



BC Economic Development Association
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

BC Economic Development Award winners for 2026 announced

PENTICTON, B.C., May 13, 2026 – The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) announced the winners of the 2026 BC Economic Development Awards during the 2026 BC Economic Summit in Penticton, British Columbia.

These awards recognize outstanding work in supporting local economies and advancing innovation, resiliency, collaboration, tourism, and economic reconciliation in communities throughout British Columbia.

Congratulations to the following 2026 BC Economic Development Award winners:

Economic Reconciliation Award

Recognizes partnerships, agreements, and initiatives that advance shared economic reconciliation work.

- Neskonlith, Adams Lake, Skwłāx te Secwepemcúlecw and Splatsin First Nations for the Stselxmēm̓s r Stselxmēm̓m (SSMP) Demonstration Block

Community Project Award

Recognizes organizations that have implemented projects providing meaningful economic benefits to a community or region.

- **More than 25,000 population:** Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce – AI in Aquaculture
- **10,000 to 25,000 population:** Castlegar and District Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce – The Confluence: A New Model for Integrated Economic Development in Rural Communities

Less than 10,000 population: Surfrider Foundation Canada – ReSurf

Economic Development Marketing Innovation Award

Recognizes achievement in marketing initiatives supporting economic development, investment attraction, workforce attraction, and community promotion.

- **More than 25,000 population:** City of Penticton – Start Here Penticton
- **10,000 to 25,000 population:** Comox Business In Action (BIA) – Seas the Summer Campaign

- **Less than 10,000 population:** District of Kitimat – Kitimat, BC: It’s Not For Everyone

Community Resiliency Award

Recognizes initiatives that demonstrate leadership in economic recovery, resiliency, and response to economic disruption or disaster.

- **More than 25,000 population:** City of Prince George and partners – Support PG Tariff Response
- **Less than 10,000 population:** Comox Business In Action (BIA) – Seas the Summer + Seas the Day Campaign – Response to Major, Region Wide Construction Disruption

Tourism & Economic Development Award

Recognizes initiatives that successfully connect tourism development with broader economic and community development outcomes.

- **Less than 10,000 population:** WorkLink Employment Society – Port Renfrew Visitor Information Centre
- **More than 25,000 population:** Tourism Kamloops – The Iconic Structure Project

Chair’s Award

The Chair’s Award recognizes a member of BCEDA who has made a significant contribution to the profession of economic development and to BCEDA.

BCEDA Board Chair Rocio Zielinski presented the 2026 Chair’s Award to Pat Deakin.

Pat has made a significant contribution to economic development in British Columbia through his leadership, mentorship, and commitment to collaboration and reconciliation initiatives. He has served BCEDA as both a Board member and Chair and is widely respected throughout the profession for supporting communities and fellow practitioners.

In 2025, Pat received both the BCEDA Economic Reconciliation Award and People’s Choice Award for the CEDI Project at Clutesi Haven Marina, a partnership initiative with the Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nations focused on advancing reconciliation through economic development.

“The projects recognized this year demonstrate the incredible innovation, leadership, and collaboration taking place throughout British Columbia,” said Rocio Zielinski. “Congratulations to all of this year’s award recipients for the impact they are making in their communities.”

“The calibre of submissions this year was exceptional,” said Dale Wheeldon. “These projects reflect the creativity and dedication of economic development professionals, Indigenous communities, local governments, and organizations working to strengthen local economies and build resilient communities across British Columbia.”

For more information about BCEDA and the BC Economic Summit, visit [BCEDA](#).

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About BCEDA

Established in 1981, the [British Columbia Economic Development Association \(BCEDA\)](#) is the leading organization supporting economic development professionals, local governments, Indigenous communities, and partner organizations across British Columbia. Through leadership, professional development, advocacy, networking, and resource sharing, BCEDA helps communities strengthen local economies, build resilience, and create sustainable opportunities for the future. Today, BCEDA represents more than 575 members throughout the province and continues to play a key role in advancing the economic development profession in British Columbia.