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**ALBERTA WINNERS** from: Canmore, Smokey Lake, High Prairie, Banff, Stand Off, and Waterton Lakes National Park

**MANITOBA WINNERS** from: Winnipeg and Hillside Beach

## **Alberta Wood *WORKS!* Announces 2023 Prairie Wood Design Awards**

(Edmonton, May 17, 2023) Eight outstanding wood projects from Alberta and Manitoba have been announced as the winners of the 2023 Prairie Wood Design Awards. The awards program honours the people and organizations that, through design excellence, advocacy, and innovation, are advancing the use of wood in all types of construction.

“This year’s winners are remarkable and innovative, demonstrating the exceptional versatility of wood construction,” said Rory Koska, executive director of Alberta Wood *WORKS!*. “From residential applications that include a deep energy retrofit of a single-family home and a multi-unit housing development that helps address a community’s need affordable housing, to beautiful commercial and institutional buildings of nearly every occupancy type, we are very impressed by what is being achieved with wood construction.”

“In the face of growing concerns about the carbon footprint of our built environment, we need to increase our use of sustainably sourced, local wood products and other natural, renewable materials that have a reduced carbon impact. This environmental priority is a common thread throughout the projects we’re celebrating this year, said Koska.”

“Fortunately, wood design and construction technologies are advancing at an encouraging rate, and the culture of information sharing in the wood industry, combined with the development of more progressive, science-based building codes, is empowering the design community to realize the full potential of wood construction to create a more sustainable and beautiful built environment for generations to come.”

“I am honored to recognize these award-winning projects on behalf of a wood design community that has worked tirelessly to create opportunities for the expanded use sustainable wood products of every type in construction today. Let us continue to push the boundaries of what is possible and build a brighter, more sustainable future for all,” concluded Koska.

Wood *WORKS!* is a national, industry-led initiative of the Canadian Wood Council that provides free technical support to facilitate the use of wood in all types of construction. Working with the design community, Wood *WORKS!* connects AEC+D professionals with resources they need to use of wood in commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-unit residential construction.

**[VIDEO](#) and [PHOTOS](#) available. For additional information, or to arrange interviews, please contact:**

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**Individual project details for each winner follow:**

# Alberta Wood *WORKS!* 2023 Prairie Wood Design Award Winners

Winning Projects	Project Credits
<p><b>Residential Award:</b> <b>Mountain Deep Energy Retrofit   Canmore, AB</b></p> <p>This single-family home underwent a deep energy retrofit – which did not impact the building’s structural form - to improve its building envelope, energy performance, and curb appeal. A timber frame entrance addition was constructed at the front of the building with the timber beams left exposed. The exterior redesign of the building involved replacing the original stucco exterior with charred cedar cladding to evoke a mountain cabin feel and harmonize with the surrounding natural wooded environment.</p> <p>Designed with Passive House strategies, the highly efficient building envelope uses a Larsen truss system with ample insulation that brings the building envelope R-value up to R-57 and significantly reduces heat loss and thermal bridging. The roof was further insulated with cellulose to R-80. To mitigate thermal bridging at the foundation, the perimeter was excavated and XPS insulation installed.</p> <p>The existing gas connection was removed, and a new geothermal system installed. This deep well geothermal system covers all heating, cooling, and domestic hot water demand. A new entry mud room was added, clad in local materials of cedar and stone, and all existing windows were replaced with Passive House certified windows, many with expanded openings to promote passive solar gain.</p>	<p>Architect: <b>Rayni Kovacs / HSS Design Build</b></p> <p>Structural Engineer: <b>Jamie Fukushima</b></p> <p>General Contractor: <b>HSS Design Build</b></p> <p>Photography: <b>Thomas Walton Photography</b></p>
<p><b>Interior Showcase Award:</b> <b>Grey Buffalo Grandfather Wellness Lodge   Hillside Beach, MB</b></p> <p>A new facility for the Indigenous organization, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc., Grey Buffalo Grandfather Wellness Lodge is a rural learning and wellness retreat for urban families and youth. It provides a welcoming space for people to connect to the land, learn about Indigenous Traditions and Ceremonies, and participate in cultural activities.</p> <p>The centre is primarily wood construction and includes 12 bedrooms, a kitchen, a multipurpose room, washrooms, shower facilities, and ancillary spaces. Wood is used throughout the building in various forms including engineered trusses with plywood sheathing, an expansive wood curtain wall, and Glulam columns in the Great Hall. On the exterior, wood was thoughtfully placed with a variety of treatments to break up the lines and add variety through patterning. The cedar siding allows the building to disappear into the surroundings creating an understated but beautiful building that integrates well with the site and doesn’t intimidate new guests upon arrival.</p> <p>The design team worked closely with the client and user groups and developed design grounded in a sense of procession and a generosity of space that is expressed through a “Great Hall” with expansive windows. Natural light studies were performed to ensure that any additional direct sunlight inside the building would not adversely affect the comfort of the residents or obstruct carefully crafted views. The result is a comfortable, airy living space with a powerful connection to the wooded landscape outside.</p>	<p>Architect: <b>Cibinel Architecture Ltd.</b></p> <p>Structural Engineer: <b>Beach Rocke Engineering Ltd</b></p> <p>General Contractor: <b>Three Way Builders</b></p> <p>Photography: <b>Lindsay Reid Photography</b></p>

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**Commercial Award:****Métis Crossing Boutique Lodge | Smokey Lake, AB**

The Boutique Lodge is a cornerstone of an ambitious and ongoing project at Métis Crossing, a cultural interpretive site located in Smokey Lake, Alberta. The two-storey Lodge offers 40 guestrooms and plays an essential role in providing an authentic and immersive cultural experience for visitors of Métis Crossing. Wood was essential to achieving project objectives, offering a sustainable, comfortable, culturally and economically relevant structure that offers a specific aesthetic and sensory experience grounded in the history and culture of the area.

The presence of wood supports our vision of a space that is lovingly and carefully handcrafted and that feels comfortable, warm, and lived-in. The Lodge places a high value on the truth in materials and is designed to reflect how Métis people built and lived historically and how they continue to innovate in a contemporary context. No design element was deemed too insignificant; each detail was chosen with the aim of conveying a distinctly Métis cultural and historical character.

Many of the wood design choices, such as the dovetail joint and post-and-beam details, are reminiscent of the area's original buildings, which include fur trade-era homesteads and trappers' cabins. The Lodge's feature stair was made with planks of 2 x 8 laminated eastern white pine. The pine provides a strong and stable base, and the large, imperfect cuts align with an overarching vision of a space that is warm, welcoming, and thoughtfully handcrafted.

Architect:

**Reimagine Architects Ltd.**

Structural Engineer:

**RJC Engineers**

General Contractor:

**GenMec ACL**

Photography:

**Cooper & O' Hara Photography**

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**Recreational Award:****Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Centre | Waterton Lakes National Park, AB**

The design of the new Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Centre captures the interest of visitors by creating a central plaza in the hamlet of Waterton. To achieve this, the building was subdivided into three smaller structures (Interpretive Centre, Administration, and Public Washrooms) that are connected with a series of integrated cantilevering roofs that utilize the two-way spanning capabilities of CLT with purlins used to support the roof overhangs at building ends, perpendicular to primary beams. The three structures are positioned to create borders around a plaza to provide a greater sense of place.

The structure celebrates the strength and natural beauty of wood and the large, sturdy stone masses juxtaposed with voids of glass create a dynamic quality to the building that celebrates the majestic views. The building's strong simple forms unite in contemporary style and use natural materials typical of the park context. Wood was selected for its aesthetics, structural capacity, local availability, and sustainability. Carefully detailed and strategically concealed connections were used between mass timber elements, with an atypical connection strategy of concealing the self-tapping timber screws and bolted knife plates with wood plugs deliver a clean aesthetic.

Architect:

**FWBA Architects**

Structural Engineer:

**ISL Engineering and Land Services**

General Contractor:

**Graham Construction**

Photography:

**Angus Mackenzie Photography**

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**Institutional Award:****Northern Lakes College High Prairie Campus | High Prairie, AB**

The new NLC High Prairie Campus Building is a two-storey, 30,000 ft<sup>2</sup> mass timber (GLT) project that can host three-hundred students and has achieved both Net-Zero Energy and LEED Silver targets. The primary reason for choosing wood was sustainability, especially when it came targeting a low embedded-carbon footprint. The

Architect:

**Reimagine Architects Ltd**

Structural Engineer:

**RJC Engineers**

General Contractor:

**Clark Builders**

Photography:

superstructure is made of Glu-Laminated Timber (GLT) columns, beams and Westdek GLT floor panel system, while walls are framed in dimensional lumber.

One distinct detail in wood, which was specially designed for this building, was the idea to "drop" the GLT beams three feet below the ceiling and introduce load-bearing wooden-framed pony-walls to allow for building services to stay tight to ceilings and distribute directly, and at the same level from hallways to classrooms, without the need to duck under structural members. That detail helped minimize overall building height while maximizing the suspended ceiling height in the interiors.

The educational aspect is present not only in the building's core program but is embedded the building's architecture and engineering. With vision windows built into some of the interior partition walls, exposed building services, perforated suspended ceilings and accessible mechanical rooms for students to visit, this facility is designed as a didactic environment, to spark students' curiosity in sustainable architecture. Wood is used for many purposes: to enhance the building's energy performance, minimize its embodied carbon footprint, reduce its need for finishes, mitigate its reverb issues and transmission sound impact through wooden-slat acoustic paneling, and to improve students' mental health by being close to natural materials while studying in their classrooms.

**Cooper & O'Hara Photography**

**Industrial Award:  
The Nancy Pauw Bridge | Banff, AB**

The Nancy Pauw Bridge in the heart of Banff spans the Bow River to connect the municipality's Central Park with the Banff Recreation Grounds. The bridge provides a way to explore and access Banff without the use of a vehicle. This encourages alternative modes of transportation such as cycling, walking, and running, reducing environmental impact. The bridge has a low profile for user accessibility.

The Town wanted a graceful, unobtrusive, and natural looking bridge that would fit in with the beautiful surroundings and allow unimpeded views while crossing. Shaped glulam beams were chosen to create the natural form of a shallow tapered arch that transfers the bridge's forces into the abutments. The use of wood in this way helped to achieve the desired aesthetic and user experience.

The bridge's clear span minimizes impact on the river during construction, both during and after construction. To minimize handling during installation, the long, tapered glulam pieces were fabricated and coated at the glulam plant, transported directly to site, and assembled into two 40-metre sections. The two pieces were installed simultaneously in a matter of hours from either side of the river. They were connected in the air by a 5" diameter pin nestled into a knuckle at the centre as the sections were lowered into the abutments.

Architect:  
**StructureCraft**  
Structural Engineer:  
**StructureCraft**  
General Contractor:  
**StructureCraft**  
Photography:  
**Paul Zizka Photography**

**Jury's Choice Award:  
The Intrinsic Connection Between Wood and Indigenous Culture | Stand Off, AB**

For over 30 years, Red Crow Community College (RCCC) in Stand Off, Alberta has served both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. As the first Tribal College in Canada, Red Crow is a leader in delivering education rooted in Blackfoot culture to meet the needs of the students, Elders, and the broader community. The use of natural wood as the fundamental building material in this project is intrinsic to conveying the spirit of RCCC.

Architect:  
**Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning Ltd**  
Structural Engineer:  
**RJC Engineers**  
General Contractor:  
**Clark Builders**  
Photography:  
**Latitude**

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The strength and permanence of trees adds a sense of stability and identity to the historically traditional Blackfoot culture. This is represented in the central gathering hall, a welcoming gateway and entry to the college. A sloped wood ceiling, comprised of glue-laminated timber (GLT) deck, is supported by a Douglas Fir waffle glulam structure. Designed to reflect a canopy of trees, four solid wood columns - with branches connecting to the beams - define the gathering space. The electrical, HVAC, and sprinkler systems are integrated above the structure to avoid interrupting the view of the wood ceiling.

Anchored to the south of the gathering space is a ceremonial round room, with a wood panel detail reflecting the feather pattern of the traditional Blackfoot Stand Up headdress. Large Douglas Fir glulam beams also feature prominently in the gymnasium. This space is used for hosting Pow Wows, and other community celebrations. With resiliency being a main project driver, the durability of wood is evident. The wood elements represent harmony with nature and are long lasting and easily maintained. A beautiful balance was achieved by combining the beauty of natural wood with the rich and vibrant Blackfoot culture.

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**Industry Award:**  
**SOHO Cost-effective 5-Story Stick Wood Frame Apartment | Winnipeg, MB**

SoHo Flats is one of the first five story wood frame apartment buildings constructed in Manitoba. Because Manitoba building codes do not currently permit wood buildings over four stories tall, the structure required specialized approvals. The team worked with building code specialists to create a solution that was accepted by the City of Winnipeg.

Wood was central to the success of the project because it offered the quickest and most cost-effective option for delivering much needed affordable housing. The hybrid solution employed a mixture of light wood frame technologies and prefabricated wood components that enabled the project to be rapidly assembled on site. The natural insulating properties of wood systems produced a gain of over twice that of typical steel stud wall assemblies and resulted in an energy efficient design that exceeds the National Energy Code for Buildings by approximately 28%.

Architect:  
**Verne Reimer Architecture Inc**  
Structural Engineer:  
**Beach Rocke Engineering Ltd**  
General Contractor:  
**Bouchard Bros 2014 Ltd**  
Photography:  
**Scott Zielke Photography**

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