

DAWSON CREEK  
**Daily News** SINCE 1930

## Late mayor wins environmental Catalyst Award

Dawson Creek Daily News  
Friday, April 24, 2009  
Page: A1 / FRONT  
Section: News  
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Source: Dawson Creek Daily News

The late Mayor Calvin Kruk posthumously received a **Project Porchlight** 2009 Catalyst Award. **Project Porchlight** was created by the Ottawa-based group One Change, which is an environmental group that focuses on taking small steps towards reducing climate change, such as using energy efficient light bulbs and maintaining good tire pressure on vehicles.

Kruk was instrumental in bringing the project to B.C. and helping to deliver more than 20,000 energy efficient light bulbs throughout the province.

The executive director of One Change said the most important accomplishment Kruk achieved through the effort was giving people the belief that they can make a difference.

"Calvin Kruk was unique in that he felt it was his job as mayor to make people feel like they're part of solutions," said Stuart Hickox, who took over the job generally regulated to a media liaison because of his respect for Kruk. "He was a catalyst for change in Dawson Creek so we wanted to give him that award."

Hickox recalled meeting Kruk during a conference put on by EnCana in Calgary two years ago. It was here that the mayor of the small northern city latched onto One Change's mission statement and decided he wanted to bring the project back to Dawson Creek.

"He said 'you've got to come and do this in my town' which is one of the first things he said to me," Hickox said, adding they not only came to Dawson Creek but eventually had the chance to spread the message to all of northeastern B.C. "It was our foothold into British Columbia that we hope to expand across the province now."

Since the first **Project Porchlight** event in Dawson Creek, which took place at last year's community cleanup day, over 20 additional B.C. municipalities have contacted the group expressing their interest.

"This is the reason why that man is a catalyst, because he took charge, brought it into British Columbia, and proved that it could work," Hickox said.

Hickox agreed it was odd that their environmental group had such an easy time getting a foothold in the north of B.C. when places like Vancouver and Victoria are generally accepted as the more environmentally forward thinking cities in the province.

"Frankly, we didn't think we would start in northeast B.C., it's an energy town... like why would people up there care about taking action on the environment?" he asked. "We were a bit skeptical at first, but Calvin said to me 'this is a great place to start. People are community focused here and they do care about the environment and energy,' and it's true."

The Catalyst Awards ceremony was held on April 15 at the National Art Gallery in Ottawa. Amy Fraenkel, the regional director for the United Nations Environment Program for North America, presented each award. Kruk's widow Faith and son Austin attended in his honour.

The other the recipients of a 2009 Catalyst Award were the Ottawa MP David McGuinty, EnCana, and the Vermont Energy Investment.

Illustration:

- Colour Photo: Submitted photo / Faith Kruk (left) widow of Mayor Calvin Kruk, accepts a 2009 Catalyst Award in her husband's honour from the regional director for the United Nations Environment Program for North America Amy Fraenkel.

Idnumber: 200904240003

Edition: Final

Story Type: Business

Length: 496 words

Illustration Type: Colour Photo

Tone: Positive

Ad Value: \$443.82 Circulation: 2,200