

Revelstoke Development News

March 2014



**COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



HIGHWAY SIGNAGE



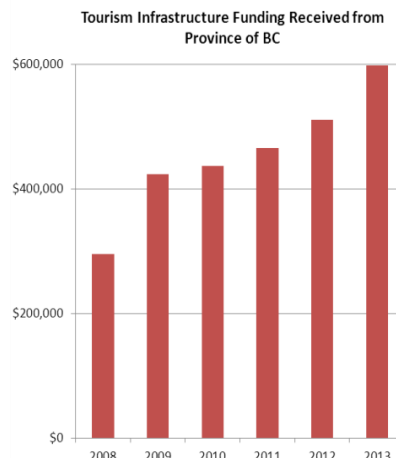
The Community Economic Development (CED) Department is funded by the City of Revelstoke and the CSRD Area B. The purpose of the Department is to implement the CED goals and objectives identified by the community in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The Department has been working on the following initiatives over the past few months. For information on CED initiatives contact Alan Mason, Director of Community Economic Development at 250-827-5345 or e-mail amason@revelstoke.ca.

CED has been working with the City's Enhancement Committee, the Chamber of Commerce and the Revelstoke Accommodation Association to develop new signage on the Trans-Canada Highway that will help attract more visitors to the downtown area. The signage that the City currently has on the highway has been in place for over 20 years, and needs to be refreshed. There have been several meetings with the business community and city staff to work on a new design that will make the signage more attractive and effective in drawing more visitors into the downtown area.

TOURISM

Working closely with our tourism partner agencies, Tourism Revelstoke and the CED department is responsible for the implementation of the Tourism Resort Development Strategy. This strategy identifies a number of tourism infrastructure projects which tourism stakeholders have identified as important to help develop our tourism market. These projects are largely funded through the Resort Municipality Initiative, a Provincial program which contributes funding to 14 resort communities in British Columbia. The funding is exclusively to be used for developing infrastructure which will help to promote tourism. Examples of tourism infrastructure projects in Revelstoke include the development of the new Visitor Information Centre, the extension of Grizzly Plaza to 3rd Street, the construction of the Nordic ski lodge at Mt. MacPherson, the construction of snowmobile cabins at Boulder Mountain and Frisby Ridge, the construction of mountain bike trails, and the purchase of the resort shuttle buses that transport tourists and residents between Revelstoke and Revelstoke Mountain Resort.

These projects, and the marketing activities carried out Tourism Revelstoke, have helped to increase hotel revenues by over 30% since the RMI program was initiated in 2008. Hotel revenues have increased steadily over the past six years, and have shown increases both in summer and winter months.



FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY



Food security was identified as another high community priority in the ICSP. CED staff was able to secure grant funding from the Real Estate Foundation of BC and the Columbia Basin Trust to undertake a community strategy to help Revelstoke develop a solid plan to improve the local food supply. A number of groups in Revelstoke are already active in implementing food security initiatives, including Community Connections, the North Columbia Environmental Society, the PACs and the Revelstoke Farmers' Market.

Working closely with these stakeholder groups, CED staff will develop a strategy that will identify community priorities and actions that will help to make locally produced food more accessible and affordable for local residents.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The provision of affordable housing in Revelstoke has been identified as a high community priority for several years. The City of Revelstoke created the Revelstoke Community Housing Society to help the city to develop affordable housing. The Society was successful in obtaining grant funding from BC Housing and CBT to help with the construction costs of affordable housing in Revelstoke. For the past 18 months, the Society has been working closely with BC Housing and CBT to develop 12 rental townhouse units on city land along Oscar Street.

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REVELSTOKE COMMUNITY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Supporting Social Planning and Action in Revelstoke since July 2008

The Social Development Committee is an Advisory Committee to Revelstoke City Council. The Committee provides input to the work plan of the Social Development Coordinator, Jill Zacharias, who is contracted to the City of Revelstoke and reports to the Director of Community Economic Development.



Jill supports social sector organizations and non-profits in Revelstoke by bringing in training opportunities, helping out with grant writing, and bringing together community partners to work on special projects that help address community-wide social issues.

Since the position was created in 2009, \$355,000 has been brought in to support 23 different social projects in the community, including social planning, new program and project development, capital upgrades to facilities, and the creation of 2 new key social sector positions.



SUPPORTING YOUTH

The Youth Initiative Committee was started in 2010 - a group of youth and others interested in supporting youth in Revelstoke. CBT Community Directed Youth Funds (\$25,000/yr. for 4 years) were secured to hire a Youth Liaison, Megan Shandro. The Youth Advisory Committee was established in 2013 as a Committee of City Council to oversee Megan's work plan. Megan has been busy supporting youth-led activities such as the Stoke Youth Network, the YES Leadership Week at Revelstoke Secondary School, a WE-Day trip to Vancouver, and Love is Louder group. Megan has an office at RSS, supports CBT Youth Action Grant applications, and connects youth to employment and volunteer opportunities. Megan also updated the Youth Action Plan. Interested in supporting youth? Contact Megan at info@stokeyouthnetwork.ca

For more information about Social Development check out www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org

Want to get involved?

**Contact Jill Zacharias
Social Development Coordinator
e.jill.zacharias@gmail.com**

PROMOTING A 'HEALTHY COMMUNITY'

The Revelstoke and Area Healthy Community Project is part of the Ministry of Health's province-wide Healthy Family BC initiative to look at what communities can do to help families and individuals live healthier lifestyles. This project brought together information from a number of different plans and set priorities for what we could be doing to make Revelstoke a 'healthier' community. The photography exhibit at the Community Centre in February was part of this project.

ADDRESSING POVERTY REDUCTION

Revelstoke is one of the first small communities in Canada to complete a comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy. Since then, a 'Poverty Reduction Working Group' started to address poverty and affordability in Revelstoke. Funding from CBT's Social Grants Program has been approved to deliver a two-year "Financial Literacy" project in partnership with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. Project goals are to help our community's residents to be more secure financially and to strengthen our community's ability to work together to address needs that impact income security.

Affordable Housing continued.....



The CED staff has been working closely with the Society on this initiative, and the Society is hopeful of beginning construction of the new housing units later this year.

The units will be rented to Revelstoke residents who qualify for affordable housing, i.e. their income is below a certain threshold, they are Revelstoke residents, and they demonstrate a need for affordable housing. Application packages for the new units will be made available later this year. These units will be a valuable addition to the stock of affordable housing units in the community.

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Community Futures Revelstoke provides a number of business services to both new and existing Revelstoke Entrepreneurs. These services include one-on-one business counselling and advice, business planning assistance, business training, the Self-Employment Program, and business financing for start-up and existing business. For more information phone 250 837-5345 or visit www.revelstokecf.com.

SELF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

is for unemployed individuals on Employment Insurance (EI) or those who are unemployed and have been on EI in the last 3 years or are unemployed and have been on maternity in the last 5 years. The first step in accessing this program is to make an appointment with a Case Manager at the WorkBC Employment Services Centre, at 250 814-0244 to verify eligibility. This program provides financial support, business counselling and business training for up to 48 weeks while establishing your new business.

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES

are available to anyone who is looking to either expand or start a business. The first step is to call Community Futures at 250 837-5345 to set up an appointment with one of our staff members.

Community Futures staff can advise on topics such as marketing, human resources, financial management, time management, operational management, and regulatory issues, to name a few. There is no cost to accessing these business advisory services.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

Community Futures can lend up to \$150,000 to any one business. Lending decisions are not based on set formulas. Each business is looked at and evaluated on its own unique circumstances.

The Community Futures Loan Portfolio stands at approximately \$6.5 Million. Approximately \$4.6 Million is currently loaned out, and \$1.9 Million is available to be lent out. Since its inception in 1987, Community Futures has lent out more than \$21 Million to the Revelstoke business community, resulting in significant economic spin-offs and job creation.

Coming soon to the Basin Business Advisor program is **Enterprising non-profit workshops** – pre requisite for ENP grants – your advisor will work with your group on the application process and support execution of successful grant applicant projects.

BASIN BUSINESS
ADVISORS PROGRAM

A PROGRAM OF
Columbia
Basin **trust**

ADMINISTERED & MANAGED BY
**Community
Futures**



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North Basin Business Advisor
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www.cbt.org/bba

Owners of established businesses in the Columbia Basin, including social enterprises, have access to the Basin Business Advisors (BBA) program, which provides free, one-on-one, confidential business counselling services. A qualified professional business advisor can provide business counselling, a detailed assessment report of the business and an in-depth financial analysis of the business. Following the completion of the assessment, the advisor may recommend the services of an independent qualified business consultant to provide further analysis and recommendations on a specific area of business management. The BBA program provides a contribution to the cost of consulting.

Business owners who participate in the BBA program will have the opportunity to increase their managerial skills and knowledge, focus more confidently on long-term strategic planning, strengthen decision-making skills, reduce and better manage risk, improve financial control and enhance human resources expertise.

The Purpose of the BBA program is to build economic capacity in the Basin Communities, encouraging established businesses to grow and prosper. In order to be eligible for the program your business must be headquartered in the Basin, actively conducting business and earning business income and in compliance with all Canadian laws and regulations

New to the BBA program this year, is **Me Inc. Workshops** for pre-start-up entrepreneurs. In just 1.5 hours we will review critical decision points for making the transition, provide industry insights, support resources and other details. Me Inc. Workshop will be in Revelstoke Tuesday, April 22nd, 6:30pm – 8:00pm in the Revelstoke Business Information Centre boardroom at 301 Victoria Rd W. Pre-registration is a must. Call toll free to register by phone at 1.855.510.2227.

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Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber staff began the year with a clear set of goals and objectives from the Board of Directors. We are focused on engaging our members, promoting business retention and expansion and continued advocacy on behalf of Revelstoke's business community.

Business today must adapt to survive in this time of economic uncertainty. The Chamber recognizes the importance of supporting our businesses, big and small, so that our community is the best place to live, work and play. Business retention and expansion (BRE) is one of the cornerstones of economic development. It's a strategy with a focus on supporting existing businesses and attracting new businesses to grow our local economy and tax base.

In the "Dynamic & Local Economic Development" section of the *Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)*, there are several initiatives and supportive actions identified for the Chamber, City, and City economic development (CED). One of these is to improve communication between the City, local business and potential development clients to give them a clear picture of what will be required in terms of plans, costs, processes, etc. for "property improvement" and development initiatives. The Chamber is working on a special trades & industry session with Development Services. This meeting will be in the upcoming months and will be supportive of our "Open for Business" initiatives with CED and City Council.

The Chamber volunteer Board of Directors is committed to the progress and development of our community and all are advocates for our members. Several of the directors also volunteer to represent the Chamber on City Committees. We have representatives on the Committees of: Economic Development, Advisory Planning, Enhancement, Social Development, Tourism Infrastructure, and Parks, Recreation & Culture. Our team is always open to our members input and will bring forward member ideas and comments to their respective committees and Chamber staff.

Chamber of Commerce Vision: "We represent our member's interests in promoting the progress and development of Revelstoke in order to make it a better place in which to do business, live, work and play."



VISITOR CENTRE UPDATE

Our new space is being enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. Our first full month of operations proved to be a huge success. We welcomed 126 locals and 1,005 visitors in February, a 300% increase over February 2013! We are excited to get ready for the busy summer season and will be implementing new strategies and initiatives to better promote our membership and community at large. We have a new retail strategy focused on unique and local products and our tourism and visitor centre team is working to create additional information kiosks and brochure centres throughout our community.



Chamber Spring Calendar

March 27 @ 5:00 PM – Business after Business at The Sandman Inn. Join us to celebrate the new look!

April 11 @ 11:00 AM *Official Opening of the New Business and Visitor Information Centre!*

April 15 @ Noon - The Power of selling experiences over places Brow Bag webinar series. Chamber Boardroom.

April 23 @ Noon Chamber AGM, McPherson Room, Recreation Centre

Saturday May 10th – Downtown Sidewalk Sale! Head uptown and check out what's new for Spring and support the Heart & Stroke Big Bike Event!

May 16 – 19 Downtown - Vintage Car Club of Canada Show & Shine

A full listing of all community events can be accessed the Chamber website at www.revelstokechamber.com