



**For Immediate Release**

## **Canadian Technology Meets Russian Arctic Needs**

Vancouver, BC, October 17, 2001 – **BRITCO** Structures today announced the delivery of two factory-built schools specially designed to withstand the harsh conditions of the Russian High Arctic.

The schools, consisting of thirty-three modules in total and representing \$2.4M in sales, were delivered to local government officials in Russia's Chukotka region, only 1,000 miles from the North Pole. Final assembly will take place at the site.

"This project is a tribute to Canadian cold weather building expertise and technology," said Project Manager Andrew MacPhail.

**BRITCO's** factory-built schools introduce a level of comfort and construction excellence previously unknown to the region. Local temperatures drop as low as – 100 degrees Celsius, including the wind chill factor. For local students, going to school up to now meant sitting in concrete barrack style buildings with no running water and little heat or ventilation, if any. **BRITCO** has changed all that. The new schools are heated and ventilated. There is also a stand-by generator for power black-outs. A school cafeteria is equipped to deliver hot meals. Classroom features include the warm feel of clear, premium-grade Canadian birch millwork, custom-designed, manufactured and installed by **BRITCO**.

Structurally, the buildings surpass anything typically seen in most North American areas. The wall structure is a superior standard to increase strength and provide greater thermal insulation in the extreme cold climate. The floor system is built to further reduce cold air infiltration and heat exfiltration. One school structure can withstand 150 mph winds and 100 psf wind uplift. And the windows are an innovative design to resist rocks and other debris that may be blown against it by these high winds, or thrown by vandals.

This is **BRITCO's** third school project designed for the harsh Russian climate. "Our team has consistently done an outstanding job for the Russians," said managing partner Rick McClymont. **BRITCO's** versatile staff has also delivered award-winning factory-built structures to hot, tropical locations such as Hawaii and parts of California, and to the milder temperatures of the Pacific Northwest. With sales of \$20M annually, and 80% of that in exports, **BRITCO** is a prime example of a leading-edge company in the modular building industry. Increasingly, it is focussed on exporting technology, engineering and high value-added wood products such as finished homes, commercial offices and schools to world markets.

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BACKGROUNDER**

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### **Background on BRITCO**

Founded in 1977 with a 10,000 sq. ft. factory and just a handful of employees, **BRITCO** has grown to become British Columbia's largest designer and manufacturer of modular buildings. With sales approaching \$20M annually, and a solid reputation for meeting our customers' exact needs, we anticipate continued growth in the years ahead.

**BRITCO** offers complete design-build services to clients throughout Canada, the US Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Hawaii, Russia and other world markets. Our operations are guided by one key principle: a commitment to customer service.

**Quality Assurance** **BRITCO's** custom-designed modular buildings are backed by the most comprehensive warranties in the industry. Additionally, all construction projects are subject to a stringent 97-point system of quality control, supervised throughout the entire process by the Project Manager. We use only premium-grade materials, engineered for structural integrity to ensure a longer life and higher return on your investment. Our buildings are manufactured inside a controlled factory environment, and designed to meet or exceed CSA standards and the requirements of local building codes at the site of installation.

**Cost-Competitiveness** **BRITCO's** Modular Core Construction, System ensures that we consistently deliver ON TIME and ON BUDGET. In the words of one BC government official familiar with **BRITCO's** services in school construction, "I highly recommend **BRITCO** for their proven track record and their ability to offer the modular advantage of speed, quality and delivering projects within budget."

**Design Versatility** **BRITCO** has supplied facilities for over 6,000 customers, bringing attention to detail and individual care to each type of structure to meet local climate conditions, building code standards and other customer needs. We have designed and built a wide range of structures, including offices, classrooms, single and multi-family homes, day care centres, health clinics, gas stations, restaurants and bunkhouses for a wide variety of climates ranging from tropical to temperate to high arctic. We offer the full range of design-build services, including architectural design, engineering, manufacturing, installation, and custom loan and financing arrangements.

### **Helping customers is the key to BRITCO's success!**

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is 'factory-built' housing?

The term 'factory-built' simply refers to buildings that are built inside a factory, transported to a site and installed. 'Factory-built housing' can be residential structures such as single-family homes or apartment buildings, commercial structures such as bank buildings, offices, hotels and resorts, schools and community centres, or industrial housing units such as logging camps.

There are four main types of factory-built construction: modular, panelized, pre-cut and manufactured homes.

In the first three examples – **modular, panelized and pre-cut construction** – the buildings are required to be built to local, state/provincial and regional codes. With modular buildings, whole units (or 'modules') are constructed in the factory, transported to the site and assembled there. Modulares are the strongest of the four frame house construction methods described here. With **panelized** buildings, whole walls with windows, doors, wiring and outside siding are constructed inside the factory. These are then transported panel by panel for assembly at the site. Pre-cut refers to a process where the building materials are pre-cut to design specifications, transported to the site and assembled there. Log homes, for example, are pre-cut.

**Manufactured homes** are in an entirely different category. These are designed to meet a federal building code administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (commonly known as the HUD Code). They are historically rooted in the post-war demand in the 1950s for mobile homes. The appearance and quality of these homes have come a long way since the immediate post-war period, but the manufactured homes sector still suffers from memories of their 'tin-box' predecessor.

All four examples of factory-built homes and commercial buildings are so close in design and structure to their site-built counterparts that it is difficult to tell them apart.

#### 2. How does factory-built housing differ from traditional 'site-built' methods?

Simply put, factory-built housing is superior to site-built construction on both cost and quality issues. Because most of the construction process occurs within a control factory environment, bad weather does not cause the long delays often associated with site-built construction. In some areas of the world, such as the Russian High

Arctic, the extremely harsh climate conditions would make on-site construction virtually impossible. Scheduling, project management and construction all proceed more efficiently, thus saving both labour and material costs.





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The skills base is higher in a factory environment because all the workers operate as part of a team, supervised throughout the entire construction process. Local, state/provincial and regional building codes add another layer of quality control. And factory-built manufacturers often provide warranties that exceed those typically offered by traditional site-built manufacturers.

### ***3. Is there a market for BC exports of factory-built housing?***

According to an upcoming study by Peter Woodbridge and Associates Ltd., Canadian exports of prefabricated buildings (ie. factory-built) jumped 526% from \$93.5M in 1991 to \$492.1M in 2000. Over the same period, BC exports of prefab buildings rose 480% from \$34.2M to \$164.1M. Only Ontario performed better in this sector, jumping 535% from \$37.4M to \$199.9M. Company president Peter Woodbridge has identified factory-built systems as one of several value-added wood products with the potential to become 'key product markets' for British Columbia.

### ***4. Where is BC's biggest export market for factory-built buildings?***

Traditionally, Japan has been our biggest export partner in prefab housing, but exports to the US have risen steadily over the past ten years, reaching \$79.2M in 2000. The long-term potential of the US market is highlighted in another report by consultant Peter Woodbridge, 'Evolution of the North American Housing Industry' (Nov 2000).

### ***5. How much does BC export to Russia?***

At present, BC exports of prefabricated buildings to Russia are minimal, compared to our major markets in Japan and the US. But our expertise in cold weather building technology will be a major asset in helping to establish BC firms as preferred suppliers to this region.

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**Other websites on factory-built housing and modular construction:**

<http://www.housingzone.com/>

<http://www.mbab.com/>

<http://www.mbinet.org/>

