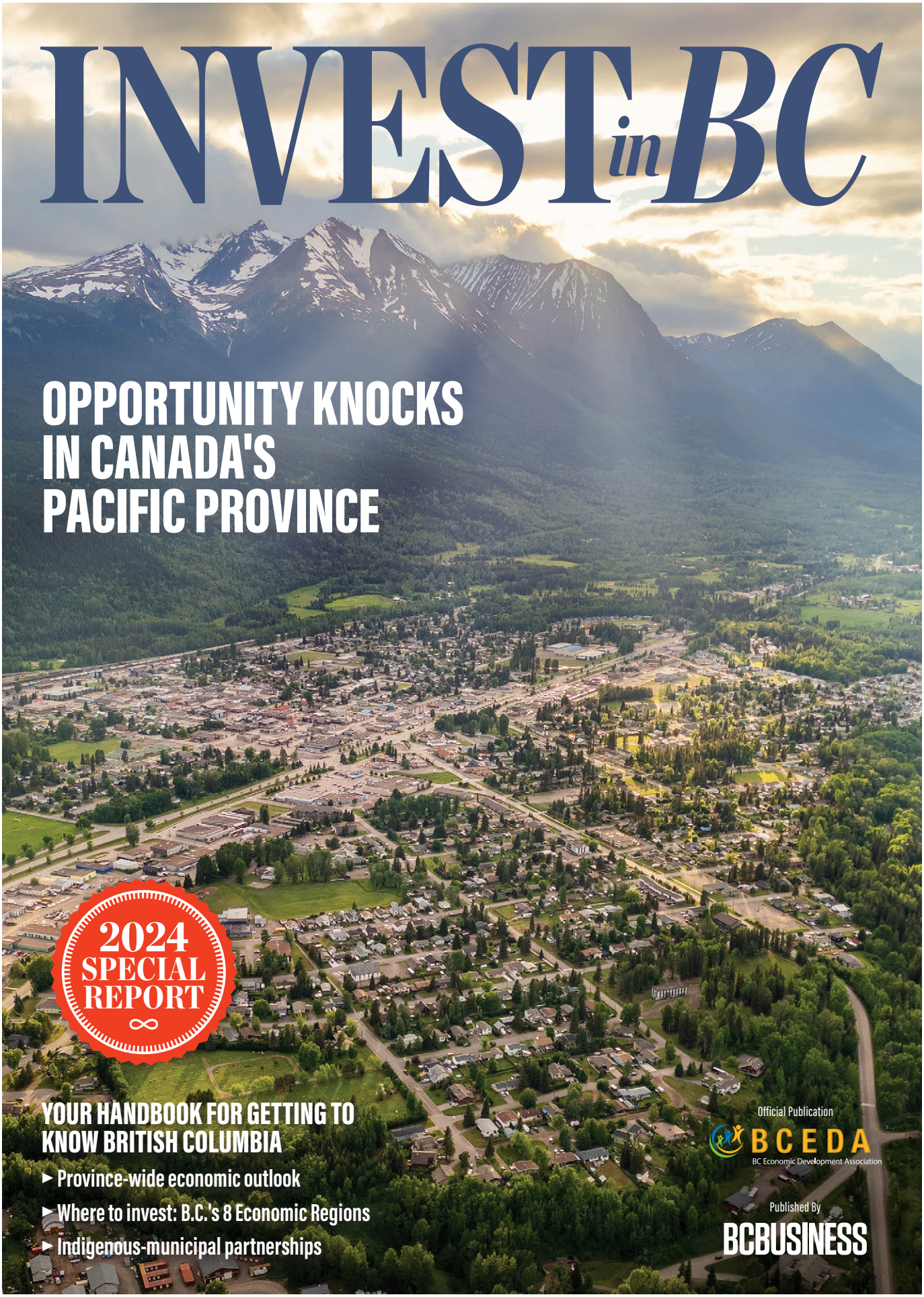
INVEST in BC



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS IN CANADA'S PACIFIC PROVINCE

2024 SPECIAL REPORT

YOUR HANDBOOK FOR GETTING TO KNOW BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Province-wide economic outlook
- Where to invest: B.C.'s 8 Economic Regions
- Indigenous-municipal partnerships

Official Publication
BCEDA
BC Economic Development Association

Published By
BCBUSINESS

Power smarter with BC Hydro

Save energy and money for your large commercial or industrial business with expert advice, tools, and incentives from BC Hydro.

Our Energy Efficiency Plan includes a $700+ million investment over the next three years. Our goal is to help our customers use less energy and shift their usage away from peak times to meet the growing demand for electricity.

Our expanded programs can help your business optimize energy use and manage peak demand.

Energy management support for business[1]

Access incentives and offset costs

Shift usage and earn rewards

Optimize operations and save energy

Improve resilience with energy storage

To apply:
Contact your Key Account Manager or call our business help desk at 1 866 522 4713.

bchydro.com/businessprograms

BC Hydro
Power smart

[1]Eligibility criteria apply

CS–5091

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: DISCOVER SURREY/IAN HARLAND; TOURISM KELOWNA/NIC COLLAR FILM; TASEKO MINES

Contents

INVEST IN BC 2024

FEATURES

8 Blueprint for a Brighter Tomorrow
B.C.'s economic indicators continue to hold up surprisingly well, and the government aims to keep it that way

12 Neighbours Working Together
Partnerships between local governments and First Nations are flowering across B.C., to mutual benefit

14 From Primary to Manufacturing
Often mistakenly characterized as a throwback, primary industries play a vital role in fostering manufacturing in B.C.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

18 Mainland/Southwest
26 Vancouver Island/Coast
32 Thompson Okanagan
42 Kootenay
44 Cariboo
48 North Coast/Nechako
56 Northeast

LISTINGS

60 BCEDA Member Organizations

ON THE COVER
Aerial view of Smithers, in the Nechako region of northwestern B.C.
Photograph by Camus Photography

The BC Economic Development Association acknowledges it carries out its work on the traditional territories of Indigenous nations throughout British Columbia. We pay our respects to the Elders, past and present, descendants and custodians of these lands. We honour the knowledge keepers and the continuing relationships with Indigenous peoples in BC that develop through our work together.

BCEDA 2024 PARTNERS

DIAMOND

City of Penticton
Destination BC
Indigenous Services Canada

PLATINUM

BC Hydro
Cando

GOLD

BC Provincial Nominee Program
ExecutivePulse
Localintel
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
<Γ"Ċ° Pamihtâw Consulting Inc.

SILVER

Co-Operatives First
Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium
The Growcer

BRONZE

468 Communications
BC Centre for Agritech Innovation, a Simon Fraser University initiative
City of Delta
CityViz
ETSI-BC
FortisBC
Futurpreneur
Manifold Data Mining Inc.
Meet in Penticton
WeBC

INVEST in BC

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
BCEDA
BC Economic Development Association

IN SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH
BCBUSINESS

CEO & GROUP PUBLISHER Ryan Benn
GROUP VP, PUBLISHING & OPERATIONS Nina Wagner

EDITORIAL

EDITOR Michael McCullough
SPONSORED CONTENT EDITOR Jessica Kirby

DESIGN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Jenny Reed
ART DIRECTOR Edwin Pabellon

SALES REPRESENTATION

VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES Anna Lee
SENIOR MEDIA SPECIALISTS Brianne Harper, Mira Hershcovitch, Sheri Stubel
SALES COORDINATOR Rebecca Scutt
EMAIL email sales@canadawide.com

PRODUCTION/ADMINISTRATION

GROUP VP, EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION Jane Griffiths
VP, CUSTOM PUBLISHING Brendan Harrington
GROUP DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS Devin Steinberg
DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION Tracy McRitchie
MANAGER, HR AND ADMINISTRATION Ava Pashmchi
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO Hannah Dewar
DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER Rebekah Ho
PRODUCTION MANAGER/MEDIA COORDINATOR Kim McLane
PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE Natasha Jayawardana
PRODUCTION SUPPORT TECHNICIAN Ina Bowerbank
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR Celine Simpson

FINANCE

GROUP VP, FINANCE Conroy Ing, CPA, CMA
VP OF FINANCE Sonia Roxburgh, CPA, CGA
ACCOUNTING Terri Mason, Eileen Gajowski

PUBLISHED BY

CW media.

CANADA WIDE MEDIA LIMITED | canadawide.com

ADDRESS Suite 130, 4321 Still Creek Drive, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 6S7
TEL 604-299-7311 FAX 604-299-9188 EMAIL sales@canadawide.com

PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

2024

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to the readers of the 2024 edition of the *Invest in BC* magazine.

Since 1979, *Invest in BC* has provided valuable information on economic development in British Columbia, including profiles on the province's eight economic regions and details on a wide range of business and investment opportunities.

I'd like to thank the British Columbia Economic Development Association for its hard work and dedication. You can take pride in your contributions to the province's economic prosperity.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

LETTER FROM THE PREMIER

A Clean Economy that Works for People

It's no secret: B.C. is a great place to live. We have a strong economy and opportunities for everyone to build a good life here in our province.

B.C.'s economy is a leader in Canada. Our province saw some of the strongest job growth in the country last year with 74,000 new jobs. We have an abundance of natural resources and highly skilled people, already hard at work building a clean energy future.

At the same time, we know global inflation and high-interest rates continue to squeeze family budgets and make it tougher for businesses.

This year, we took steps to reduce the cost of doing business. More than 8 of every 10 small and middle sized businesses are now exempt from the Employer Health Tax, saving businesses millions of dollars every year. Businesses here also enjoy the benefits of BC Hydro offering the third-lowest commercial and industrial rates in North America. We also offer low and stable commercial vehicle insurance through the Insurance Corporation of B.C., which has even provided four rebates to all personal and commercial customers in recent years.

There is more work to do. We must make sure B.C. remains a great place to live, work and invest. We're focused on growing a stronger, cleaner economy by building on our province's natural strengths in manufacturing, life sciences, hydrogen, critical minerals, forestry, and more.

We are starting from a good place. British Columbia is a world-leading mining jurisdiction with the critical minerals to power a cleaner future, from electric cars to wind turbines and solar panels. Companies like E-One Moli see the potential here — and it's why they're bringing lithium-ion battery cell production to Maple Ridge, along with hundreds of new jobs.

It is not only B.C.'s natural resources that set us apart in the global market. Our commitment to reducing climate pollution through the CleanBC plan, paired with our clean hydroelectric power, sets B.C. up well to capitalize on the direction of a global economy committed to a low-carbon future.

These are B.C.'s competitive advantages. And we're doubling down on our strengths. For the first time in 15 years, BC Hydro has released a competitive call for power and an updated 10-year capital plan, leading to some $40 billion in capital investments, while creating as many as 14,000 construction jobs annually and expanding our ability to power the industries of the future.

Our partners in the traditional energy sector will be our partners in our net zero future. Pumping up production of zero carbon fuels, enabling industries like steel and cement to slash their emissions, and being at the forefront of hydrogen development, will all play an important part.

As the first Canadian province to design and implement a hydrogen strategy, B.C. is committed to growing its hydrogen economy. We are well-positioned to attract investment in clean-hydrogen projects, such as HTEC's recently announced $900 million H2 Gateway project, which aims to reduce emissions in the transportation sector. With about 50 proposed projects in the hydrogen sector, our province could see billions in potential investment.

We cannot afford to squander this generational opportunity before us. Some will say we must choose between economic growth and climate action. That is an old and rudimentary approach which fails to grasp the realities of today and will leave B.C. at the back of the pack in prosperity.

In an uncertain world, British Columbia remains a competitive, stable and secure place to live, work and invest. We're focused on building a cleaner, brighter future here in B.C. and around the world. To put it simply, we are open for business.

Honourable David Eby
Premier of B.C.

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO, BC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

We're Open for Business

Welcome to the 2024 edition of *Invest in BC*, the official publication of the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA). Our goal is to provide you with a concise yet informative overview of British Columbia, encouraging you to explore our province's diverse investment opportunities. This magazine is designed to deliver valuable insights into the eight economic regions of British Columbia and highlight the latest trends in our economy. We encourage you to use this information as a starting point and delve deeper into what B.C. offers.

Having travelled across our province and witnessed the remarkable efforts of local and Indigenous governments, I am proud to say that British Columbia boasts a strong and diverse economy with unparalleled opportunities. Despite global challenges, our economic momentum remains robust, thanks to our talented workforce, high quality of life, openness to newcomers and resilience in times of crisis.

Our association has grown to encompass over 500 members representing a broad spectrum of communities, Indigenous groups, businesses, chambers of commerce, Crown corporations, tourism organizations, financial institutions, government agencies, NGOs and educational institutions, all dedicated to building a prosperous British Columbia. We aim to bring the right people together at the right time to forge valuable partnerships and promote growth.

As the leading provincial association of economic development practitioners in British Columbia, we offer services that help member communities expand and attract new businesses and pursue strategic infrastructure investments, land-use planning and community enhancement.

British Columbia is renowned for its unparalleled quality of life. We invite you to discover the endless possibilities our province has to offer. British Columbia's only limit is your imagination. We are proud to work alongside the Province of B.C. in supporting existing businesses and showcasing B.C.'s opportunities to investors worldwide. Investing in B.C. is an opportunity you won't want to miss.

Please feel free to contact me, my staff or any of our members to discuss anything related to economic development in British Columbia.

Dale Wheeldon, *President and CEO, British Columbia Economic Development Association*

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, BC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

BCEDA Supports Communities

As the chair of the board of the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA), I am delighted to present the 2024 edition of *Invest in BC* magazine. Developed in partnership with Canada Wide Media and *BC Business*, this publication showcases the vibrant opportunities across British Columbia. BCEDA represents over 500 economic development professionals throughout the province, all dedicated to supporting community growth and development.

British Columbia offers many investment opportunities, whether you are interested in natural resources, energy, technology, food production, tourism, education, transportation or shipping. Our province is renowned for its highly skilled workforce, low corporate tax rates, world-class infrastructure and services and friendly, inclusive communities of all sizes.

Municipalities, regional districts and Indigenous communities collectively invest over $100 million annually in economic development and tourism programming. BCEDA enhances this investment by providing economic development professionals with essential marketing tools, professional development programs and resource materials. In May of 2024, BCEDA proudly announced the Certified Economic Development Professional of British Columbia (CEDP.BC) program to establish a standard for ongoing professional development in the province, and to help provide the tools and support for today's economic development.

We are particularly proud to have established Canada's first Economic Resiliency and Recovery Program. In the aftermath of wildfires and floods, BCEDA volunteers have actively supported communities by identifying immediate business needs, connecting business owners with resources and aiding in economic recovery planning. Our initiatives have gained global recognition, with our volunteers assisting in disaster-affected areas across Canada, the U.S., and other countries.

Economic Development Officers (EDOs) are experts in their communities. As you explore this magazine, I encourage you to contact the EDOs in any community that interests you. They can provide detailed information about local business environments, upcoming investments and ongoing efforts to create strong and sustainable communities.

BCEDA is dedicated to assisting economic developers, local, regional and Indigenous communities, businesses and the government of B.C. to build a robust and sustainable economy through education, collaboration and partnerships.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are creating a prosperous and dynamic future for British Columbia.

Warm regards,

Brian Coombes, *Chair of the Board, British Columbia Economic Development Association*

BLUEPRINT FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

B.C.'s economic indicators continue to hold up surprisingly well, and the government aims to keep it that way

BY JOANNE PETERS

ACCELERATING GROWTH: Alpine enthusiasts gather at Revelstoke Mountain Village (right); B.C. has adopted its own Critical Minerals Strategy to take advantage of the global energy transition (below)

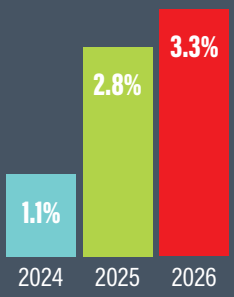
In the midst of a soft patch in the economic cycle, British Columbia continues to boast one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country and strong job growth. The province is expected to have a million job openings over the next decade, more than a third of them newly created positions. As of May 2024, B.C. showed a year-over-year hiring growth of 2.8 percent, above the national rate of 2.0 percent. Employment growth is coming in at 1.8 per cent on average, lifted in part by increased capacity from population growth.

With new heavy oil and liquefied natural gas export infrastructure and a major hydroelectric dam nearing completion, as well as new green hydrogen production and biodiesel refineries in the works, and carbon-capture companies reaching $1 billion valuations, B.C. is increasingly viewed as an energy and clean-tech powerhouse.

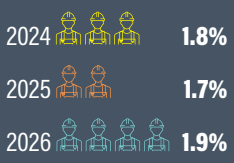
According to BC Check-Up: Invest, an annual report by the Chartered Professional Accountants of British

PROVINCIAL FORECAST

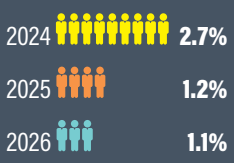
REAL GDP GROWTH



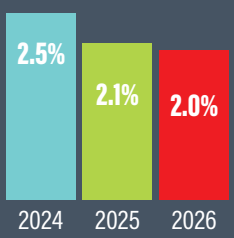
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH



POPULATION GROWTH



CONSUMER PRICE INDEX



SOURCE: CENTRAL 1 ECONOMICS

Columbia (CPABC), construction began on 47,894 housing units in 2023, marking a record high. The group predicts the economy will accelerate in 2025 and 2026 as exports increase and consumer demand improves due to lower interest rates and strong population growth.

More broadly, investment and business expansion are expected to rebound. The CPABC outlook sees real economic growth of 1.1 per cent this year before increasing to 2.8 per cent in 2025 and over three per cent in 2026.

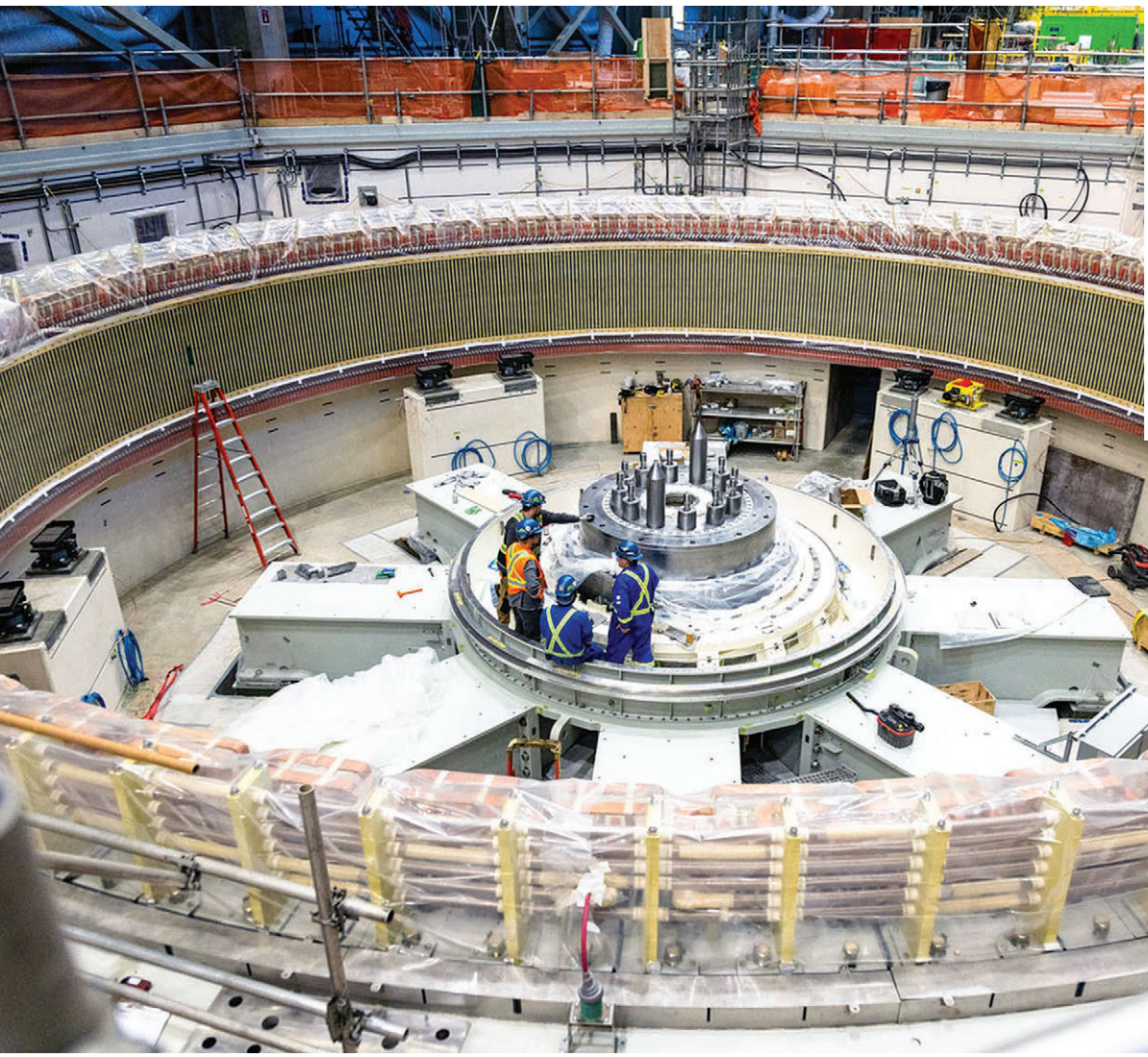
While goods make up the bulk of trade activity, tourism services have remained firm, aided by a low Canadian dollar and still robust global tourism following the pandemic.

RESOURCES IN DEMAND

The provincial budget for 2024-25 advances the new made-in-B.C. Critical Minerals Strategy in collaboration with First Nations, industry, local governments and the public, and strengthens resources for mine permitting. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has estimated a sixfold increase in demand for critical minerals will be needed by 2040, largely to supply the energy transition. Of the 31 minerals on the federal government's critical minerals list, 16 are found in the westernmost province.

There are 17 critical mineral mines proposed for B.C., and a recent economic impact study on them found that, if all were built, their development and construction alone would generate $36 billion in near-term investment. That would result in an economic output of $80 billion, labour income of $23 billion, and $11 billion in tax revenues. The longer-term impact of these mines, once in operation, could reach nearly $800 billion over their lifespans. Five proposed gold mines in B.C., furthermore, would exceed $29 billion in economic activity over their lifespans.

The importance of forestry as a driver of the provincial economy has unfortunately declined in recent decades and 2023 was no exception with the volume of exports dropping 13.2 per cent. Timber supply issues in the face of insect infestations, wildfires, conservation measures and



ENERGY BOOST: Refuelling with hydrogen at Vancouver International Airport (above); Site C powerhouse under construction (top)

fluctuations in demand are largely responsible. That said, mass timber is an emerging sector in B.C. with strong innovation potential in the areas of building design, product manufacturing, and construction technology.

Roughly $90 billion worth of energy mega-projects are nearing completion in B.C. – the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, the LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink pipeline, and Site C dam – with tens of billions of dollars of further investments still to come in other energy projects, including two LNG terminals led by First Nations (Cedar and Ksi Lisims LNG), green hydrogen and ammonia production proposals, and new renewable energy and transmission projects. B.C. will also enjoy the fruits of capital investment in liquefied natural gas and electricity generation with the completion of the LNG Canada plant and Site C, which will lift export activity and create positive spillover effects in local areas and government finances.

High technology continues to grow, with B.C. ranked third nationally in venture capital investment in 2023 at $1.2 billion, following Ontario ($3.3 billion) and Quebec ($1.4 billion). Blockchain developer LayerZero Labs alone secured $120 million in a Series B financing. In a 2023 survey by office leasing company CBRE, Vancouver tied Austin for the highest job growth since 2021 among the 30 largest technology hubs in North America.

In terms of exports over a 12-month period from May 2024, there was a jump in farm, fishing, and intermediate food products, which were up 50.9 per cent to $298 million.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

The provincial government aims to build on these strengths. B.C.'s Budget 2024

TOP LEFT: BC HYDRO

NICHE INDUSTRIES: (clockwise from top) Mass timber mill on Vancouver Island; maritime industries in Steveston; agricultural technology development at Simon Fraser University

provides a record $43 billion in capital funding for schools, post-secondary facilities, housing, health-care facilities, roads and other infrastructure over the next three years. The province continues its work through its CleanBC plan to transition to a low-carbon economy, providing more rebates on heat pumps to households with low and middle incomes and increasing funding for electric-vehicle public charging stations.

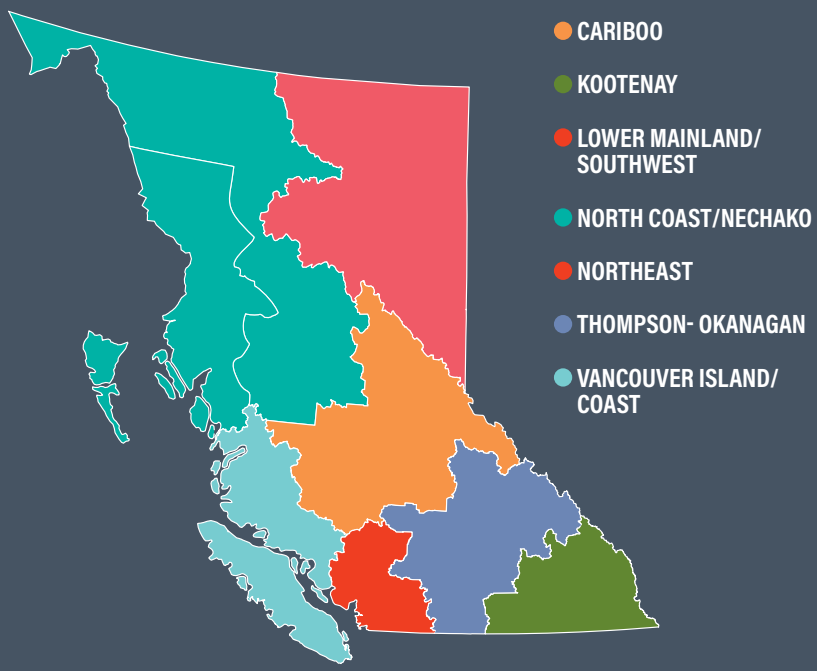
Building on the momentum of its economic strategy, StrongerBC, the government continues to focus on the development of priority innovative sectors such as mass timber, clean tech, life sciences, biotech and biomanufacturing, quantum computing, manufacturing, agritech and maritime industries.

Other new initiatives focus on alleviating the cost of living. To help people through the impacts of global inflation, a BC Family Benefit Bonus means that more than 340,000 families will receive a 25 percent bonus with their monthly family benefit in 2024. This includes an estimated 66,000 families that haven't received the BC Family Benefit previously.

A one-time BC Electricity Affordability Credit will help reduce electricity bills for people and businesses in the coming year. Small and growing businesses will also receive help with the impacts of inflation and labour shortages, through a higher Employer Health Tax exemption threshold, doubled from $500,000 to $1 million.

Expanding the First Time Home Buyers program will help more people save more money when buying their first home, while other tax changes will lower the cost of new home and rental construction. New investments in BC Builds will speed up the development of housing by bringing together underused land, low-cost financing, and grants to deliver more homes for people and families with middle incomes. ■

B.C.'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS



NEW UNDERSTANDING: An agreement between Mission and area First Nations that translates to "Together we paddle" covers matters of mutual concern including public parklands, recreation and housing (left and above)

NEIGHBOURS WORKING TOGETHER

Partnerships between local governments and First Nations are flowering across B.C., to mutual benefit

BY JOANNE PETERS

"Community to community" partnerships between municipalities and neighbouring First Nations can create economic opportunities in various different industries. The collaborations are mutually beneficial and offer prospects for the future.

Consider a recent agreement between the Province of British Columbia, the Leq'á:mel, Matsqui and Sumas First Nations and the City of Mission that will return traditional lands to the First Nations and establish new public parklands and recreation areas.

Leq'á:mel Chief Alice Thompson, Matsqui Chief Alice McKay and Sumas Chief Dalton Silver were joined by Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and Paul Horn, mayor of Mission, for the signing of Í:xel Sq'eq'ó, a Hul'qumi'num phrase that translates to English as "Together we paddle."

Unique in that it brings together First Nations, the province and local government, the agreement will see the provincial government transfer approximately 60 hectares of Crown land to the LMS Society, which represents the three First Nations. The lands will be subdivided to create a park parcel of approximately 50 hectares, which will be leased to Mission to manage for public use as a community park and recreational area, and two development parcels, to be developed by the First Nations to support much-needed housing in the area and increase economic and social opportunities.

A park management plan will be collaboratively developed by LMS and Mission to maintain the natural character of the area, protect sensitive environmental elements, enhance cultural and historic understanding, and guide improvements over time.

"From the First Nations perspective, since the land is now in their ownership as

TOP LEFT AND RIGHT: CITY OF MISSION; ISTOCK/NATOLIY_GLEB; OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT TOP: CRANBROOK TOURISM/ABBY COOPER

fee simple property, there is a considerable amount of land now freed up to develop into housing and commercial ventures," says Barclay Pitkethly, deputy chief administrative officer for the City of Mission. "From the city's perspective, because the land is being transferred as fee simple, and not an addition to reserve lands, the tax implications stay with the city, as does the servicing. Collectively, the LMS Society and the City of Mission are also placing the majority of the lands into park designation that will be jointly co-managed via a newly created joint park management plan."

Then there is the signing of a friendship agreement by the District of Kitimat and Haisla Nation Council, concluding a two-year relationship building project. The agreement was signed at a celebration at Minette Bay West Park on June 2, 2024.

The agreement, which is named gi guáƛap̓nis (meaning working together/helping each other), is the result of the work the district and Haisla have done through the Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) program. CEDI is a national program delivered jointly by CANDO (the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

The program in Kitimat, launched in 2022, is a facilitated, collaborative process to approach economic development opportunities through a respectful, equitable partnership involving the District of Kitimat and Haisla Nation Council.

As the facilitated CEDI process ends, the parties set the framework for continuing work.

"Our friendship agreement means we will always have a space to share ideas and plans for thoughtful development in the territory," says chief councillor Crystal Smith. "All our communities benefit from this new way we can work together in an environment of respect and inclusion."

With participation in this program having ended in June 2024, the District of Kitimat and Haisla Nation Council have created a five-year Joint Strategic Plan that lays out actions that will be embarked on together moving forward. The efforts won recognition of the partnership through a BCEDA Award for Economic Reconciliation—Partnership on economic development programs and strategy development.

The goal for both governments was to build a sustainable partnership and foster relationship growth through economic development. Over the past two years, the partnership developed principles and terms of reference to guide their discussions. Through their work together, the parties have increased collaborative programming, incorporated Haisla art on the newly completed Haisla Bridge, launched an Indigenous hiring program at the district and created a new Indigenous relations manager position at the district.

The Ktunaxa Nation's ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises and the City of Cranbrook form another example of a community-to-community partnership. Adjacent to the Canadian Rockies International Airport are 100 acres of land that the two organizations are developing together, in part for a renewable energy project. The parties are also behind a new interpretative centre that will serve as a visitor centre as well as a cultural centre as part of its tourism plan.

"The vision for the infrastructure is to tell the story of the Ktunaxa and to create a workplace for our artisans to show their skills as well as to manufacture and sell their artwork," says Janice Alpine, the business development officer/tourism engagement with the Ktunaxa Nation Council Economic & Investment Sector.

Adds Darren Brewer, business development officer with the City of Cranbrook: "Indigenous tourism is an underserved and emerging sector in the tourism space." ■

BUILDING BRIDGES: The Ktunaxa Nation Interpretive Centre (left) opened with the support of the City of Cranbrook; Kitimat politicians join Haisla elders and councillors to open the Haisla Bridge, part of a Joint Strategic Plan

WE BC

SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN BC

GRANT FUNDED

Self-Paced Courses for Entrepreneurs

With WeBC's SMART programs, women business owners in all areas of BC can improve their business skills in HR, financials, marketing and more. No membership required!

Visit go.we-bc.ca/SMART

We support women in your community with:
Business Loans up to $150k
+ Advisory Services, Training, and Mentorship

WeBC is supported by Pacific Economic Development Canada
The SMART Program is funded by the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy

Canada

FROM PRIMARY TO MANUFACTURING

Often mistakenly characterized as a throwback, primary industries play a vital role in fostering manufacturing in B.C. **BY JOANNE PETERS**

ISTOCK/PHYNART STUDIO

For most of its history, Canada developed on the backs of primary industries. And in the lesser populated parts of the country, trapping for furs, farming, fishing, forestry and mining are still important components of the economy. But as the country has grown, those natural resources no longer seem as abundant as they once did.

There is still abundant opportunity to add value to traditional extractive industries, however, as countless ventures are finding. The economic activity generated by those sectors is often underestimated.

"The manufacturing sector is closely tied to the primary industries," says David Munro, manufacturing consortium manager for the western provinces with Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC). "In most cases primary industries are considered manufacturers. For example, primary sectors like mining, forestry and farming remove, grow or harvest products and convert them to raw materials, which is manufacturing. These materials are then used in more traditional manufacturing operations.

"A more specific example is a mining

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

FOUNDATION: Teck Resources' Highland Valley Copper mine near Kamloops (top); the forest industry strives to use 100% of every tree (below)

VALUE ADDED: Sectors from metal fabrication to food processing benefit from synergies with primary producers (left)

company that mines iron ore, which is then provided to a secondary manufacturer to make into steel products. Those are then often distributed to tertiary industry that manufactures other goods such as equipment (planes, cars, tractors, machinery), parts, tools, et cetera," Munro continues. "Or these products could go to a tertiary sector in the construction sector for building homes, bridges and the like."

EMC's members provide vivid examples of the synergy between primary industries and manufacturing. Visscher Speciality Products of Chilliwack sources Canadian lumber that has been harvested and then milled for their outdoor living space products. AE Concrete of Surrey sources Canadian primary-sector inputs like sand and gravel that are mined by primary industries and then used in its engineered precast products for electrical vaults, custom chambers and so on. A food and beverage example would be JD Sweid Foods. The Langley meat processor sources beef, poultry, pork, and plant-based products for its meatless line from the agriculture sector.

The Value-Added Accelerators, meanwhile, is a related program developed in partnership between the B.C. Ministry of Forests, the Council of Forest Industries (COFI), the Value-Added Coalition and the B.C. First Nations Forestry Council. A healthy and stable primary sector is critical to an integrated and robust secondary sector.

A related consideration lies within cost structures across the supply chain for forest products; secondary and value-added manufacturers can benefit from the infrastructure maintained by the primary producers, with the efficiencies that come through economies of scale for operations. The primary forest industry can benefit the manufacturing of building materials for housing and non-residential projects, and wood products have environmental benefits with the low embodied carbon of wood-based building solutions that use locally sourced materials.

Looking to more advanced opportunities in the supply chain, forestry is nowadays connected to potential advancements in the bioeconomy. The forest industry in B.C. strives to use virtually 100 percent of every tree. Almost half becomes lumber for high-value wood products, with the rest becoming residual wood chips used to create pulp and paper, packaging, novel bioproducts and bioenergy, a growing part of the sustainable economy. By carefully managing forests, extracting value from every part of a tree, using wood residues and waste for value-added manufacturing and energy, while replanting trees, it's possible for B.C. and Canada to deliver not only a vibrant bioeconomy but also renewable energy growth.

New technologies are being developed to better manage forest health and decarbonize operations. Bioproducts are being developed that can replace non-renewable materials in items like medical face masks, asphalt for roads and natural-based glue and adhesives for wood panels in houses and buildings.

Much of the manufacturing innovation coming out of British Columbia today can be traced back to those primary industries long established in the province. ■

TOP RIGHT: ISTOCK/URBAZON; MIDDLE: ISTOCK/PIXDELUXE

UPSKILL YOUTH WITH INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS IN MANUFACTURING

WILWorks Skilled Trades in Advanced Manufacturing builds the workforce, enhances retention and helps employers plan for succession

Young people have a key role in shaping the future of manufacturing in Canada. They are the thinkers, inventors and leaders of the future, and they represent a new wave of energy, innovation and creativity that is crucial to driving change. Young people crave diverse work opportunities, stability, competitive salaries and the opportunity to make an impact with their work. They can find it all in manufacturing. With an emphasis on sustainability and a favourable perspective on mentorship, youth are the catalysts to propelling manufacturing into the newly charted territories of Industry 4.0.

"Immersed in technology, young people bring a natural aptitude for innovation that can't be underestimated," says Julie Smith, Project Coordinator at EMC Canada. "Employers can leverage this essential workforce by empowering youth with education, embracing technology, focusing on sustainability and fostering leadership through mentorship."

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING

Both federal and provincial governments are investing in integrated learning programs to develop manufacturing skills in youth, to build a strong workforce for tomorrow's industry and leverage the unique skillset youth brings to the table.

"To harness this potential, manufacturers can align with future industry needs by helping to fill employment shortages today and propel progress in key areas," Smith says.

WILWorks Skilled Trades in Advanced Manufacturing offers youth 15 to 29 introductory skills training and exposes participants to advanced manufacturing career pathways. Employers can customize the training to their organization's needs by selecting from a range of technical skills, including mechanical, electrical and machining.

"The program is open to both new and current eligible employees not registered in apprenticeships, enhancing their technical skills and improving organizational communication through a better understanding of terminology, equipment operations and processes," Smith says.

WILWorks Skilled Trades in Advanced Manufacturing supports employers with up to $5,000 in wage subsidies per eligible participant, funded in part by the Government of Canada's Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy.

ESSENTIAL MENTORSHIP

Manufacturing is a rapidly evolving sector, and mentorship programs are vital to bridging skills gaps, fostering innovation and enhancing employee retention.

"Mentoring facilitates knowledge transfer from seasoned professionals to the leaders of tomorrow and vice versa," Smith says. "This promotes a culture of continuous learning and growth, and ensuring that invaluable industry insights are passed on to the next generation."

WILWorks Skilled Trades in Advanced Manufacturing offers mentorship training for employers so they can actively invest in fostering youth careers in the manufacturing sector.

All interested employers can reach out to Julie Smith, Project Coordinator, **jsmith@emccanada.org** or visit **https://emccanada.org/wilworks** to learn more.

EMC

Connect on LinkedIn **@Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium,** Facebook **@emccanada.org** or X **@EMCCanadaMFG**

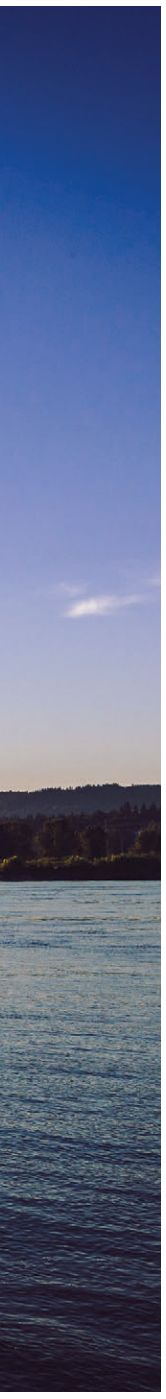
Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

HIRE ELIGIBLE YOUTH AND RECEIVE UP TO
$3,500
PER PARTICIPANT
Youth in Manufacturing
APPLY TODAY
www.emccanada.org/bc-youth
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supported by the Province of British Columbia
EMC
CANADA'S LARGEST MANUFACTURING CONSORTIUM

MAINLAND/SOUTHWEST

- Abbotsford
- Burnaby
- Chilliwack
- Coquitlam
- Delta
- Gibsons
- Hope
- Langley
- Lillooet
- Maple Ridge
- Mission
- New Westminster
- North Vancouver
- Pitt Meadows
- Port Moody
- Richmond
- Sechelt
- Squamish
- Surrey
- Vancouver
- West Vancouver
- Whistler

61% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION



CITY OF MISSION (ALL PHOTOS)

TURNING HEADS: Mission's plan to transform its Fraser River foreshore (opposite page, and renderings above and right)

Ripple Effects

Being the epicentre for waves of migrants arriving in B.C., Vancouver and its neighbouring communities drive economic opportunities to the far corners of the Lower Mainland and the province as a whole

At the heart of Southwestern B.C. lies Mission, for most of its history a blue-collar, shake and shingle-milling town on the banks of the Fraser River. The population growth and housing development that has taken over much of the surrounding Fraser Valley was late to arrive here. But these days, Mission is changing faster than just about anywhere in the province and is expected to double its population of 44,000 very quickly.

Southwest Mission, a 3,400-acre area designated for urban growth that will accommodate approximately 40,000 residents at build-out, recently adopted the Silverdale Central Neighbourhood Plan, opening up 1,811 acres for the development of more than 10,000 new homes for 25,000 residents, three elementary schools and two civic centres.

But the City of Mission has an even more ambitious plan in the works, to reclaim the largest undeveloped river frontage in the Lower Mainland. It envisions a mix of businesses, homes, shops and restaurants covering nearly 300 acres along 3.5 kilometres of south-facing shoreline on the Fraser River. The development will also enhance infrastructure to provide flood protection to areas inland. The city has created the Mission Bridgehead Investment Corporation to help spearhead the project and coordinate efforts between the city and private landowners.

The idea has turned heads such that the Economic Development Association of Canada sponsored a team from Mission to present its plan at a major international gathering of investors in France. In March 2024, Mayor Paul Horn and other city representatives showcased the waterfront plan at the MIPIM real estate investment conference in Cannes.

MAKING A SPLASH

To understand why Mission is evolving the way it is, and why now, you have to understand the forces driving growth throughout the region. The Mainland/Southwest is by far the most

REGIONAL POPULATION (2023)
3,413,392

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
5.7%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
Health care & social assistance
12.4%
Retail trade
12.2%
Professional, scientific & technical services
11.6%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
234,600

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$15.4 BILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
35,389

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$113.3 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
41,718

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, BC STATS

populous, most densely developed, most economically diverse part of the province.

It's also where the vast majority of immigrants to B.C. first land and settle, and immigration has been an outsized factor in Canada's economic growth in recent years. In just the first three months of 2024, net international migration to B.C. hit a new quarterly high of 40,840. Almost all those migrants, a mix of permanent and temporary residents (such as those on work and study permits), made their homes in Metro Vancouver. That inevitably drives demand for housing and other services; regional housing starts rose more than 20 percent in 2023 over 2022. It also encourages residents and businesses to seek out lower-cost locales outside the urban core—places like Mission.

Or, for that matter, Chilliwack. For more than a year Chilliwack Economic Partners Corp. (CEPCo) worked with Red Bull to find a suitable location for the energy drink maker's first ingredient preparation plant outside its home base of Austria. Red Bull settled on a 15-acre parcel within the Chilliwack Food and Beverage Processing Park, which was already occupied by Molson Coors's brewery for western Canada. It cited the location's proximity to major road and rail links, the Port of Vancouver—Canada's largest trade entrepot—and the U.S. border, along with the availability of fresh farm produce and skilled workers for its choice. Construction of the plant began this year.

Surrey, the largest of Vancouver's suburbs and soon to be the region's most populous municipality, continues to boom with some 34,000 homes in various stages of development, work ongoing on the $1.4-billion Patullo Bridge replacement, plans to extend the SkyTrain system to neighbouring Langley, the site cleared for a new $2.9-billion hospital in Cloverdale and ongoing expansion of the mammoth Campbell Heights industrial park near the U.S. border.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

AFFORDABLE LAND: Chilliwack's Food and Beverage Processing Park (top) has attracted Molson Coors and Red Bull; Surrey's Campbell Heights offers industrial space near the U.S. border (above); the municipality is on track to become the region's most populous (bottom)

TOP: MOLSON COORS; MIDDLE: CITY OF SURREY

NEW WESTMINSTER: WHERE HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION

Nestled strategically in the heart of Metro Vancouver, New Westminster epitomizes a city that seamlessly blends history with forward-thinking development. With a commitment to fostering vibrant commercial districts, stimulating innovation, and celebrating arts and culture, New Westminster offers an unparalleled environment for businesses and professionals to thrive.

CENTRAL LOCATION, UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

New Westminster has become a beacon for small and medium-sized businesses seeking to establish or expand operations. The city's strategic location offers exceptional connectivity and accessibility, supported by five SkyTrain stations, easy access to the US border, Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and rail, making it a prime hub for commerce. Businesses here benefit not only from logistical advantages but also from a community-driven approach that supports family-sustaining jobs and an active, engaged workforce.

CULTIVATING INNOVATION AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Innovation is at the forefront of New Westminster's economic strategy. The city nurtures creative industries as drivers of growth, recognizing the vital role that arts and culture play in stimulating new opportunities. From a thriving arts scene to community-driven cultural events, New Westminster provides fertile ground for creativity to flourish. This commitment not only enriches the cultural fabric of the city but also fuels economic expansion and attracts forward-thinking professionals.

DISCOVER THE OPPORTUNITY

New Westminster stands as a testament to progressive urban planning, historical significance and a commitment to fostering innovation and community spirit. Whether you have a business looking to grow or are a professional seeking an ideal balance between career opportunities and quality of life, New Westminster invites you to explore its limitless potential and become a part of its thriving future.

Invest New West

Discover
NEW WESTMINSTER
today at
info@investnewwest.ca
or **investnewwest.ca**

Invest New West

New Westminster:
An incredible place for business

Centrally located with five SkyTrain stations, award-winning parks, unique neighbourhoods, and diverse commercial spaces.

Join our dynamic and growing business community! **Contact the Economic Development Office to find out how New Westminster can work for you.**

NEW WESTMINSTER

investnewwest.ca

604-527-4536

info@investnewwest.ca

FROM PAGE 20

This year Surrey was awarded the Community Resiliency Award (community more than 20,000 population) by the BCEDA for its Economic Strategy 2024. The comprehensive, 77-page document, Surrey's first such strategy since 2017, aims to create one job for every resident worker in the city within 20 years—a lofty goal that will require the creation of more than 300,000 new jobs. It identifies four priorities: the attraction of and readiness for strategic industries; ensuring the availability of land for optimizing employment; enhancing the innovation ecosystem; and creating livable, vibrant and distinct communities.

TRADE WINDS: (clockwise from top) Woodfibre LNG near Squamish promises to be the world's first net-zero gas export terminal; construction workers will be housed in a converted cruise ship; Lougheed Town Centre is undergoing a $7-billion renovation

A HUB FOR HIGH TECH

The Mainland/Southwest is home to a large and diversified high-technology community recognized at an international level. Vancouver tied Austin, Tex., for having the highest technology job growth of all North American cities since 2021 at 26.3 percent, office leasing company CBRE determined in its Tech 30 report released in October 2023.

Local companies continue to attract noteworthy venture capital investments. For example Operto Guest Technologies raised $34 million last year to further develop its platform for automating hotel reservations, payments and other operations. Blockchain developer LayerZero Labs attracted $120 million in a Series B funding round. This year, Sanctuary AI landed a major cash infusion from the Business Development Bank of Canada and InBC Investment Corp. that brings its total raised to date to $140 million.

And there are growing clusters of companies in niches such as nuclear energy, quantum computing and antibody-based drug development.

The provincial government announced late last year it is adding a $638-million research centre to the new, $1.9-billion St. Paul's Hospital under construction in downtown Vancouver. Connected to the hospital by an overhead "sky bridge," the facility is meant to accelerate the testing of innovative therapies and medications in a clinical setting and help build the ecosystem of private- and public-sector life sciences research in the city.

FROM SHIPBUILDING TO ENERGY EXPORTS

The wide-ranging economy of Southwest B.C. is evidenced by the head offices of its largest corporations, which include telecommunications company Telus, mining giant Teck Resources and fashion designer Lululemon Athletica. In North Vancouver, the next generation of Canadian Coast Guard research vessels is coming together at Seaspan shipyards. The first, $1.3-billion ship is expected to be in service on the Atlantic coast in 2025, part of a multi-vessel contract stretching into the 2030s.

Bucking the slowdown in retail nationwide, Lougheed Town Centre, on the border of Burnaby and Coquitlam, is undergoing a $7-billion redevelopment. Swedish furniture brand Ikea is revamping and expanding its Richmond store—the first in Canada when it opened in the 1970s—on a budget of more than $100 million. It is expected to open its doors again late next year.

This past spring, Squamish saw the arrival of a converted cruise ship, soon to be a "floatel" housing hundreds of workers assembling the Woodfibre LNG terminal on the site of an old pulp mill. The proponents tout the $1.6-billion liquefaction plant as "the world's first net-zero LNG facility," designed to be powered by renewable hydroelectricity. ■

LEFT: THE CITY OF LOUGHEED

AT THE HEART OF IT

Maple Ridge boldly positioned for business success

Maple Ridge, at the heart of British Columbia's Lower Mainland, is boldly moving to build a city where businesses can thrive and people can live, work, invest and play in their own backyard and beyond. The home of the q̓i̓čə́y̓ (Katzie) and qʼʷaːn̓ƛʼən̓ (Kwantlen) First Nations since Time Immemorial, Maple Ridge is celebrating its 150th anniversary this September.

From the soaring alpine heights of Golden Ears to the waters of the majestic Fraser River, Maple Ridge is brimming with spectacular scenery and renowned parks throughout the territory. And it's not just the locals who get to experience the beauty; hundreds of movies and TV shows like Virgin River, Tracker, Reacher, Goosebumps and more have called 'Action!' in Maple Ridge.

Home to more than 100,000 residents (projected to grow to 150,000 within the next 20 years), and with more than 11 million people living less than a day's drive away, Maple Ridge is a prime location for businesses looking to serve an affluent, mobile and globally connected population.

Businesses in Maple Ridge have access to two international airports (YVR, YXX), a full-service regional airport (YPK), one of North America's closest ports to Asia (Port of Vancouver), two intermodal rail terminals and four border crossings into the United States, all less than one hour away. Goods loaded in Maple Ridge can be on their way around the world quicker than ever before.

For these reasons and more, E-One Moli Energy, makers of Molicel brand high-performance rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, has chosen Maple Ridge as the home of its new North American manufacturing and R&D facility. This $1.05 billion investment speaks to the company's belief in Maple Ridge and the City's efforts to grow the advanced manufacturing and portable energy sectors.

Maple Ridge

Make **MAPLE RIDGE** your investment destination of choice. We can show you how. Contact us today at **invest@mapleridge.ca** or **604.467.7320.**

We're a City On The Move

Natural beauty and a film industry hub - we've attracted major film productions like Virgin River and Disney's Goosebumps.

100,000 residents (projected 150,000 in 20 years). Strategic location within a day's drive of 11 million people, making it ideal for businesses serving an affluent global market.

Near international airports, rail terminals & Port of Vancouver for global trade. We've attracted major investments, like E-One Moli Energy's $1.05 billion lithium-ion battery facility.

MapleRidge.ca/Invest

LET'S MOVE!

Maple Ridge

INVEST IN THE FRASER VALLEY—AND YOUR FUTURE

British Columbia's Fraser Valley stands out as one of the fastest growing economic regions in Canada. This growth is fuelled by a rapidly expanding population, an exceptional lifestyle and a diverse economy bursting with opportunities. These factors position the Fraser Valley as an ideal destination for investment.

The Fraser Valley's unique combination of location, economic diversity and quality of life makes it a compelling choice for investment. Whether your interest lies in advanced industries, technology or sustainable growth, the Fraser Valley offers a promising landscape for your business endeavors.

CENTRAL LOCATION

The Fraser Valley is ideally positioned to serve as a gateway for both domestic and international markets. It offers excellent transportation infrastructure, including major highways, railways and proximity to ports and airports.

DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

This region has established itself as having a strong foundation in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, agri-tech, clean technology and information and communications technology. As a growing community of experienced businesses in these and other sectors, it is the ideal place to leverage opportunities for innovation and collaboration across these key sectors.

EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE

The Fraser Valley is home to a diverse and growing population, ensuring vibrant growth and a steady supply of innovative talent. Local educational institutions provide a pipeline of well-trained professionals and skilled tradespeople.

EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Residents enjoy a high standard of living with access to beautiful natural surroundings, recreational activities and vibrant cultural amenities. Besides fulfilling the growing emphasis on work-life balance, this attractive lifestyle is a key draw for businesses recruiting and retaining top talent.

SUPPORTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Start-up entrepreneurs and seasoned business owners looking to relocate will benefit from proactive local governments and economic development organizations that facilitate business growth. That means access to incentives and resources to support new and expanding businesses.

LOOKING TO INVEST?

Investors are attracted to the Fraser Valley's expanding customer base and market opportunities. With that comes increased demand for goods and services, which is driving business growth in every sector. A strong emphasis on innovation and technology fosters a dynamic business environment, as well as opportunities to engage in cutting-edge research and development.

The Fraser Valley is committed to sustainable growth through the use of clean technology and sustainable practices and by offering opportunities to invest in environmentally responsible projects and industries.

The **Fraser Valley Alliance (FVA)** is an economic development partnership between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Maple Ridge, and Mission, working together to attract foreign direct investment.

Fraser Valley Alliance

Learn more at
investfraservalley.ca
or connect on LinkedIn
@InvestFraserValley

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

Fraser Valley: Four Communities. One Region. Endless Opportunity.

British Columbia's Fraser Valley is one of the fastest growing economic regions in Canada. With a rapidly growing population, an exceptional lifestyle, and a strong, diverse economy rich in opportunity, the Fraser Valley is primed for your investment.

Our central location is home to a diversified economy anchored by our established strengths in **advanced manufacturing**, **aerospace**, **ag-tech**, **clean technology**, and **information and communications technology**. Our growing communities boast an educated, diverse, and skilled workforce that will help your business grow now and in the future.

*The **Fraser Valley Alliance** (FVA) is an economic development partnership between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Maple Ridge and Mission working together to attract foreign direct investment.*

Fraser Valley Alliance

Visit **investfraservalley.ca** today to learn why the Fraser Valley is your best investment destination in Canada.

VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST

- Campbell River
- Comox
- Courtenay
- Cowichan
- Duncan
- Esquimalt
- Ladysmith
- Lake Cowichan
- Langford
- Nanaimo
- North Cowichan
- Parksville
- Port Alberni
- Port Alice
- Port Hardy
- Port McNeill
- Powell River
- Qualicum Beach
- Saanich
- Sidney
- Sooke
- Tofino
- Ucluelet
- Victoria

17% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

Welcoming Shores

The Vancouver Island/Coast region has become a magnet for migrants and innovative businesses alike

Of all Vancouver Island municipalities, perhaps none are feeling the pressures of growth more than Langford is. The once sleepy suburb to the west of Victoria today is welcoming new residents, businesses, schools and health facilities. Between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, the city's population jumped 31.8 percent. But until recently Langford had no public space where people could gather, enjoy a stroll, sample food al fresco or listen to live music and feel part of the community.

For years residents and business owners had expressed concern about a derelict, 500-metre section of decommissioned rail line near the centre of the city. The owner, the Island Corridor Foundation, approached the City of Langford about revitalizing the property and in 2021 signed a 30-year lease whereby the municipality would develop an indoor/outdoor cultural district funded by the Union of B.C. Municipalities Gas Tax Fund, the Island Coastal Economic Trust and local donors.

Today The Langford Station, as the development is known, is animated by artists, retailers, murals, sculptures, interactive lighting installations and food trucks 12 months a year. It hosts special events and live music from time to time. There's an off-leash dog park and below-market space available for art studios and retail business incubation that are eagerly sought after. And of course residents have flocked to the area as a place to meet and bring visitors. After so much growth, Langford now has a place to let its hair down.

This year the BCEDA honoured the City of Langford with its Community Project Award for The Langford Station,

CITY OF LANGFORD (ALL PHOTOS)

PEOPLE PLACE: The Langford Station redevelopment won this year's Community Project Award from BCEDA

recognizing economic development initiatives that benefit the community and region. But it's just one of a host of new developments taking shape in the Vancouver Island/Coast region.

ATTRACTING PEOPLE

With its seemingly endless stretches of scenic seashore and the mildest climate in Canada, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast has long been a magnet for migrants seeking a congenial lifestyle. The advent of remote work has enabled former residents of high-cost Canadian cities to decamp to the Island in ever greater numbers without changing careers. The population is rapidly approaching one million and construction—in large part dedicated to building new homes—is a major employer, providing 8.8 percent of jobs.

REGIONAL POPULATION (2023)
934,721

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
4.7%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
Health care & social assistance
16.5%
Retail trade
12.6%
Public administration
9.6%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
58,500

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$3.5 BILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
7,292

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$27.1 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
5,226

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

This growth adds a layer on top of an already diversified and stable economy focused on public administration (Victoria is British Columbia's capital city), tourism, higher education and research, the forest industry, fishing, farming, manufacturing and advanced technology. New-economy employers can find a skilled and experienced workforce here: 13,685 people work in advanced manufacturing as it is; 9,132 in information and communication technology; 3,206 in life sciences; 974 in cleantech; 492 in digital media and entertainment; and 465 in aerospace.

Aircraft manufacturer De Havilland Canada is expanding production of DHC-515 firefighting planes at its facility in North Saanich to meet a surge in new orders from Europe, which has seen a series of bad wildfire seasons. The company has doubled its local payroll to 300 over the past year and honed those employees' skills with an in-house training academy.

Nearby, the Tsawout First Nation has embarked on a series of economic development initiatives aimed at benefiting members with jobs and training. In 2021, it granted a licence to Cascadia Seaweed to grow kelp and other edible marine plants in the Tsawout territorial waters off James Island. This year it acquired a whale-watching tour company in Sidney and formed a construction joint venture with Surrey-based Industra Construction Corp.

Further up-Island, New Times Energy Discovery Park in Campbell River signed a memorandum of understanding this year with hydrogen company Quantum Technology to build a green hydrogen plant in the community to produce low-carbon fuel for ferries, buses and trucks. Hydrogen is increasingly seen as a way for companies and public-sector entities to meet their net-zero commitments with respect to transportation.

Also in Campbell River, Poseidon Ocean Systems this year received $28 million in venture capital financing to expand production of its patented sustainable sea cages and life support systems for fish farms that have been deployed in the United Kingdom, Chile, New Zealand and Australia as well as B.C.

RECONCILIATION IN ACTION

In 2019, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority began compiling a list of local Indigenous businesses as a way to promote socially responsible procurement and serve the cause of economic reconciliation. Three years later more organizations that had been working towards the same goals—the City of Victoria, South Island Prosperity Partnership, Capital Regional District and, in 2023, the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce—joined the effort to create the South Island Indigenous Business Directory.

The partners' original goal of listing 50 suppliers was soon surpassed and the directory now hosts more than 100 companies self-identified as Indigenous owned and operated. The online directory itself—indigenousbusinessdirectoryvi.com—was built by Animikii, a local Indigenous IT firm. The effort won the Economic Reconciliation Award for communities with greater than 20,000 population in 2024 from BCEDA. ■

CAPITAL GROWTH: Victoria's Inner Harbour (top) is the at the core of B.C.'s capital city; De Havilland Canada has been hiring at its plant producing firefighting planes in nearby North Saanich

REPURPOSED: The Tsawout First Nation acquired a whale-watching company in Sidney (above left); New Times Energy has plans for a green hydrogen facility in Campbell River (rendering above)

DE HAVILLAND CANADA; SIDNEY WHALE WATCHING

A COASTAL GEM ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

Surrounded by mountains and at the head of a 48-kilometre salt water Inlet, lies the picturesque town of Port Alberni. Centrally located on Vancouver Island, this vibrant community of over 20,000 residents sits on the unceded territories of Tseshaht First Nation and Hupacasath First Nation.

Maintaining these partnerships and creating a shared vision for joint economic development is at the heart of the City's planning and decision-making processes.

Perched on the estuary of a major B.C. salmon river, Port Alberni offers exceptional accessibility. It's just 60 minutes from ferry and floatplane services to Vancouver and 90 minutes from airports with domestic and international connections.

Port Alberni features a deep-sea port, a modern secondary school, a hospital, an aerodrome and numerous recreational facilities. Traditionally known for forestry and manufacturing, the city is diversifying its economy to attract investments in tourism, the marine industry/blue economy, aerospace, the arts, and clean technologies.

As a leader in fish and seafood processing, Port Alberni capitalizes on its coastal location and natural resources. The city partners with First Nations, seafood producers and rural communities to foster ongoing investment opportunities.

A notable example of Port Alberni's commitment to growth is the redevelopment of the Somass Lands Site. This project, in collaboration with Matthews West Development Ltd., will transform 43 acres of waterfront property into a mixed-use site with public access.

Port Alberni invites entrepreneurs, artists, remote workers and families to experience its dynamic future. Whether focused on sustainability, creative placemaking, or seeking an affordable, safe community, Port Alberni is where opportunity and nature converge.

CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

Visit us online at **www.chooseportalberni.ca**, **www.albernivalleytourism.com**, or **www.portalberni.ca**, or contact us by email at **patrick_deakin@portalberni.ca**, phone at **(1) 250-720-2527**, or text at **250-720-9117**.

Love where you live

In the middle of everything there is a valley filled with adventure and beauty. A place where you will find lakes, mountains, streams and waterfalls nestled in an ancient rainforest.
Join entrepreneurs, tradespeople, techies, artists and others enjoying their lifestyle while making a good living and being centrally located to a market of 4 million people.

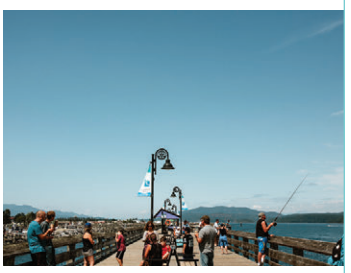
For more information please contact Pat Deakin at 250.720.2527 or patrick_deakin@portalberni.ca

DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE IN CAMPBELL RIVER

Campbell River, centrally located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, is a growing coastal city renowned for its scenic natural beauty, warm community vibes and growing economy. Surrounded by mountains and ocean, it offers an unequalled quality of life for residents to enjoy all four seasons of outdoor activities from their doorstep. As the gateway to Northern Vancouver Island, this central island hub features all the necessary urban amenities for modern families, without the traffic or crowding found in major cities, making it the perfect place for people and businesses to call home.

NATURALLY, CAMPBELL RIVER

Campbell River is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. The local geography offers exceptional saltwater and freshwater fishing, recreation and wildlife viewing along with epic gravel and mountain biking. Situated at the base of 250,000-hectare Strathcona Park, adventurers can explore numerous hiking trails or enjoy Mount Washington Ski Resort's Nordic trails and alpine lifts. A vibrant local culture is evident in the bustling Sunday farmers' market in the summer or year-round at charming local shops. Campbell River combines natural beauty with delightful local flavours, making it a perfect destination.



LIVABLE CITY

Campbell River is open for business. Over 521 building permits for single-family, duplex and multi-unit residential projects have been issued since January 2020, attracting new professionals and families to the city. The influx of skilled individuals has invigorated the local economy, fostering a fresh and dynamic atmosphere. These developments not only provide high-quality living spaces but also enhance the overall appeal of Campbell River as a thriving, forward-looking city.

CAMPBELL RIVER AIRPORT

Regularly scheduled and charter flights operate daily from Campbell River Airport, YBL. Opportunities abound for aeronautical businesses operating fixed wing or rotary equipment for pursuing technical innovation. Campbell River's own Sealand Aviation operates a maintenance facility, charter company and Sealand Flight school, leading the country by operating Canada's first commercial electric flight, opening up a new era for sustainable aviation.

BUILD YOUR FUTURE

Entrepreneurs, technology start-ups, investors, young families and GIG workers looking to find a vibrant and spectacular community to grow your future, discover Campbell River, a city enriched by land and sea.

City of Campbell River

naturally, CAMPBELL RIVER

Visit **ecdev.campbellriver.ca** to learn more.

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

ADVENTURE IN CAMPBELL RIVER

ON LAND

AT SEA

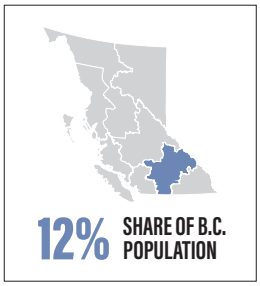
BY AIR

FIND YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE AT
WWW.CAMPBELLRIVER.TRAVEL

DESTINATION CAMPBELL RIVER

THOMPSON OKANAGAN

- Barriere
- Cache Creek
- Clearwater
- Clinton
- Golden
- Kamloops
- Kelowna
- Lytton
- Merritt
- Oliver
- Osoyoos
- Peachland
- Penticton
- Princeton
- Revelstoke
- Salmon Arm
- Summerland
- Vernon



12% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

Urban Makeover

An influx of people, money and ideas has seen the Thompson Okanagan economy grow and mature in unexpected ways

When the University of British Columbia opened its Okanagan campus on the northern outskirts of Kelowna in 2005, there were 3,000 students. Today, the student body is four times as large. In addition to new space, the institution felt the need for greater engagement with community partners in health, technology, business and arts and culture.

That was the impetus behind UBCO Downtown, a 43-storey, 415,000-square-foot building currently rising in downtown Kelowna that will have classroom space for approximately 1,000 students as well as 473 housing units. In addition, it will have spaces where academe and the general public can meet and mingle, including a public engagement suite, art gallery, maker space and wine tasting lab.

It's all a far cry from the Thompson Okanagan region's roots in cattle ranching, fruit growing, forestry and mining. Those primary industries are still here, but today there's so much more: robotics, aerospace, winemaking, finance. Just under 20,000 people work in advanced manufacturing in the region and more than 3,000 in information and communication technology. Like Vancouver Island, the southern Interior has seen an influx of remote workers from major Canadian cities seeking a more affordable cost

ALL GROWN UP: Downtown Kelowna (right) is densifying and diversifying; UBC Okanagan is building a 43-storey campus and residential tower downtown to augment its existing facilities (below)

TOP: TOURISM KELOWNA/SHAWN TALBOT PHOTOGRAPHY

RIGHT: TOURISM KELOWNA/MICHAEL HINTRINGER PHOTOGRAPHY

of living in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. And they've brought with them yet more in-demand skills, ideas, capital and consumer tastes.

Okanagan College is beginning construction this summer on a Centre for Food, Wine and Tourism at its Kelowna campus at a cost of $56 million. The facility, slated to open in 2026, will expand education in the culinary arts, local food and beverage production and world-class hospitality services, aiming to help meet a skills shortage in these areas.

BETTER CONNECTED THAN EVER BEFORE

The region owes its growing economic diversification in large part to improved transportation links with surrounding regions and the world outside, combined with its own quality of life. One of the fastest-growing airports in Canada, the Kelowna International Airport is committed to $422 million in upgrades between 2024 and 2033, including a terminal expansion, new industrial and commercial space, 245-room Sutton Place Hotel and new parking garage as well as safety and sustainability improvements.

Not all new developments in the Thompson Okanagan are big and flashy, however. Some simply fill in gaps in the local economy that have lingered too long. Sweláps Market, a supermarket focused on fresh, local food, opened in the autumn of 2023 on the T'kemlúps te Secwépemc reserve in the heart of Kamloops. The store

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

AVIATION HUB: One of Canada's fastest-growing airports, Kelowna International (above) has embarked on $422 million in upgrades

PROFESSIONALS EYE PENTICTON FOR IDEAL WORK-LIFE BALANCE

City also faces surge in construction, helping to meet housing supply and provide additional employment opportunities

With its sandy beaches, world-class wineries and four-season outdoor recreational opportunities, Penticton has long been known as a place to soak up the sunshine and good vibes on vacation. But this can be your life—year-round. Savvy entrepreneurs, remote and skilled workers are relocating to Penticton in search of the ultimate work-life balance.

ONE OF CANADA'S MOST LIVABLE CITIES

Penticton is an outdoor playground, with all the benefits of a big city, minus the traffic jams. In fact, the city ranked as the 28th most livable city in Canada, out of 439 locations assessed, according to the *Globe and Mail*'s'Most Livable Cities in Canada 2023 rankings, topping out every other Okanagan city.

Penticton was also named the third best locale in Canada for young professionals, based on criteria tailored to recent post-secondary graduates looking for a dynamic blend of vibrant job prospects, affordable housing and an active social environment. The city claimed the #11 spot nationwide for entrepreneurs.

WHO'S MOVING TO PENTICTON?

Data collected through the City of Penticton's Welcome Home initiative shows an influx of skilled and remote workers in the past two years. Also, people under age 30 make up 40% of the new arrivals. Nearly 60% said they moved to Penticton for work or career-related reasons, and 25% moved to retire. The largest group had arrived from the Lower Mainland.

SURGE OF CONSTRUCTION IN 2024

Building permits representing more than $82 million in construction value were issued over the first four months of 2024. This includes notable residential projects plus two new daycare centres and an industrial redevelopment. Many projects are proceeding to construction, helping to bring much-needed housing supply and additional employment opportunities to Penticton.

This promising trend is projected to continue, with recent changes to the city's Official Community Plan and zoning bylaw supported by council. These changes are intended to streamline the development process and open more opportunities for vibrant growth.

City council, through the first nine meetings of the year, also approved development permits representing 153 new housing units including two new apartment buildings, one downtown mixed-use building and several infill projects.

The approximate existing and future house numbers include:

- 460 residential units under construction
- 1,402 residential units approved
- 2,070 units in the development application process

In addition to these, two new office buildings are currently under construction downtown and a new commercial strip development is under construction in the south end of the city. The city recently adopted zoning for the Innovation District, a master-planned community located adjacent to the newly expanded regional hospital, which, when completely built out, will feature more than 1,200 new residential units, an office tower and a mix of small-scale retail uses. Construction is planned to begin in early 2025.

CITY OF Penticton

To learn more about living, working and investing in **PENTICTON**, visit **StartHerePenticton.com**.

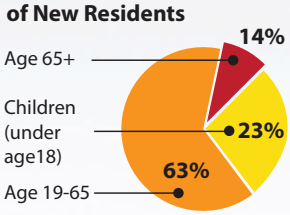
Connect on Facebook and Instagram **@StartHerePenticton** and on X **@StartPenticton**

Penticton Lifestyle Attracts Professionals and Remote Workers

BY THE NUMBERS

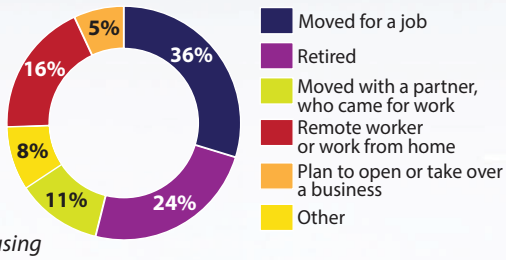
Data collected by the City of Penticton since Jan. 1, 2022*, shows an influx in skilled and remote workers. People under 30 years of age make up 40% of the new arrivals

Age Groups of New Residents



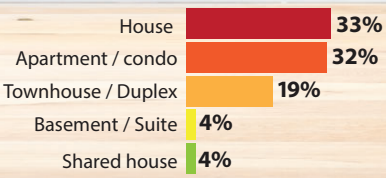
Why they Moved to Penticton

Reasons provided by the city's newest residents:

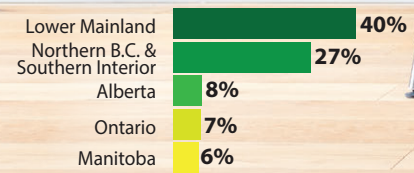


Housing

Top 5 types of housing selected by the new residents:



Top 5 Areas of Relocation



*Data collected until April 30th, 2024

LEARN MORE *Visit StartHerePenticton.com*

START HERE Penticton

CITY OF Penticton

Join us at StartHerePenticton.com

PENTICTON IS GROWING 2023

The City has many exciting housing projects proposed, approved or under construction. The following is a snapshot of most of these projects which are helping to address the need for housing in the community.

Learn more at **penticton.ca/growing**

REGIONAL POPULATION
657,450

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
5.1%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
Health care & social assistance
13.7%
Retail trade
13.4%
Construction
11.1%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
40,700

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$3.2 BILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
4,042

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$17.8 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
4,586

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISE: Swelaps Market in Kamloops (top) earned two awards at this year's BCEDA convention; the Lower Nicola Band is improving traveler amenities along the Coquihalla Highway in Merritt (right); 4AG Robotics of Salmon Arm is developing automated mushroom harvesting systems (bottom)

MIDDLE: TROIKA MANAGEMENT CORP.; BOTTOM: 4AG ROBOTICS

FROM PAGE 33

serves to improve food security on the reserve while providing jobs for members. In addition to winning the Community Project of the Year Award for communities with less than 20,000 population, Sweláps Market took home the People's Choice Award at this year's BCEDA convention.

In Merritt, Troika Management and partner Spayum Holdings, owned by the Lower Nicola Indian Band, have applied for a permit to build Gateway 286, a seven-acre commercial property designed to bring improved amenities including restaurants and electric vehicle charging to travellers on the Coquihalla Highway.

ONE-OF-A-KIND DEVELOPMENTS

Agriculture is a major focus of the technology scene in the Thompson Okanagan. Last year 4AG Robotics received $17.5 million in venture capital funding to accelerate its development and deployment of robotic systems for mushroom harvesting. With the help of the funding, the Salmon Arm company aims to nearly double its team to around 70 positions.

Since 2016, Restoration Lands has attracted a mushroom farm, vegan food factory and natural beauty product manufacturer to the site of an old glass plant in Coldstream it calls the Okanagan Industrial Eco Park. Next it plans to install B.C.'s largest solar energy array on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN IN THE CITY OF MERRITT

Nestled in the beautiful Thompson-Nicola Regional District with rolling grasslands, shimmering lakes and over 2,000 hours of annual sunshine, the City of Merritt is a virtual oasis, offering abundant city amenities neighbouring a tranquil country lifestyle.

LOCATION

Centrally located between Metro Vancouver and the Okanagan, Merritt is one of the province's most active transportation and distribution hubs, with annual traffic counts exceeding 4 million.

COMMUNITY

Merritt is a diverse, family-friendly community of just over 7,000 people, enjoying a relatively high median household income of $70,000. While seniors flock to the area, with about 28% over the age of 65, the community maintains a sizable young population (45%) under the age of 40.

AMENITIES

Merritt offers plentiful amenities, including a regional airport, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, the Nicola Valley Aquatic Centre, the Merritt Civic Centre (700-person capacity) and the Nicola Valley Memorial Arena (1000-person rink, home to the BC Hockey League's Merritt Centennials). The city also offers a spray park, tennis courts, skateboard and bike pump tracks, disc golf, golf course, ball fields and bandshells. Residents also enjoy easy access to miles of hiking, biking and ATV trails, and year-round adventures like ice fishing, snowmobiling, boating and camping.

DESTINATION MERRITT

Merritt has gained notoriety as a destination for music festivals, such as the Bass Coast Music and Art Festival. It is also renowned for the annual Nicola Valley Pro Rodeo and international motorsport events like the Pacific Forest Rally.

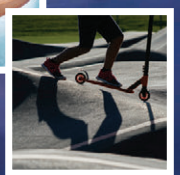
Merritt
FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

Visit **merritt.ca** or
connect **@cityofmerritt**

Flourish UNDER THE Sun

Merritt

AFFORDABLE SUCCESS. Centrally located between Metro Vancouver and the Okanagan, the City of Merritt is a destination for international events, major retailers, commercial/residential development, and a better quality of life ... under the sun.



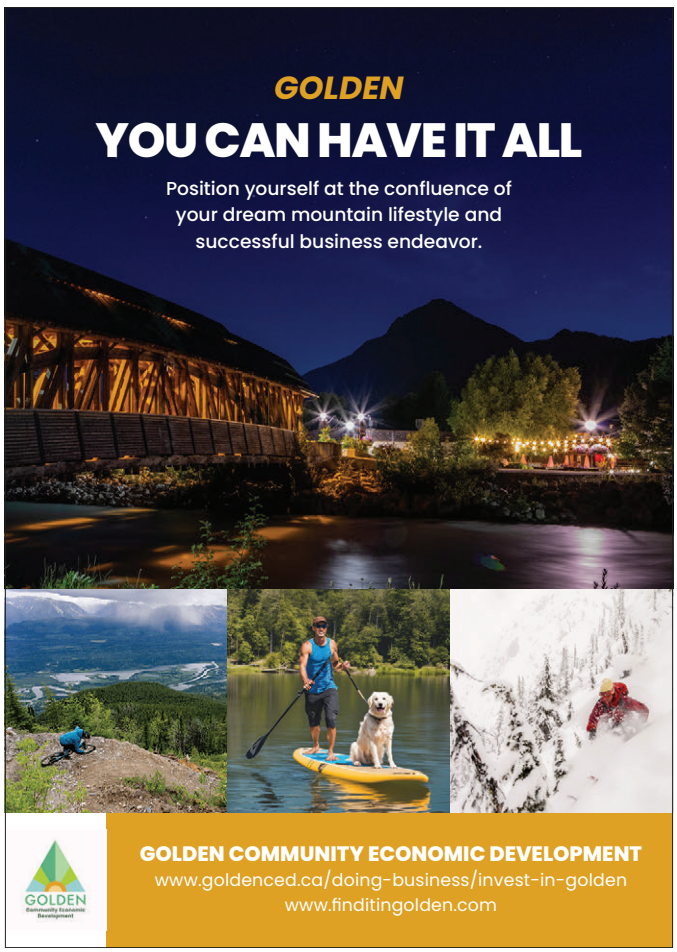
MERRITT.CA | ECDEV@MERRITT.CA | 250-378-8623

VIRAL HIT: The Work and Invest Vernon campaign struck a chord with internet viewers (right)

FROM PAGE 36

sprawling building's seven-acre roof. At completion, it's expected to produce four megawatts of power, enough to offset a substantial portion of the power consumed on site.

When the Vernon Chamber of Commerce surveyed its members last year, it found the number one issue facing local businesses was attracting and retaining skilled labour. So it set to work creating a website-and-video campaign called Work and Invest Vernon that went viral, reaching more than 400,000 residents of Vancouver and Calgary. The campaign's videos, which showcase the quality of life to be had in the North Okanagan in an endearingly offbeat way, have been viewed more than 15,000 times on YouTube. Funded mainly by local employers, the campaign won the Economic Development Marketing Award (community more than 20,000 population) from the BCEDA this year. ■



GOLDEN

WHERE BUSINESS MEETS ADVENTURE

Discover Golden, a haven for business with an authentic, welcoming, mountain-town lifestyle. Treasure work-life balance? Revel in the appeal of an outdoor recreational paradise? Golden is a tourism hot spot with visitors from around the world and the ideal place to bring your business vision to life.

Golden has everything entrepreneurs need to relocate or launch a start-up. The Golden area offers available land, proximity to regional markets, a growing population and steady influx of visitors, and a strong, educated workforce.

Located between five national parks with two major highways intersecting it, Golden has all the major amenities and services, while being easily accessible to Alberta and B.C. markets.

Check out our commercial property database for listings on spaces for sale or lease.

find it in GOLDEN

Discover **GOLDEN** at **https://goldenced.ca/doing-business/invest-in-golden/** or check out the business directory at **finditingolden.com**

PRINCETON INDUSTRIAL PARK IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES SEEKING AFFORDABLE, WELL-CONNECTED AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS TO THRIVE

Princeton, British Columbia, is home to a burgeoning industrial park that represents a significant opportunity for businesses looking to expand or establish themselves in a strategic location. With land starting at an affordable $225,000 per acre, this industrial park offers a compelling proposition for various industries, including manufacturing, logistics and technology, empowering businesses with a cost-effective solution for their expansion needs.

The Princeton Industrial Park is strategically positioned to leverage the town's unique geographical location. Nestled in the Similkameen Valley, Princeton serves as a gateway between the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan and the Kootenays. This advantageous positioning provides businesses with efficient access to major markets and transportation networks, making them feel strategically positioned for success.

One of the key advantages of the Princeton Industrial Park is its affordability. At $225,000 per acre, the land cost is significantly lower compared to other industrial hubs in British Columbia. This affordability allows businesses to allocate more resources to development, operations and growth rather than land acquisition. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and startups, this cost-effectiveness can be a critical factor in their decision-making process, making the Princeton Industrial Park an attractive option.

The industrial park is designed with modern infrastructure and amenities to support diverse business needs. It offers fully serviced lots with access to essential utilities such as electricity, water and sewage. The availability of high-speed internet ensures that businesses can operate efficiently in today's digital age. The park's layout is also planned to accommodate future expansions, providing flexibility for growing enterprises.

Princeton itself is a community that values and supports economic development. The local government and business organizations are committed to fostering a business-friendly environment. They offer various incentives and support programs to attract and retain regional businesses, creating a supportive ecosystem that can be particularly beneficial for new businesses that require assistance during their initial stages of operation.

Furthermore, Princeton boasts a skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of diverse industries. The town's rich history in mining and forestry has cultivated a community of hardworking and experienced individuals. This local talent pool can be an asset to businesses setting up in the industrial park, reducing the need for extensive recruitment from outside the region.

In terms of lifestyle, Princeton offers a high quality of life with its picturesque landscapes, outdoor recreational opportunities and a close-knit community atmosphere. This translates to a balanced and fulfilling work-life dynamic for business owners and employees, enhancing overall productivity and satisfaction.

TOWN OF PRINCETON

Ready to explore the affordability, modern infrastructure and strategic location of Princeton Industrial Park? Visit **princeton.ca/p/industrial-park** today.

SALMON ARM

SMALL CITY, BIG IDEAS

Meet BC's small city with big ideas. Salmon Arm is the service centre for the Shuswap's 60,000 residents, strategically located on the Trans-Canada Highway, just a short drive from the Kelowna International Airport. Our location makes it easy to conduct business all over the world. Salmon Arm's quality of life is difficult to match, offering the shortest commute times in the province, hundreds of kilometres of maintained trail systems and quick access to Shuswap Lake. Join the locals and make the lake or trail systems your new boardroom.

SMALL CITY, BIG OPPORTUNITY

Entrepreneurship in Salmon Arm is growing. Particularly food and beverage processing, tourism and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Zest Commercial Food Hub is a shared-use commercial kitchen that welcomes food and beverage businesses to create their products with onsite mentorship. Zest's unique model eliminates the need to invest in food processing equipment, reduces operating costs and creates a supportive environment for food entrepreneurs.

There are also extensive business development opportunities in Salmon Arm's Tourism Sector. The city's breathtaking location along the shores of Shuswap Lake, coupled with its desirable four-season climate, make this an ideal destination for visitors. A beautiful half-day drive from either Vancouver or Calgary, or a short flight into one of our nearby international airports, ensures ease of accessibility for all.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Salmon Arm's economy is the cluster of technology and advanced manufacturing companies operating within the city. Salmon Arm breaks the mold as it is home to a significant number of well-established high tech businesses in our dedicated Industrial Park. We're far from a one-size-fits-all small economy. The city also offers an industry-specific tax incentive to support new development.

SMALL CITY, BIG BUSINESS

Discover **Salmon Arm** today at **saeds.ca** or connect with **Lana Fitt** at **edo@saeds.ca**

SALMONARM
SMALL CITY, BIG IDEAS

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

VERNON

A COMMUNITY ON THE RISE

Vernon, B.C. is alive with the buzz of a community on the move. Home to nearly 50,000 and serving as the central hub for the North Okanagan, Vernon is emerging as a community on the rise, attracting investors, entrepreneurs, and new residents. Each year, nearly 1,000 new residents are making the move and calling Vernon home for its quality of life, affordability and opportunities.

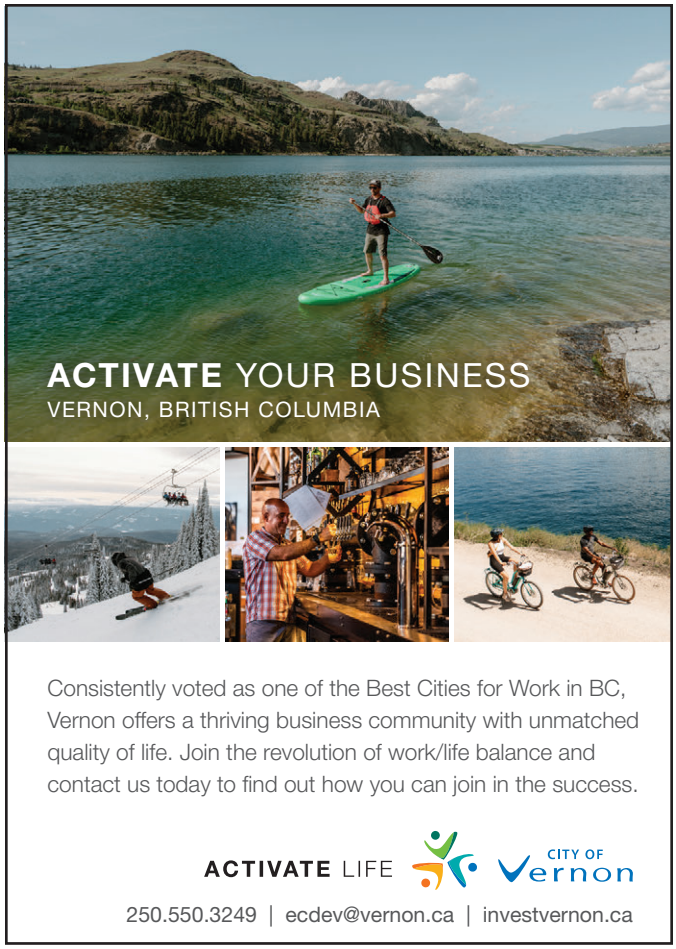
Savvy entrepreneurs are seizing on Vernon's growth by quickly bringing new concepts to the community, including wineries and breweries, technology, manufacturing, development, and professional and personal services to meet the needs of a growing community.

Vernon recently adopted a new Zoning Bylaw, which has created opportunities for more multi-family and commercial development while streamlining the development processes.

As such, development activity flourishes with more than 400,000 square feet of new light industrial buildings under development, numerous purpose-built rental buildings in process, and the recent groundbreaking on a new $130-million Active Living Centre (recreation centre), just to highlight a few!

CITY OF Vernon

Reach out to the City's Economic Development and Partnerships Office to learn more about **VERNON**'s opportunities today.
John Perrott, Manager, *Economic Development & Partnerships*
jperrott@vernon.ca | **250-550-3249**



ELKFORD

WILD AT HEART? DISCOVER ELKFORD

At the District of Elkford, we've been working hard to prepare for your investment. We've overhauled our downtown zoning to be flexible as it gets and upgraded our downtown infrastructure to help your businesses thrive. We've also added downtown tax exemptions and simplified our approval processes so that whether you're investing in residential, commercial or light industrial space, developing in Elkford is faster and easier than ever before.

Why invest in Elkford? Our land continues to increase in value while remaining the most affordable in the Elk Valley, and our regional economy shows long-term growth that has increased demand for more local services, businesses, industrial and commercial development and housing construction. Our community is safe and clean, with low crime rates, crisp mountain air and 360-degree mountain views—and our population reports a significantly higher income than the provincial average.

Virtually view land at **elkford.ca/maps**, or visit **elkford.ca/invest** to browse available land parcels and see the results of major public investments in quality of life and future growth (including nearly $10 million recently invested into infrastructure in our growing downtown).

elkford
Wild at heart.

Ready to invest or book your in-person site tour?
Contact us at **250-865-4000** or **business@elkford.ca**.
Connect on Facebook **@district.elkford**

KOOTENAY

- Castlegar
- Cranbrook
- Creston
- Elkford
- Fernie
- Grand Forks
- Invermere
- Kaslo
- Kimberley
- Nakusp
- Nelson
- New Denver
- Radium Hot Springs
- Rossland
- Slocan
- Sparwood
- Trail

3.1% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

Hidden Gem

Out of the way in B.C.'s southeast corner, the Kootenay region combines scenic splendour, historic towns, active lifestyles and an affordable cost of living

Historically, the mountainous Kootenay region relied for its livelihood on the mining and forest industries and to a lesser extent on agriculture. Metallurgical coal mining around Fernie and Sparwood and a handful of small metal and industrial mineral operations scattered around the region, along with the Teck smelter in Trail, still contribute to the local economy, as do logging and sawmill operations. But these days the primary industries are complemented by tourism, manufacturing and advanced technology.

The Kootenays are home to several major ski and golf resorts attracting recreational property buyers from nearby Alberta and visitors from around the world. And there's more to come with investments worth hundreds of millions on tap for the Wildstone golf resort near

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

GETAWAY-READY: The Wildstone Golf Resort near Cranbrook (left) is undergoing a huge expansion; Accelerate Kootenays is helping make the Kootenays' mountain passes accessible to EVs (below)

MOUNTAIN HIGH: Cranbrook (opposite page) is the Kootenays' largest city and transportation hub; MetalTech Alley in Trail is developing new skills and marketable materials (above)

Cranbrook, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort near Invermere and Blackstone Resort in Fernie. Not to be outdone, the Fernie and Kimberley alpine resorts are also expanding.

Cranbrook is the largest city in the region and is getting larger. The city has seen the construction of 900 housing units worth more than $300 million over the past five years. The past year witnessed the announcement of a $157-million long-term care facility to be built here. Cranbrook is also working hand-in-hand with ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises (ACE), part of the Ktunaxa Nation, to develop two large light industrial properties adjacent to the Canadian Rockies International Airport. The developments include the Natanik Renewable Energy Project, which aims to take advantage of Cranbrook's status as the sunniest city in B.C. to generate power from a solar array.

PEOPLE COME FIRST

Aiming to improve residents' access to primary health care, the Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce, based in Invermere, has launched a digital campaign to attract more family doctors to the area. The campaign emphasizes the four-season active lifestyle opportunities available in the Rocky Mountain communities, the top-level health infrastructure including a hospital and two clinics and the well paid jobs currently available for physicians.

That's just one of many grassroots efforts at community development in the Kootenay region. Accelerate Kootenays is a unique strategy to build out the electric vehicle charging station network along the region's often remote and mountainous highways. With the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation, the Kootenays also have a comprehensive open-access fibre-optic network. MetalTech Alley is harnessing an existing knowledge base in metallurgy, digital fabrication, industrial recycling, cleantech and the industrial internet of things in the smelting town of Trail and applying it to innovation in the circular economy. In Nelson, the Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (KAST) at Selkirk College helps companies and entrepreneurs develop prototypes and bring inventions to market.

Since 1995, the Columbia Basin Trust has been investing revenues from power generated on both sides of the Canada-United States border in communities affected by the many hydroelectric dams on the boundary-hopping Columbia River and its tributaries. It's financed everything from high-speed internet to energy efficiency to waste diversion to carbon reduction. ■

REGIONAL POPULATION (2023)
173,059

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
5.9%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023):
Health care & social assistance
16.3%
Retail trade
11.8%
Educational services
8.9%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
4,100

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$548.7 MILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
73
(CRANBROOK ONLY)

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$5.1 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
809

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

LEFT OPPOSITE PAGE: KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM/MITCH WINTON; FROM TOP CLOCKWISE: DESTINATION BC/DARRYL PALMER; DESTINATION BC/KARI MEDIG; METALTECH ALLEY

CARIBOO

- 100 Mile House
- Barkerville
- Mackenzie
- McBride
- Prince George
- Quesnel
- Valemount
- Wells
- Williams Lake

4% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

TOMORROW'S FUEL: Various partners seek to turn Prince George into a hotbed of hydrogen production and distribution (above)

Pioneer Spirit

From a hydrogen hub to mass timber prefab homes, the heart of B.C. is on the lookout for the next economic wave

Located in the geographic centre of British Columbia, the Cariboo has been the locus of several key phases of the province's economic history: the fur trade, the Cariboo gold rush, the coming of railroads and highways, the rise of the forest and hydro-electric industries. Today, it's making a strong case to lead the way in the energy transition.

Various partners are working towards making the regional capital of Prince George a hydrogen hub. Already, Hydra Energy is building what it calls the world's largest hydrogen refuelling station and green production facility in the city, part of a "hydrogen corridor" stretching from Edmonton to the Pacific Coast for low-emission truck transportation.

The McLeod Lake Indian Band, meanwhile, entered into a partnership last year aiming to build what could be Canada's largest hydrogen project on the Kerry Lake East reserve about 80 kilometres north of Prince George. The $5-billion Tse'khene Energy Transition Hub would produce both "green" and "blue" hydrogen from renewable sources as well as from natural gas. Emissions from the project would be stored underground.

More recently, Australian green energy and metals company Fortescue has proposed building a $2-billion, 1,000-megawatt green hydrogen and ammonia facility at the city's Willow Cale Industrial Park. Fortescue founder and executive chair Andrew Forrest cited the abundance of emissions-free hydro power, fresh water and transportation links for locating the plant in the Cariboo. Another partner in the project is the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, which signed a memorandum of understanding with Fortescue in 2021.

And there's more to the Cariboo's clean energy push than hydrogen. In 2023, Calgary-based Tidewater Renewables started up the first stand-alone biodiesel refinery in Canada in Prince George. The $430-million plant has the capacity to produce 170 million litres of diesel fuel per year from renewable feedstock including canola oil, tallow, used cooking oil and tall oil.

Even remote parts of the Cariboo are making strides with clean energy. The

LEFT: ISTOCK/AUDIOUNDWERBUNG; TOP: TOURISM PRINCE GEORGE/DARRIN RIGO; OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT: HYDRA ENERGY

CROSSROADS: Investors cite the affordable, clean hydroelectric power, water resources and transportation links for targeting Prince George (top); Hydra Energy is building the world's largest hydrogen refuelling station (rendering left)

REGIONAL POPULATION
170,432

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
4.7%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
Health care & social assistance
16.2%
Retail trade
12%
Manufacturing
10.7%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
400

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$488 MILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
296

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$8.2 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
728

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

COMING ONLINE: Artemis Gold expects a first gold pour from its Blackwater mine this year (top); the Ulkatcho First Nation is substituting solar power for diesel (below)

REVIVAL: McBride's Main Street (left) benefited from a new marketing campaign; Taseko's Gibraltar Mine (above right) is the region's largest private-sector employer

Ulkatcho First Nation, based near Anahim Lake, obtained $16 million in federal and provincial funding this year to build what will be the largest off-grid solar energy array in Canada. The project will help wean the isolated community off diesel generation.

BETTER THINGS TO COME

A plan by Alberta-based, Chinese-owned JX LNG Canada shows there's still interest in liquefied natural gas infrastructure. The company seeks to build a plant in Prince George that would produce 2.7 million tonnes of LNG per year and ship it by rail in containers to Prince Rupert for export to Asia. Powered by clean electricity, the liquefaction plant would be among the lowest-emission LNG producers around.

The Cariboo's mining sector has been on the upswing too. Artemis Gold is putting the finishing touches on its Blackwater mine, which expects to pour its first gold before the end of 2024. Osisko Development, meanwhile, has completed an environmental review of the Cariboo Gold project east of Quesnel and hopes to be operational on a similar timeline. At the Gibraltar Mine near Williams Lake—the largest private employer in the region—owner Taseko Mines recently reached an agreement with workers that should ensure labour peace for at least three years. Looking further into the future, Vitreo Minerals has proposed a $300-million quarry north of Prince George for producing frac sand to be used in natural gas extraction in Northeast B.C.

RESILIENCE AMIDST ADVERSITY

Once forest-dependent communities that have suffered from declines in the timber supply have in several cases learned to persevere. On the site of a former sawmill in Williams Lake, Massive Canada Building Systems is developing a $75-million modular building factory using mass timber. The project is benefiting from up to $10 million in assistance from the B.C. Manufacturing Jobs Fund.

Beginning in 2010, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the villages of McBride and Valemount collaborated to attract new agri-food, forestry, tourism and professional businesses with Invest Robson Valley Region, a digital campaign that this year was honoured with the Marketing Innovation Award (community less than 20,000 population) by the BCEDA.

"While it can be challenging to quantify the success of programs like this, I can tell you that McBride had 10 empty storefronts along our five-block Main Street prior to the pandemic and nine were filled between 2020 and 2024," says Karen Dubé, McBride's economic development officer. ■

FROM TOP CLOCKWISE: ARTEMIS GOLD; TASEKO MINES; NORTHERN BC TOURISM/ANDREW STRAIN; ISTOCK/ARTISTGNDPHOTOGRAPHY

A HUB OF OPPORTUNITY IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Nestled in the heart of Northern British Columbia, Prince George stands as a beacon of economic potential and natural beauty. Prince George offers a unique blend of resources, infrastructure and community spirit that fosters growth and prosperity. It is a strategic hub for business and innovation in BC.

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

The city's strategic location at the crossroads of two major highways and CN Rail's intermodal facility in Prince George is connected to a robust rail network across North America, which enhances its status as a regional transportation and logistics hub. The recent expansion of the Prince George International Airport has further bolstered its connectivity, facilitating easier access for businesses and investors. Exports via the Port of Prince Rupert to Asia-Pacific markets are closer by two days than any other Western port. Prince George had over $9B in annual exports in 2023.

KEY INDUSTRIES AND INNOVATIONS

Prince George is fostering growth in technology, healthcare and education. It has availability of industrial land and abundant natural resources; access to renewable, reliable, low-cost power; low time-cost permitting supports development and a skilled industrial workforce. The University of Northern British Columbia is a hub for research and innovation, attracting talent and investment. The College of New Caledonia provides world-class Red Seal trades training.

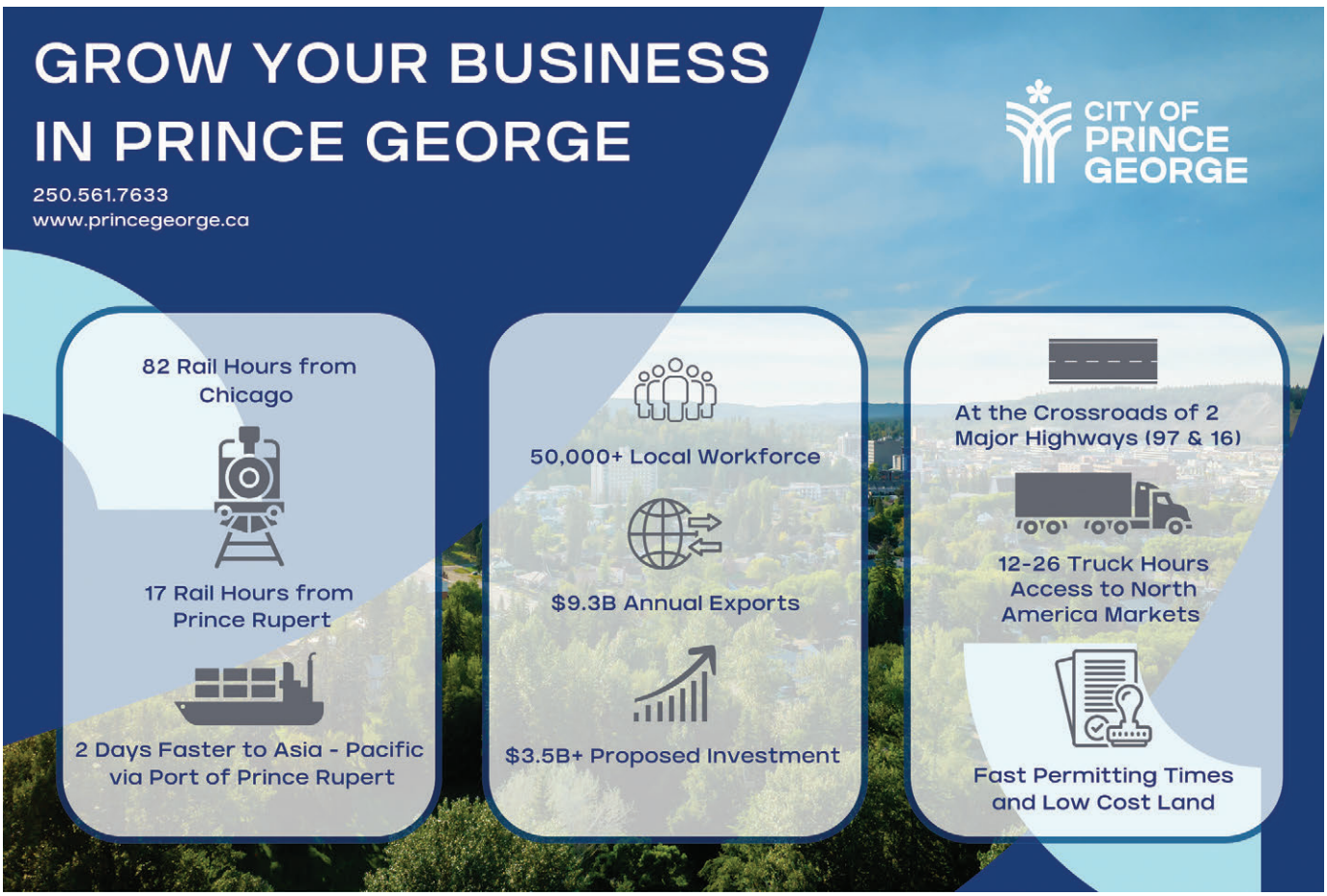
An emerging clean fuels and manufacturing sector is furthering our sustainability goals with over $3.5B in proposed investments.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY

Prince George offers a high quality of life amidst stunning natural surroundings. Residents enjoy easy access to outdoor recreational activities, including hiking, skiing and fishing. The city's healthcare facilities, educational institutions and cultural amenities provide a supportive environment for families and professionals alike. Community initiatives promote inclusivity and sustainability, enhancing the city's appeal as a place to live and work.

CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE

Discover **PRINCE GEORGE** today at **princegeorge.ca** or connect **@cityofpg**



NORTH COAST/NECHAKO

- Atlin
- Burns Lake
- Cassiar
- Dease Lake
- Fort St. James
- Fraser lake
- Granisle
- Hazelton
- Houston
- Kitimat
- Masset
- New Hazelton
- Port Clements
- Port Edwards
- Port Simpson
- Prince Rupert
- Queen Charlotte City
- Sandspit
- Skidegate
- Smithers
- Telegraph Creek
- Telkwa
- Terrace
- Vanderhoof

2% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

Sea Change

The once dire economic prospects of the North Coast and Nechako have reversed, turning the regions into drivers of province-wide prosperity

The fate of Watson Island, a patch of land 15 minutes' drive south from Prince Rupert, is emblematic of the revival of the North Coast's economic fortunes. It was once the site of a pulp mill, the city's largest employer with 600 workers. But the mill's gates shut in 2001 due to cost pressures and low pulp prices. Several failed attempts to revive it later, the City of Prince Rupert became an unwilling owner as the result of a tax sale. Just maintaining the site and preventing contamination of the surrounding environment cost $1.2 million a year, an expense the economically depressed community could ill afford. The city still planned to sell the site as it paid to dismantle the mill and sell its steel for scrap in 2015. But then its thinking began to change.

"We started to see the value to the property," says Paul Vendittelli, director of economic development and transportation for the City of Prince Rupert. Watson Island had rail, road and water access just as energy and other exporters were taking notice of Prince Rupert's strategic location between North American and Asian markets. The city went on to secure a lease with Pembina Pipeline Corp. of Calgary to build a propane export terminal on the site. The facility started operations in 2022, creating some 75 jobs.

"We went from losing $1.2 million a year on the site to generating $5 million a year in lease revenue and taxes," Vendittelli says. CN Rail, Bolloré Logistics and a temporary camp housing 150 workers also use the site, and Prince Rupert aims to attract a green hydrogen facility as well. For its willingness to think entrepreneurially about Watson Island, the City of Prince Rupert this year received the Community Resiliency Award from the BCEDA.

RIGHT AND INSET: CITY OF PRINCE RUPERT; OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: PEMBINA PIPELINE CORPORATION

RESILIENCY: Prince Rupert turned a liability into an asset at Watson Island (below and inset); Pembina Pipeline Corp. built a propane export terminal on the site (left)

REGIONAL POPULATION (2023)
99,840

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
6.0%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
5.7%
RETAIL TRADE
5.0%
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING
5.0%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
4,800

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$176.2
MILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
159
(PRINCE RUPERT AND TERRACE ONLY)

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$114.3
BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
398

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

CANADA'S LARGEST-EVER INDUSTRIAL PROJECT

Another project nearing completion on the North Coast in Kitimat will dwarf what's happened on Watson Island. The LNG Canada gas liquefaction plant and export terminal, which together with the Coastal GasLink pipeline from the Northeast of the province cost $40 billion, represents the largest industrial project ever undertaken on Canadian soil.

Construction activity peaked in 2023 with more than 8,000 workers on site. Now the consortium building it has entered the safe startup phase, ensuring all the components are fully operational, before commencing shipments of up to 14 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually in 2025. If all goes well, there are plans for a Phase 2 expansion that would bring output up to 26 million tonnes per year.

For the North Coast and Nechako regions, that means taking a breather from the hectic construction period and settling into regular operations at the facility, which will add to notable regional infrastructure including the Port of Prince Rupert's now bustling container terminal and the Rio Tinto aluminum smelter.

In June the Haisla Nation and Pembina Pipeline made a final investment decision to proceed with a second gas export terminal in Kitimat, Cedar LNG, expected to be operational in 2028. The Haisla have already plowed some of the proceeds of industrial development into a new apartment complex, a health centre and a cultural centre that will help preserve the Haisla language.

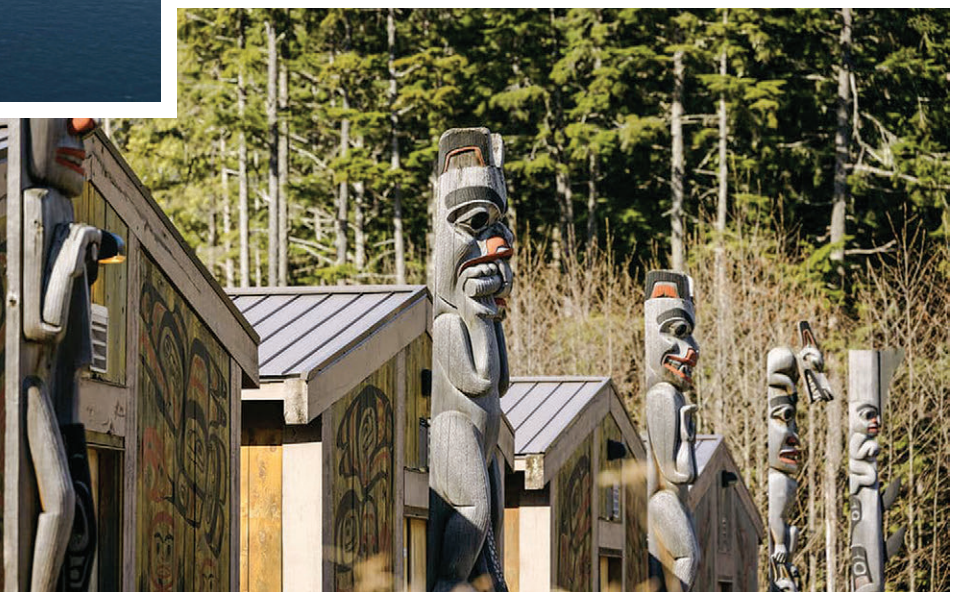
And third LNG project, Ksi Lisims, backed by the Nisga'a Nation, is planned for the Prince Rupert area. Although a final investment decision has not been made, pipeline company TC Energy has issued a start work order on the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission project, which would supply the plant with natural gas.

MORE RICHES UNDERGROUND

The North Coast is also home to the Golden Triangle, an area rich in mining potential. Much of the $644 million spent on mining exploration in B.C. last year was focused on this region, which currently hosts the Red Chris, Brucejack and Premier mines, producing gold, silver and copper. Skeena Resources has raised sufficient funds to restart the Eskay Creek gold mine too. And there is even more excitement around critical minerals

FOREIGN EXCHANGE: The colossal LNG Canada terminal (below) will start exporting gas in 2025; another Kitimat facility, Cedar LNG (top), got the go-ahead this year; the Eskay Creek gold mine is reopening (middle)

LEFT: LNG CANADA; TOP: CEDAR LNG; TOP BOTTOM: SKEENA RESOURCES; OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: MARTY CLEMENS/KITSELAS FIRST NATION



ENERGY TRANSITION: The Red Chris copper/gold mine anchors the Golden Triangle (top); First Nations including the Kitselas (below left) have negotiated new treaties in the northwest

essential to the energy transition, demand for which is expected to soar.

The Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations, based near Terrace, became the first Indigenous groups in a decade to conclude treaties with the B.C. government, raising hopes for further economic reconciliation in the region. If ratified by members, the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum will receive 38,000 and 46,000 hectares of land, respectively, powers of self-government and hundreds of millions of dollars in cash settlements from the federal government. The treaties would come into effect in 2028. ■

NORTHWEST BC

NORTHWEST BC: WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

With short commutes from affordable homes, state-of-the-art healthcare, recently-announced infrastructure investments, a surplus of residential and commercial land and, of course, unlimited outdoor adventures at your doorstep—endless opportunities await in Northwest B.C.

After a decade of lobbying, the Province recently announced an unprecedented investment in local public infrastructure. The region will receive more than $110 million over five years, with $19.5 million for the District of Kitimat; over $34 million each for Prince Rupert and Terrace; a combined $10.3 million for the Village of Hazelton and District of New Hazelton; and almost $12 million for the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

It's a region teeming with opportunities: cross-sector demand, high-paying jobs and countless opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Northwest also boasts modern amenities, laid-back vibes, a real sense of community and thriving cultural scenes. With capital investments easing the burden on taxpayers, the time is now to invest in Northwest BC.

So, what are you waiting for? Contact the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine's Economic Development Officer Meghan Bowles at **250-615-6100** or **mbowles@rdks.bc.ca** for more information on investing in Northwest BC.

Northwest BC

Visit **livenorthwestbc.ca** or connect on Facebook or Instagram **@livenorthwestbc** Search for **LiveNorthwestBC** on Youtube

INVEST IN THE GEM OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA—SMITHERS

Tourism Smithers/Camus Photography

Smithers, the hub of economic development, recreation and culture in Northern BC's Bulkley Valley is also a growing hub of opportunity. Serving a regional population of more than 15,000 people, the town is strategically located on a sophisticated transportation network. It is connected to major urban centres by Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway) and the CN Rail line, which links the bustling Port of Prince Rupert to global markets. Additionally, Smithers Regional Airport, just 5 km from downtown Smithers, offers commercial passenger travel, charter flights, and cargo services. But connectivity is just one of the town's strengths.

Smithers' 5,400 residents are the fabric of a vibrant, growing community. The skilled labour pool makes the area an attractive destination for entrepreneurs, businesses and site selectors seeking opportunities to grow and thrive. As the regional hub, it serves a diverse economy that includes forestry, mining and exploration, healthcare, government services, education, retail, and tourism sectors. With many industries prospering in Smithers, entrepreneurs are encouraged to explore cluster development and leverage the region's transferable labour base.

Nearly 700 businesses keep Smithers alive with opportunity, as they benefit from ample public spaces and commercial nodes, positioning Smithers as a top destination for business and resident relocation in Northern BC.

Not sure where to begin? Visit the Town of Smithers website for business development support, including information on commercial space, business opportunities, statistics, and growth opportunities. The economic development team is proud to support a strong and diverse economy, reflected in the innovation of local businesses in the community.

Town of Smithers ...simply exceptional.

Discover Smithers at
smithers.ca/invest-smithers

Smithers The Gem of the North

Photo: Camus Photography

Your Gateway To Northern Opportunities

Smithers is the Bulkley Valley Region's economic, recreation and cultural hub, serving a regional population of approximately 15,000 people. Smithers' strength lies in its strategic location, vibrant community, and skilled labour pool. It's an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and businesses seeking growth and opportunity.

www.smithers.ca

Smithers ...simply exceptional.

Economic Development: ecdev@smithers.ca Ph: 250-847-1600

KITIMAT: CHOOSE MORE

The undeniable economic powerhouse of BC's northwest coast, Kitimat is home to Canada's first natural gas export facility—the LNG Canada mega-project—plus the recently-approved Haisla Nation-led Cedar LNG.

Twice the site of Canada's largest-ever private investment, Kitimat is a booming industrial centre with a friendly, small-town vibe.

Located on the traditional territory of the Haisla people, Kitimat (meaning "People of the Snow") was incorporated in the 1950s to serve the aluminium industry and attracted workers from around the world. The massive Alcan Kitimat Project was completed in just five years; now owned by Rio Tinto, aluminium is still a major local employer. But with the LNG Canada project poised for kick-off in 2025 and Cedar LNG hot on its heels, there are more reasons than ever to invest in Kitimat.

Kitimat has everything you need—huge business potential, great infrastructure (including high-speed Internet, industrial rail service, well-maintained highways and a nearby airport), affordable homes (the average house price in 2024 is only $386,106)—all set against a breath-taking backdrop of mountains, rivers and ocean.

The classic West Coast lifestyle, balancing both work and play in a welcoming, tight-knit community, is alive and well in Kitimat. Here, you can clock off work and be fishing a world-class river within minutes. There is a scenic golf course, endless trails to explore on foot or wheels, and every snowsport is easily accessible. The local brewery is a popular spot to enjoy a cold pint and delicious food after your outdoor adventures. Plus, with two ice arenas, fully equipped recreation and aquatic centres, multiple yoga studios and more, there's no shortage of indoor activities, too.

Kitimat Bound

Contact the District of Kitimat's Director of Economic Development Walsham Tenshak at **250-632-8900 ext.2255** / **wtenshak@kitimat.ca** for more information on investing in Kitimat or visit **kitimatbound.ca**. Connect on Facebook and Instagram **@kitimatbound** or on YouTube **@kitamatbound8079**

BURNS LAKE IS CARVING A STRONG, HEALTHY ECONOMIC PATH, SETTING IT APART IN RURAL BC

While natural resource fortunes fluctuate, Burns Lake has been decidedly stable and sustainable as an innovative, forward-thinking community.

The civil infrastructure for the town's latest fully serviced commercial development is ready for construction. Richmond Loop is a high-profile street at the gateway of Burns Lake, adjacent to the brand-new firehall and next door to the main shopping mall. These new lots are designed for new stores and food outlets interested in the combination of healthy resident population numbers and all the tourist and transport traffic Highway 16 has to offer.

While most northern BC towns sprang up around a mine or a mill, Burns Lake has some added economic features that investors consistently find intriguing.

In addition to the clear influence of agriculture, there's more than a century of tourism, led by Tweedsmuir Park's northern gateway and some of Canada's best mountain biking, as well as hundreds of forested lakes.

Few small towns in the interior have quite the same kind of regional heartbeat. There are distinct communities all around Burns Lake, including six First Nations, all of them using the town as a goods and services centrepoint. The impressive array of lakes, rivers, mountains and valleys make it a natural meeting point. It has been that way for millennia.

Modern amenities include the well-outfitted airport, railroad services and the highway intersections going both north and south, and east-west.

This business magnetism is feeding future growth. The commercial opportunities of Richmond Loop are fed by the new residential development, Village Heights, at the popular north end of the town. Village Heights is located right on the doorstep of a recreational development already underway. The development planned for Village Heights links to the array of year-round activities aimed at the newly acquired Gowan Road property. The Gowan Road development is tucked tantalizingly between the existing Rod Reid Trail network, the existing Magee House Airbnb, and the nationally recognized mountain biking facilities at Kager Lake - Boer Mountain.

With such economic stability, opportunity for growth and robust history, it isn't a surprise that Burns Lake is perfect for investment. With urban centres straining under affordability and infrastructure pressures, this is a town with an average house price of less than $300,000, where commutes are mere minutes, parking is free and the scenery never gets old.

This is a town where new professionals want to establish their careers, young families can afford to own their own homes, and the community has plenty of lifestyle features—both financial and recreational—to allow almost anyone to carve their own path.

Burns Lake
Carve your path

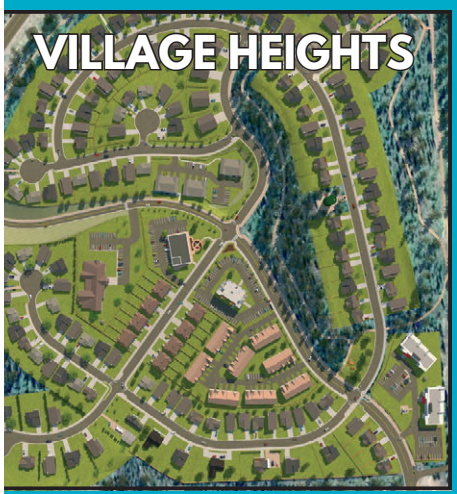
Discover **Burns Lake** at
burnslake.ca
and connect on Facebook
@Village of Burns Lake

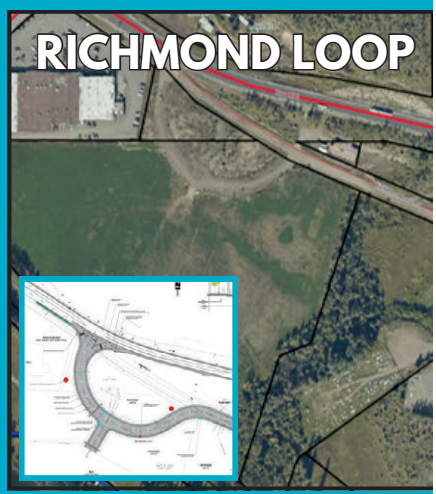
Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

INVEST Burns Lake

Come CARVE your Path and INVEST in Burns Lake

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES





Burns Lake

Village Office:
15~ 3rd Ave
PO Box 570
Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0

Village Heights

86 acres of residential and mixed-use within Village boundaries.

Gowan Road

160 acres of Village-owned property strategically located close to world-class recreation opportunities.

Richmond Loop

3 new fully serviced commercial lots with direct highway visibility and access.

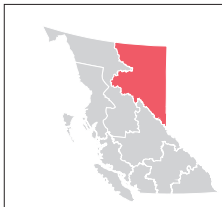
An innovative and forward-thinking community, the Village of Burns Lake has proven its ability to partner with industry and support commercial ventures.

Invest Now! 250-692-7587 edo@burnslake.ca

For more information visit: burnslake.ca | invest.burnslake.ca | visitburnslake.ca

NORTHEAST

- Chetwynd
- Dawson Creek
- Fort Nelson
- Fort St. John
- Hudson's Hope
- Pouce Coupe
- Taylor
- Tumbler Ridge



1.4% SHARE OF B.C. POPULATION

A New Energy Era

The Northeast is about to vastly expand its already outsized contribution to B.C.'s energy output

RIGHT: BC HYDRO; TOP: DESTINATION BC/ANDREW STRAIN; OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: CITY OF FORT ST. JOHN

Despite being the most sparsely populated region of British Columbia, the Northeast is an energy powerhouse. The region's plains, foothills and boreal forests are the site of virtually all the province's natural gas production as well as a major source of hydroelectric power, newly augmented by the Site C project on the Peace River.

As such, the region is on the verge of a huge expansion in output. Exploration and production from the huge Montney, Horn River and Liard Basin gas fields are set to soar as liquefied natural gas exports to Asia through the LNG Canada terminal in Kitimat commence in 2025. The Coastal GasLink pipeline, built to transport gas from the region to the coast at Kitimat, saw its final weld completed in fall 2023.

The Northeast makes a huge and soon-to-grow contribution to clean energy as well. The existing two dams on the Peace River generate around 30 percent of B.C.'s hydroelectric power and a third, Site C, will supply 1,100 megawatts more—ensuring the province's electrical grid is almost 100 percent renewable far into the future. Its dam, spillway and powerhouse now complete, Site C is now in the process of filling its reservoir and is expected to begin generating power in 2025.

In fact the Northeast punches above its weight in a lot of respects. Among B.C.'s economic regions, it has the highest proportion of people that are working age, between 15 and 64, at 68 percent. It also has the highest labour force participation rate among working-age people, again 68 percent. It has the third-highest dollar value of major projects planned or under construction in the province and more than half that total is actively underway.

In addition to energy, the Northeast hosts substantial agriculture, forestry and mining activity as well. The Peace River country around Dawson Creek and Fort St. John is home to grain, canola and pulse farming along with cattle ranches and feedlots. The forest industry, unfortunately, has seen a wave of consolidation in recent years due to

POWERHOUSE: The new Site C dam (above) will generate about 8 percent of B.C.'s electricity with a relatively small footprint; Doig River First Nation has established and is developing an urban reserve in Fort St. John (bottom)

BREADBASKET: The Peace Country represents the northwestern extremity of Canada's prairie grain belt (opposite page); metallurgical coal mining and reclamation near Tumbler Ridge (left) and Chetwynd (below)

cost pressures, volatile markets and a decline in the timber supply.

There are two metallurgical coal mines in the south of the region around Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge, Brule and Willow Creek, currently operating, and a handful of others under care and maintenance that could be brought back into service should coal prices permit. These mines send their ore directly to Asia steel mills by rail and through the Port of Prince Rupert.

RESERVES IN THE CITY

Recent cooperation between the Doig River First Nation (Tsáá? çhé ne dane) and local municipalities in establishing urban reserves illustrates reconciliation in action that creates benefits for the entire community. As a signatory to Treaty 8 in 1900, the DRFN has long held rural reserve lands throughout the Peace Country. But in recent years it has acquired fee-simple properties in Fort St. John and, through a legal process involving the federal government, is in the process of turning these into urban reserves. This status will allow some 2,000 members of the First Nation to live and work in the city where the jobs are while still enjoying treaty rights, tax exemptions and other benefits. As part of the transition, the DRFN has entered into partnership with local government to harmonize the operation and maintenance of infrastructure, bylaws and land use policy. Having established a template in Fort St. John, it is now working towards a similar partnership in Dawson Creek.

"It unlocks a lot of economic growth," says Will Fong, an economic advisor to the DRFN. In addition to increasing the labour supply where it's most needed, the urban reserve partnerships provide an outlet for First Nations investment. "The capital that exists within First Nations is pretty significant," he notes.

In Fort St. John, for example, the DRFN recently completed engineering and planning work on a $25-million gas station, café/restaurant and office building that represents the first phase of a larger commercial land development. The ribbon-cutting is slated for 2025. ■

REGIONAL POPULATION
70,119

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MAY 2024)
6.4%

TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY (2023)
Retail trade
14.4%
Mining & oil & gas extraction
12.6%
Construction
11.8%

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2023-33
1,600

BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2023)
$563 MILLION

HOUSING STARTS (2023)
59

VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q4 2023)
$41.6 BILLION

BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2023)
589

SOURCES: B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK, STATISTICS CANADA AND B.C. STATS.

ENTREPRENEURS CALL FORT ST. JOHN HOME FOR THE AFFORDABILITY, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

HOMESTEADER HEALTH FOODS

Trish and Steve Brousson were always interested in healthy living, but they had no idea how this passion would change their lives, until a small health food business came up for sale in Fort St. John in 1989.

They couldn't resist.

Fort St. John offered everything they wanted—affordable rents, reasonable taxes and a strong community. "A big advantage of doing business in a tight-knit community is, you get to know your customers," Trish says. "That means your customers are also your friends."

The couple truly learned about community in 1998, after they lost the store in a fire. Within five days, the community had come together to help set up a new location, where the store operated for the next 15 years.

Today, the store brings wholesome food and supplements to its four locations in BC and Alberta.

"Living in a smaller community, there's always so much more," Trish says.

COBS BREAD BAKERY

Hardik Patel moved to Fort St. John from India in 2013 to continue his education and settle down in Canada. He finished a diploma in Business Management from Northern Lights College and set his sights on a business opportunity—COBS Bread Bakery. He loved that the fresh bread franchise donates its leftovers to charities and food banks. "I was a customer before and always loved COBS products," Patel says. "We decided to invest our time, money and life in Fort St. John."

He and his wife opened the bakery in 2020 after researching the economic advantages of Fort St. John—affordability, abundant real estate options and friendly, helpful landlords.

Community support was instrumental to the bakery's success while navigating the challenges of opening during the pandemic. Customers visited every day while patiently following the pandemic's safety guidelines—sometimes waiting in -40 degree Celsius cold!

PIMM'S PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT, INSTRUMENTATION, ELECTRICAL

Ted Primm, general manager of Pimm's Production Equipment, Instrumentation, Electrical, has felt connected to Fort St. John his entire life. The family business was founded there in 1980, and three generations later, it is still providing for the oil and gas industry from northern BC to western Alberta. Thanks to endless possibilities in the Peace River region, the business has expanded its services to include telecommunications, IT, computer communication equipment, air compressors, millwrighting and more.

"Economically, the city has been a boon for the company, and geographically, it has been well-positioned to thrive in multiple industries," Primm says.

The company's multigenerational success has allowed it to stay agile and branch out to other industries.

"We didn't choose Fort St, John," Primm says. "It chose us."

POWERING POSSIBILITY

Fort St. John is well-known as a Peace River Region hub and an area of progress, growth and opportunity.

FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City

Ready to discover yours?

Visit | **fortstjohn.ca**

Connect |

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

FORT ST JOHN
The Energetic City

The future is North

34
average age, eight years younger than Canada's average

5.1%
unemployment rate, 0.3% lower than BC

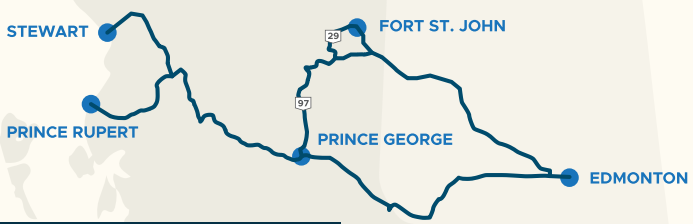
2
postsecondary institutions provide skilled workers

9th
lowest municipal tax revenues in Northern BC

1-3 months
average development permit approval

Fort St. John is the economic hub of the Peace River Region and British Columbia's best kept secret. No matter how you crunch the numbers, investing here makes good business sense.

See what's possible.



fortstjohn.ca/ecomonic-development

BCEDA
BC Economic Development Association

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATIONS/TRUSTS

BC Aviation Council
Dave Frank, Executive Director
info@bcaviationcouncil.org
306 – 8300 Bennett Road, Richmond, BC, V6Y 1N5
bcaviationcouncil.org

BC Centre for Agritech Innovation, a Simon Fraser University initiative
bc_cai@sfu.ca
13450 - 102nd Avenue, Surrey, BC, V3T 0A3
sfu.ca/agritech-innovation.html

CANDO
Ray Wanuch, Executive Director
cando@edo.ca
9635 – 45 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T6E 5Z8
edo.ca

Economic Developers Association of Canada
Penny Gardiner, Executive Director
gardiner@edac.ca
edac.ca

ETSI-BC (Economic Trust of the Southern Interior)
Laurel Douglas, Chief Executive Officer
laurel@etsi-bc.ca
201 – 460 Doyle Avenue, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 0C2
etsi-bc.ca

Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium
David Munro, Manufacturing Consortium Manager, British Columbia
dmunro@emccanada.org
Box 396, Owen Sound, ON, N4K 5P7
emccanada.org

International Economic Development Council
Nathan Ohle, President & CEO
1275 K Street, Suite 300, Washington, DC, USA 20005-4083
iedconline.org

Island Coastal Economic Trust
Brodie Guy, Chief Executive Officer
brodie@islandcoastaltrust.ca
#108 – 501 4th Street, Courtenay, BC, V9N 1H3
islandcoastaltrust.ca

Northern Development Initiative Trust
Samuel Cawkell, Manager, Economic Development
info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca
301-1268 Fifth Avenue, Prince George, BC, V2L 3L2
northerndevelopment.bc.ca

PNWER
Matt Morrison, CEO/Executive Director
matt.morrison@pnwer.org
2200 Alaskan Way, Suite 460, Seattle, WA, USA, 98121
pnwer.org

WeBC
Shauna Harper, CEO
hello@we-bc.ca
Suite 201, 1726 Dolphin Avenue, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 9R9
we-bc.ca

CARIBOO

?Esdilagh First Nation
Wylie Bystedt, Band Manager
bandmanager@esdilagh.ca
#4 - 423 Elliott Street, Quesnel, BC, V2J 1Y6
esdilagh.com

Cariboo Regional District
Beth Holden, Regional Economic & Community Development Officer
bholden@cariboord.ca
Suite D, 180 North Third Avenue, Williams Lake, BC, V2G 2A4
cariboord.ca

City of Prince George
Deklan Corstanje, Manager, Economic Development
deklan.corstanje@princegeorge.ca
1100 Patricia Boulevard, Prince George, BC, V2L 3V9
princegeorge.ca

City of Quesnel
Amy Reid, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
areid@quesnel.ca
410 Kinchant Street, Quesnel, BC, V2J 7J5
quesnel.ca

City of Williams Lake
Beth Veenkamp, Economic Development Officer
bveenkamp@williamslake.ca
450 Mart Street, Williams Lake, BC, VG 1N3
williamslake.ca

Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin
Karen Eden, General Manager
karen@cfdccariboo.com
266 Oliver Street, Williams Lake, BC, V2G 1M1
cfdccariboo.com

District of 100 Mile House
Joanne Doddridge, Director of Economic Development & Planning
jdoddridge@100milehouse.com
PO Box 340, 100 Mile House, BC, V0K 2E0
100milehouse.com

District of Mackenzie
Rachelle Dumoulin, Economic Development Clerk
ecdev@districtofmackenzie.ca
1 Mackenzie Blvd, Bag 340, Mackenzie, BC, V0J 2C0
districtofmackenzie.ca

Nazko Economic Development Corp.
Tai Krahn, Manager
manager@nazkoecdev.ca
405 Barlow Ave, Quesnel, BC, V2J 2C3
nazkoecdev.ca

Tsilqot'in National Government
Dolly Kershaw, Economic Opportunities Coordinator
dkershaw@tsilhqotin.ca
253 4th Ave N, Williams Lake, BC, V2G 4T4
tsilhqotin.ca

Village of McBride
Karen Dube, Community Economic Development Coordinator
karen@mcbride.ca
100 Robson Centre, 855 SW Frontage Rd., PO Box 519, McBride, BC, V0J 2E0
mcbride.ca

Williams Lake First Nation
Kirk Dressler, Director of Legal and Corporate Services
kirk.dressler@wlfn.ca
315 Yorston Street, Williams Lake, BC, V2G 1H1
wlfn.ca

CORPORATE

ᐸᒥᐦĊ° Pamihtâw Consulting Inc.
Devin Gambler
devin.gambler@gmail.com
Kamloops, BC
pamihtaw.com

468 Communications
Tim Fry, President
tim@468communications.com
468insider.com

BC Hydro
bizdev@bchydro.com
333 Dunsmuir St, 15th floor, Vancouver, BC, V6B 5R3
choose.bchydro.com

BC Infrastructure Benefits
Greg Johnson, Executive Director, Stakeholder & Community Relations
gjohnson@bcib.ca
bcib.ca

Cityviz
Sasha Bogdanovic, Chief Technical Officer
info@cityviz.ca
cityviz.ca

Deloitte
Jamie Vann Struth
jvannstruth@deloitte.ca
Vancouver, BC
deloitte.com

Destination BC
Spencer Toth, Senior Program Advisor, Destination Development
spencer.toth@destinationbc.ca
12th Floor – 510 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, V6C 3A8
destinationbc.ca

ExecutivePulse
Laith Wardi, President
lwardi@e-pulse.net
executivepulse.com

FortisBC
Surrey, BC
fortisbc.com

Gafka, Valerie
ProjectsByVal@gmail.com
Langley, BC,

Growcer
info@thegrowcer.ca
thegrowcer.ca

Indigenous Tourism BC
Paula Amos, Chief Marketing and Development Officer
paula@indigenousbc.com
707-100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC, V7T 1A2
www.indigenousbc.com

Kizet Advisory Limited
Mike de Carle, Principal
mike.decarle@gmail.com
Salt Spring Island, BC

Limbic Media
Jake West, VP Sales
info@limbicmedia.ca
#2 740 Discovery Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 1H2
limbicmedia.ca

Localintel
Dave Parsell, Co-Founder & CEO
dave@localintel.co
Suite 1680; 401 W Georgia St, Vancouver, BC, V6B 5A1
ecdev.org

Manifold Data Mining
Sebastian Woo, Client Associate
info@manifolddatamining.com
220 Duncan Mill Road, Suite 519, Toronto, ON, M3B 3J5
manifolddatamining.com

Meet in Penticton
Karen Davy, Convention Bureau Manager
ask@meetinpenticton.com
Penticton, BC
meetinpenticton.com

Monitor CRMS
Daley Thompson, Head of Sales and Customer Success
daley@monitorcrms.com
Level 1 302-304 Barkly Street, Brunswick VIC, AUS, 3056
monitorcrms.com

Myriad Consulting
Lori Ackerman
ackerman@telus.net
Fort St. John, BC
myriadconsulting.ca

O'Leary & Associates Ltd.
Colin O'Leary, Principal
colin@olearyandassociates.ca
Kamloops, BC
olearyandassociates.ca

Succession Ready
James Grieve, Co-Founder
james@catalyst-strategies.com
Kelowna, BC
successionready.ca

Toptekkies Technology
Farrell Segall, Owner/Proprietor
farrell.segall@gmail.com
Salmo, BC

GOVERNMENT

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
economicdevelopment@gov.bc.ca
gov.bc.ca

Procurement Assistance Canada
questions@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement.html

Provincial Nominee Program
PNPConcierge@gov.bc.ca
welcomebc.ca

KOOTENAY

Castlegar and District Chamber of Commerce
Tammy Verigin-Burk, Executive Director
cdcoced@castlegar.com
1810 8th Avenue Unit A, Castlegar, BC, V1N 2Y2
chamber.castlegar.com/

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

Christina Gateway Community Development Association
Tracey MacGregor, Community and Economic Development Coordinator
info@christinagateway.ca
1675 Highway 3, Christina Lake, BC, V0H 1E2
christinagateway.ca

City of Cranbrook
Darren Brewer, Business Development Officer
darren.brewer@cranbrook.ca
40 10 Ave S, Cranbrook, BC, V1C 2M8
choosecranbrook.ca

City of Revelstoke
Cat Moffat, Community Economic Coordinator
ced@revelstoke.ca
301 Victoria Road West, PO Box 2398, Revelstoke, BC, V0E 2S0
chooserevelstoke.ca

Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce
Pete Bourke, Executive Director
executivedirector@cvchamber.ca
651 Hwy 93/95, PO Box 1019, Invermere, BC, V0A 1K0
cvchamber.ca

Community Futures Boundary
Jennifer Wetmore, General Manager
jennifer@boundarycf.com
Box 2949, Grand Forks, BC, V0H 1H0
boundarycf.com

Community Futures Central Kootenay
Andrea Wilkey, Executive Director
awilkey@futures.bc.ca
201-514 Vernon St, Nelson, BC, V1L 4E7
futures.bc.ca

Community Futures East Kootenay
info@cfek.ca
#100 131 7th Ave S, Cranbrook, BC, V1C 2J3
cfek.ca

Golden Community Economic Development
Jill Dewtie, Executive Director
jill@goldenced.ca
202- 421 9th Ave North, ox 746, Golden, BC, V0A 1H0
goldenced.ca

Ktunaxa Enterprises Ltd.
Kevin Weaver, Director - Business Development
kevin.weaver@ktunaxaenterprises.ca
1629 Baker St., Cranbrook, BC, V1C 1B4
ktunaxaenterprises.ca

Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation
Rebecca Richards, Director
rrichards@lcic.ca
1499 Bay Ave, Trail, BC, V1R 4A9
lcic.ca

Nakusp and Area Development Board
Aidan McLaren-Caux, Economic Development Coordinator
aidan@nadb.ca
Box 15, Nakusp, BC, V0G 1R0
nadb.ca

ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation
Lisa Cannady, Economic Development Officer
lisa.cannady@akisqnuk.org
3050 Highway 93/95, Windermere, BC, V0B 2L2
akisqnuk.org

MAINLAND SOUTHWEST

Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Alex Mitchell, CEO
ceo@abbotsfordchamber.com
207 - 32900 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC, V2S 5A1
abbotsfordchamber.com

AdvantageHOPE
Sarah Brown, Economic Development Coordinator
operations@hopebc.ca
919 Water Ave, PO Box 370, Hope, BC, V0X 1L0
hopebc.ca

Bowen Island Municipality
Stefania Shortt, Committee Clerk & EDC Liaison
bim@bimbc.ca
981 Artisan Lane, Bowen Island, BC, V0N 1G2
bowenislandmunicipality.ca

Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation
Brian Coombes, President
info@chilliwackpartners.com
46115 Yale Road, Chilliwack, BC, V2P 2P2
businessinchilliwack.com

City of Abbotsford
Carilynn Siemens, Director, Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations
CSiemens@abbotsford.ca
32315 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC, V2T 1W7
abbotsfordsitefinder.ca

City of Coquitlam
Eric Kalnins, Manager, Economic Development
economicdevelopment@coquitlam.ca
3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, V3B 7N2
coquitlam.ca

City of Delta
Donny van Dyk, City Manager
citymanager@delta.ca
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent, Delta, BC, V4K 3E2
delta.ca

City of Langley
Francis Cheung, Chief Administrative Officer
fcheung@langleycity.ca
20399 Douglas Crescent, Langley, BC, V3A 4B3
city.langley.bc.ca

City of Maple Ridge
Tyler Westover, Director of Economic Development
twestover@mapleridge.ca
11995 Haney Place, Maple Ridge, BC, V2X 6A9
mapleridge.ca

City of Mission
Stacey Crawford, Director of Economic Development
scrawford@mission.ca
34033 Lougheed Highway, Mission, BC, V2V 5X8
mission.ca

City of New Westminster
Blair Fryer, Manager, Economic Development and Communications
info@investnewwest.ca
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC, V3L 1H9
newwestcity.ca

City of North Vancouver
business@cnv.org
141 W 14th Street, North Vancouver, BC, V7M 1H9
cnv.org

City of Richmond
Jill Shirey, Manager, Economic Development
economicdev@richmond.ca
6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC, V6Y 2C1
businessinrichmond.ca

City of Surrey
Stephen Wu, Manager, Economic Development
swu@surrey.ca
13450 - 104 Avenue, Surrey, BC, V3T 1V8
investsurrey.ca

Community Futures British Columbia
Wendy McCulloch, Executive Director
wmcculloch@communityfutures.ca
33163 2nd Avenue, Mission, BC, V2V 6T8
communityfutures.ca

Community Futures of Howe Sound
Kieran Hale, General Manager
info@cfhowesound.com
Suite 102 – 1909 Maple Drive, Squamish, BC, V8B 0T1
cfhowesound.com

Community Futures South Fraser
Nicole Read, General Manager
nicole.read@southfraser.com
#303 – 46167 Yale Road, Chilliwack, BC, V2P 2P2
southfraser.com

District of North Vancouver
Neonila Lilova, Business and Economic Development Manager
lilovan@dnv.org
355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, BC, V7N 4N5
dnv.org

District of Squamish
Jen Stone, Economic Development Officer
economicdevelopment@squamish.ca
37955 Second Avenue, PO Box 310, Squamish, BC, V8B 0A3
investsquamish.ca

Downtown Surrey BIA
Elizabeth Model, CEO
info@downtownsurreybia.com
10362 King George Blvd, Surrey, BC, V3T 2W5
downtownsurrey.ca

Invest Vancouver
Jacquie Griffiths, President
info@investvancouver.ca
Metrotower III, 4515 Central Boulevard, Burnaby, BC, V5H 0C6
investvancouver.ca

Leq'a:mel Development Corporation
Ron Smith, Chief Executive Officer
ecdev@leqamel.ca
#200 - 41350 Lougheed Highway, Deroche, BC, V0M 1G0
leqameldevelopmentcorporation.ca

Stó:lō Community Futures
Rocio Zielinski, General Manager
rzielinski@stolocf.ca
Bldg #5A - 2nd Floor, 7201 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, BC, V2R 4G5
stolocf.ca

TTQ Economic Development Corp
Darryl Peters, Business Manager
dpeters@ttqecdev.com
P O Box 606, Mount Currie, BC, V0N 2K0
xaxtsa.ca

Xwísten
Michael McGee, Economic Development Coordinator
ecdev@xwisten.ca
Lot 1A Joseph Road, PO Box 190, Lillooet, BC, V0K 1V0
xwisten.wordpress.com

NECHAKO/NORTH COAST

City of Prince Rupert
Paul Vendittelli, Manager of Transportation and Economic Development
paul.vendittelli@princerupert.ca
424 - 3rd Avenue West, Prince Rupert, BC, V8J 1L7
princerupert.ca

Community Futures Nadina
Kim Martinsen, General Manager
kmartinsen@cfnadina.ca
Unit A - 2430 Butler Avenue, PO Box 236, Houston, BC, V0J 1Z0
cfnadina.ca

District of Fort St. James
Clyde MacGregor, Economic Development Officer
cmacgregor@fortstjames.ca
477 Stuart Drive West, Box 640, Fort St. James, BC, V0J 1P0
fortstjames.ca

District of Houston
Andrea Newell, Director of Economic and Community Development
ecdev@houston.ca
3367 - 12th Street, PO Box 370, Houston, BC, V0J 1Z0
houston.ca

District of Kitimat
Walsham Tenshak, Director of Economic Development and Communications
wtenshak@kitimat.ca
270 City Centre, Kitimat, BC, V8C 2H7
kitimat.ca

Kispiox Band
Jessica Tait, Economic Development Officer
ecdev@kispioxband.ca
1336 Kispiox Valley Rd, Kispiox, BC, V0J 1Y4
kispioxband.ca

Kitselas Development Corporation
Chad Penney, Director, Business Development & Operations
bdo@kitselasdlp.ca
2225 Gitaus Road, Terrace, BC, V8G 0A9
kitselas.com/business/development-corporation/

North Coast Regional District
Chantal Wentland, Planning/Economic Development Officer
planning@ncrdbc.com
14-342 3rd Ave, Prince Rupert, BC, V8J 1L5
ncrdbc.com

Old Masset Village Council
Ivy Bell, Lands Manager
ecdev@omvc.ca
348 Eagle Ave., Masset, BC, V0T 1M0
oldmassettvillagecouncil.com

Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
nellie.davis@rdbn.bc.ca
37 3rd Avenue, PO Box 820, Burns Lake, BC, V0J 1E0
rdbn.bc.ca

Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
Meghan Bowles, Economic Development Officer
mbowles@rdks.bc.ca
4545 Lazelle Ave – Suite 300, Terrace, BC, V8G 4E1
rdks.bc.ca

Saik'uz First Nation
Vincent Wickham, Manager, Economic Development
vincent.wickham@saikuz.com
135 Joseph St, Vanderhoof, BC, V0J 3A1
saikuz.com

Town of Smithers
Will George, Economic Development Officer
wgeorge@smithers.ca
1027 Aldous Street, PO Box 879, Smithers, BC, V0J 2N0
smithers.ecdev.org

Village of Burns Lake
Sheryl Worthing, Chief Administrative Officer
village@burnslake.ca
15 3rd Ave, PO Box 570, Burns Lake, BC, V0J 1E0
burnslake.ca

NORTHEAST

City of Fort St. John
Jennifer Decker, Director of Planning & Engineering
jdecker@fortstjohn.ca
10631 - 100 Street, City of Fort St. John, BC, V1J 3Z5
fortstjohn.ca

District of Chetwynd
Ellen McAvany, Economic Development Officer
EMcAvany@gochetwynd.com
5400 Hospital Road, Box 357, Chetwynd, BC, V0C 1J0
gochetwynd.com

District of Taylor
Ryan Galay, Director of Community Services
rgalay@districtoftaylor.com
10007 – 100th A Street, Box 300, Taylor, BC, V0C 2K0
districtoftaylor.com

District of Tumbler Ridge
Jessie Olsen, Director, Economic & Community Development
jolsen@dtr.ca
305 Iles Way, Box 100, Tumbler Ridge, BC, V0C 2W0
investtumblerridge.ca

Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Krista Vandersteen, Regional Development Officer
kvandersteen@northernrockies.ca
5319 - 50 Avenue South, Bag Service 399, Fort Nelson, BC, V0C 1R0
investnorthernrockies.ca

Prophet River First Nations
Valerie Askoty, Chief
valerie.askoty@prophetriverfn.ca
PO Box 3250, Fort Nelson, BC, V0C 1R0
prophetriverfirstnation.com

Saulteau First Nations
Tonia Richter, Employment & Training Coordinator
trichter@saulteau.com
1717 Boucher Lake Rd., Moberly Lake, BC, V0C 1X0
saulteau.com

NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Co-operatives First
info@cooperativesfirst.com
4-1810 8th Street East , Saskatoon, SK, S7H 0T6
cooperativesfirst.com

Futurpreneur Canada
Andrea Welling, Regional Director, British Columbia
awelling@futurpreneur.ca
2015 Main Street, Vancouver, BC, V5T 3C2
futurpreneur.ca

North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO)
Rachel Connell, Vice President, Membership & Events
rachel@nasconetwork.com
14902 Preston Road, Suite 404-533, Dallas, TX USA, 75254
nasconetwork.com

THOMPSON OKANAGAN

Armstrong Spallumcheen Chamber of Commerce
Patti Noonan, Executive Director
manager@aschamber.com
3550 Bridge St, Box 118, Armstrong, BC, V0E 1B1
aschamber.com

Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
Krista Mallory, Manager
info@investkelowna.com
1450 K.L.O. Road, Kelowna, BC, V1W 3Z4
investkelowna.com

City of Merritt
Marilyn Christensen, Economic Development Manager
ecdev@merritt.ca
2185 Voght Street, Box 189, Merritt, BC, V1K 1B8
merritt.ca

City of Penticton
Blake Laven, Director of Development Services
blake.laven@penticton.ca
325 Power Street, Penticton, BC, V2A 7K9
penticton.ca

City of Vernon
John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
jperrott@vernon.ca
3001 - 32 Ave, Vernon, BC, V1T 2L8
vernon.ca

Community Futures Nicola Valley
Sandy Merchant, Community Economic Development Coordinator
loanofficer@cfdcnv.com
2181 Quilchena Ave., Merritt, BC, V1K 1B8
cfdcnv.com

Community Futures North Okanagan
Leigha Horsfield, Executive Director
leighah@futuresbc.com
3105 33rd Street, Vernon, BC, V1T 9P7
futuresbc.com

Community Futures Thompson Country
Blair Gray, General Manager
bgray@communityfutures.net
330 Seymour St., Kamloops, BC, V2C 2G2
communityfutures.net

Cook's Ferry Indian Band
Jeff Monroe, Manager Economic Growth
edo@cooksferry.ca
Box 130 - 3691 Deer Lane, Spence's Bridge, BC, V0K 2L0
cooksferry.ca

District of Clearwater
edo@docbc.ca
209 Dutch Lake Road, PO Box 157, Clearwater, BC, V0E 1N0
districtofclearwater.com

District of Lake Country
Ruth Sulentich, Economic Development & Public Engagement Specialist
rsulentich@lakecountry.bc.ca
Box 1414, Lake Country, BC, V4V 2M1
lakecountry.bc.ca

District of Sicamous/District of Sicamous Development Corporation
Carly Procyshyn, Tourism & Economic Development Coordinator
c.procyshyn@dosdc.ca
446 Main Street, PO Box 219, Sicamous, BC, V0E 2V0
sicamous.ca

Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Dan Proulx, General Manager
manager@vernonchamber.ca
204-3002 32nd Ave., Vernon, BC, V1T 2L7
vernonchamber.ca

Kamloops Indian Band Development Corporation
Nova Sekhon, Project Coordinator, Land Development
businessdevelopment@ttes.ca
345 Chief Alex Thomas Way, Kamloops, BC, V2H 1H1
tkemlupsbusiness.ca

Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Colleen Clark, Acting CEO
hello@kelownachamber.org
544 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 6C9
kelownachamber.org

Merritt and Nicola Valley Destination Marketing Society
Melvina White, President
envmerritt@gmail.com
Box 159, Merritt, BC, V1K 1C6
experiencemerritt.com

Neskonlith Indian Band
Brad Arnouse, Councillor
bradarnouse@neskonlith.net
737 Chief Neskonlith Drive, PO Box 318, Chase, BC, V0E 1M0
neskonlith.net

Salmon Arm Economic Development Society
Lana Fitt, Economic Development Manager
edo@saeds.ca
220 Shuswap St NE, Salmon Arm, BC, V1E 4N2
saeds.ca

Shuswap Economic Development Society
John Reed, Executive Director
john.reed@shuswapecdev.ca
220 Shuswap St NE, PO Box 489, Sorrento, BC, V0E 2W0
shuswapecdev.ca

South Okanagan Chamber
Denise Blashko, Manager
manager@sochamber.ca
Box 1414, Oliver, BC, V0H 1T0
sochamber.ca

Town of Princeton
Gary Schatz, Director of Economic Development & Tourism
businessdevelopment@princeton.ca
PO Box 670, Princeton, BC, V0X 1W0
princetonecdev.ca

Venture Kamloops
Jim Anderson, Executive Director
janderson@venturekamloops.com
297 First Avenue, Kamloops, BC, V2C 3J3
venturekamloops.com

Village of Ashcroft
Margaret Moreira, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator
edt@ashcroftbc.ca
601 Bancroft Street, PO Box 129, Ashcroft, BC, V0K 1A0
ashcroftbc.ca

Village of Lumby
Tom Kadla, CAO
tomk@lumby.ca
1775 Glencaird Street, PO Box 430, Lumby, BC, V0E 2G0
lumby.ca

VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST

City of Campbell River
Rose Klukas, Economic Development Officer
rose.klukas@campbellriver.ca
301 St. Ann's Road, Campbell River, BC, V9W 4C7
campbellriver.ca

City of Langford
Donna Petrie, Manager of Business Development and Events
dpetrie@langford.ca
2nd Floor, 877 Goldstream Avenue, Langford, BC, V9B 2X8
langford.ca

City of Nanaimo
Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer
economic.development@nanaimo.ca
455 Wallace Street, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5J6
nanaimo.ca

City of Port Alberni
Patrick Deakin, Economic Development Manager
Patrick_Deakin@portalberni.ca
4850 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 1V8
portalberni.ca

City of Powell River
Callie Matthews, Manager of Properties, Partnerships, and Public Relations
cmatthews@powellriver.ca
6910 Duncan Street, Powell River, BC, V8A 1V4
prdiscoveryourself.ca

Community Futures Mount Waddington
Riley Zimmerman, Executive Director
riley@cfmw.ca
14 – 311 Hemlock Street, Box 458, Port McNeill, BC, V0N 2R0
cfmw.ca

District of Saanich
Mitchell Edgar, Economic Development Manager
mitchell.edgar@saanich.ca
770 Vernon Ave, Victoria, BC, V8X 2W7
saanich.ca

District of Sooke
Gail Scott, Community Economic Development Officer
gscott@sooke.ca
2205 Otter Point Road, Sooke, BC, V9Z 1J2
sooke.ca

Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
Kim Smythe, President & CEO
cao@nanaimochamber.bc.ca
2133 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9S 1H8
nanaimochamber.bc.ca

Heiltsuk Tribal Council
Evangeline Clifton, Economic Development Officer
evangeline.clifton@heiltsuk.ca
226 Wabalisla, PO Box 880, Bella Bella, BC, V0T 1Z0
heiltsuknation.ca

Huuayaht First Nations
Piyush Pushkarna, Economic Development Officer
piyush.p@huuayaht.org
4644 Adelaide Street, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 6N4
huuayaht.org

Nanoose Economic Development Corporation
Kim Burden, Chief Executive Officer
kim@nanoose-edc.com
209 Mallard Way, Lantzville, BC, V0R 2H0
nedmlp.com

Regional District of Mount Waddington
Pat English, Manager of Economic Development
penglish@rdmw.bc.ca
2044 McNeill Road, Box 729, Port McNeill, BC, V0N 2R0
rdmw.bc.ca

Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization
Yarrow Drtina, Communications & Programs Manager
info@scredo.ca
PO Box 1754, Gibsons, BC, V0N 1V0
scredo.ca

Town of Port McNeill
Marilyn MacArthur, Economic Development Manager
ecdev@portmcneill.ca
PO Box 728, Port McNeill, BC, V0N 2R0
portmcneill.ca

Town of Sidney
Randy Humble, CAO
admin@sidney.ca
2440 Sidney Avenue, Sidney, BC, V8L 1Y7
sidney.ca

Township of Esquimalt
Terése Finegan, Manager of Economic Development
terese.finegan@esquimalt.ca
1229 Esquimalt Rd, Esquimalt, BC, V9A 3P1
esquimalt.ca

Uchucklesaht Tribe Government
David McCormick, Economic Development Manager
David.McCormick@uchucklesaht.ca
5251 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 1V1
uchucklesaht.ca

Ucluelet First Nation
Corey Rich, Economic Development Officer
Corey.rich@ufn.ca
700 Way Road, Hitacu, BC, V0R 3A0
ufn.ca

Village of Sayward
Mark Baker, Mayor
village@saywardvalley.ca
652 H'Kusam Way, PO Box 29, Sayward, BC, V0P 1R0
sayward.ca

Official Publication of the BC Economic Development Association in special partnership with BCBusiness.

FOR PLANNERS WHO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.

Discover the Charm of BC's Mighty Small Cities for your next Business Event.

Outside the Box BC brings together Tourism Kamloops, Tourism Nanaimo, and Meet in Penticton to offer you a unique and unforgettable experience.

Think Outside the Box - affordable, local watering holes, off-site venues that can host up to 600 delegates, and easy access by plane, train and automobile, right here in BC!

When you secure all three BC destinations for your meeting, event, or conference, you can take advantage of our exclusive incentive program.

Enjoy $10 back per room night while your delegates experience the charm of down-to-earth locations– whether oceanside, riverside, or lakeside.

BCEDA
BC Economic Development Association

2025 BC Economic Summit
Connecting the Dots

May 12-15, 2025
Penticton, BC

Partnership Opportunities Available

BCEDA Members save $100

bceda.ca/summit

TOWN OF PRINCETON

Where Rivers and Friends Meet

INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Fully Serviced Industrial Lots For Sale

PHASE 3 COMING SOON!

Fully serviced, one acre lots starting at $225,000

Phase 1 - Only 3 Lots Available
Phase 2 - Only 3 Lots Available
Phase 3 - Coming Soon up to 20 Acres Available

Gary Schatz
Director of Economic Development

778.720.6104
gschatz@princeton.ca
Princeton - Summerland Road and David Brown Way

Call now or visit the website for more info

PrincetonEcDev.ca

Located 1.5 Kilometers North of the Town Centre and near two major highway routes Highway 3 and Highway 5a.