

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

BCEDA Launches DisasterSmartBC: Leading Canada in Economic Resiliency and Recovery

Penticton, BC – April 16, 2025 – The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is proud to announce the launch of **DisasterSmartBC™**, a cutting-edge platform designed to equip communities and businesses with the tools and resources they need to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

This new initiative reaffirms BCEDA’s position as a national leader in economic resiliency and recovery—a program the association began in 2012 following the Burns Lake Mill explosion. Since then, BCEDA has played a pivotal role in every major disaster impacting British Columbia, including wildfires and floods. Beyond provincial borders, BCEDA has shared its expertise across Canada and internationally, supporting disaster recovery efforts in places like Southern Alberta and communities worldwide, including the US Mariana Islands following Typhoon Yutu, helping to rebuild local economies and foster resilience.

“Our mission has always been to empower communities to recover and rebuild stronger,” said **Dale Wheeldon**, President and CEO of BCEDA. “DisasterSmartBC builds on more than a decade of experience and is designed to be an indispensable resource for local governments, businesses, and community leaders. It is another example of our commitment to providing innovative solutions that address the economic impacts of disasters and help communities navigate the complexities of recovery.”

In addition to launching **DisasterSmartBC**, BCEDA is also releasing new **Economic Recovery Frameworks for Local and Indigenous Governments**. These frameworks serve as essential guides to help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from future disasters, ensuring economic stability and resilience. BCEDA is committed to working alongside Indigenous and local governments to ensure communities have the necessary tools and resources to recover and thrive after a disaster.

The DisasterSmartBC website is expected to launch later this year and serve as a centralized hub for:

- **Comprehensive Disaster Resources:** Offering guidance, tools, and best practices to help communities prepare for and recover from natural and man-made disasters.
- **Economic Recovery Strategies:** Providing templates, case studies, and actionable plans to accelerate recovery efforts.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:** Creating a space for stakeholders to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships, and build long-term resilience.

DisasterSmartBC reflects the lessons BCEDA has learned through its extensive work in disaster response and recovery. The platform will empower communities to enhance their disaster preparedness while fostering economic sustainability and growth.

Since the inception of its economic recovery program in 2012, BCEDA has solidified its reputation as a trusted partner for communities facing disaster-related challenges. Whether responding to wildfires in

British Columbia or providing expertise to international recovery initiatives, BCEDA’s leadership and innovative approaches continue to set a benchmark for economic resiliency programs worldwide.

“DisasterSmartBC is a reflection of our commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities,” added Wheeldon. “We are proud to continue leading the charge in economic recovery and resiliency, ensuring that communities have the tools they need to overcome challenges and thrive in the future.”

-30-

About BCEDA

The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is the leading professional association of economic development practitioners in British Columbia. Dedicated to advancing economic development as a core function of resilient communities, BCEDA provides training, resources, and support to local governments, Indigenous communities, and businesses.

For more information or to find out about partnership opportunities for DisasterSmartBC and BCEDA’s ongoing work in economic resiliency and recovery, please contact:

Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO
British Columbia Economic Development Association
Email: dwheeldon@bceda.ca
Phone: 604-819-3809