector most valuable. These relationships, developed during this first phase of the station's history will provide the station continuing support as it grows. As well, the NCRA/ANREC believes that

National Campus and Community Radio Association
L'Association nationale des radios étudiantes et communautaires

Smithers Radio's success with this application will contribute to the strength and cohesion of the Canadian Community Radio sector in general.

10. The NCRA believes that Community radio stations like the one proposed in Smithers can play an extremely important role in their communities; facilitating communication on local issues, providing local information, exposure to local musicians, opportunities for training, access to the airwaves, and a venue for community members to come together in an environment where diversity is celebrated.

11. Based on its furtherance of the stated objectives of the Community Radio Policy (PN CRTC 2000-13), we support the Smithers Community Radio Society's endeavour to create an independent not-for-profit community-owned radio station.

12. In light of this, we encourage the Commission to approve the Smithers Community Radio Society's application.

Sincerely,

Catherine Fisher
NCRA Board Member

cc: Smithers Community Radio Society