

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

2017 British Columbia Economic Development Awards Winners

Victoria, BC, June 19, 2017 – The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) announced the winners of the 2017 BC Economic Development Awards at the BC Economic Summit Awards Banquet held Tuesday, June 13th, in Victoria, BC.

This year's award winners are (detailed descriptions follow):

1) Economic Development Marketing Innovation Award:

The BCEDA Marketing Innovation Award recognizes achievement in marketing initiatives that support economic development:

Community Less than 20,000 Population: TFN Economic Development Corporation - "*DeltaPort Logistics Centre*"

Community More than 20,000 Population: City of Campbell River – "*Investment Portal/Microsite*"

2) Community Project:

The BCEDA Community Project Award recognizes an organization that has implemented various economic development initiatives that provide economic benefits to a community or region.

Community Less than 20,000 Population: Salmon Arm Economic Development Society and Community Futures Shuswap - "*Launch-A-Preneur*"

Community More than 20,000 Population: City of Prince George – "*Foodie Fridays*"

3) BCEDA Chairman's Award: John Leech and Geoff Millar

The Chairman's Award is presented annually by the Chair of BCEDA to an individual who has made a significant contribution to BCEDA, the profession and economic development throughout British Columbia. Recipients of this prestigious award in the past includes John Furlong, Marilyn Hutchinson, Kevin Poole, Pat Bell, Burns Lake Recovery Team members, and many other deserving recipients.

The 2017 Chairman's Award winner, John Leech, CEO of the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC), has been a partner of BCEDA's since 2011. Since that time John has tirelessly worked to help support BCEDA and the work that we do. He has donated to Disaster Recovery initiatives, supported training for staff and works closely with BCEDA President & CEO, Dale Wheeldon on a number of initiatives. He includes BCEDA in ASTTBC events and activities and is always inviting BCEDA to participate in various broad based initiatives that have the potential to support economic development. John is always a call away and never hesitates to respond when BCEDA is in need.

The 2017 Chairman's Award winner, Geoff Millar was an economic development professional in a number of communities, most recently on Vancouver Island. Geoff delivered both economic development and tourism services to Cowichan Valley region for over 14 years. Prior to moving to Vancouver Island, Geoff

lived in the Okanagan providing economic development and tourism services in Summerland. Geoff's specialties include the tourism and agriculture sector.

Geoff has been a member of the BCEDA Board of Directors for over 10 years. Post-retirement, Geoff has stayed involved by helping at the BCEDA Ministers Dinner, emceeing the BC Economic Summit for the last few years and being a regular course instructor at the Western Economic Development Course. Both he and his wife Helen are regulars and you will find Helen volunteering at the events to by helping fill delegate bags, working at registration desk and more. Geoff returned as Past President when we had to make some changes to the board for 2017 and is now preparing to retire again at the end of the year. Geoff is always one of the first to volunteer to help on various projects and is always willing to provide advice to others in the industry. The BCEDA Board of Directors values his calm, positive and rationale participation.

4) Stan Rogers Memorial Award:

In recognition for a project (private or public) making the most significant economic impact in a community.

Kelowna Sustainable Innovation Group – “Okanagan Centre for Innovation”

“Effective economic development is a shared function of all levels of government, but it is most effective when implementation is lead at the local and regional level,” said BCEDA Chair Scott Randolph. “Communities across the province that make business readiness a priority and create opportunities for investment in their local economies have long been credited as being one of the main engines of economic growth and diversification.”

This marks the 27th year that BCEDA has presented these awards. The awards are presented to association members working on community-based economic development projects in BC and are an excellent way to recognize individuals and groups that produce outstanding work in economic development that has helped to make a difference in supporting and expanding local economies. We are proud to present these awards, along with our partner, FortisBC.

“It continues to amaze me the incredible efforts put forward by communities and economic development professionals to ensure strong local economies. This awards program continues to generate keen interest amongst economic developers and communities across the province.” said Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO, BCEDA. “It is very evident that many communities, regions and partners are implementing creative and bold strategies to encourage economic growth. Narrowing it down to a few winners is becoming increasingly difficult for our judges. Our thanks goes out to all who submitted projects for consideration this year. Their efforts to build stronger communities, and thereby a stronger provincial economy are to be commended and congratulated.”

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Contact:

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About BCEDA

The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is the leading professional association of economic development practitioners in the Province of BC. BCEDA currently has over 500 members from communities throughout the province. BCEDA provides services that help member communities grow and expand new and existing businesses, attract new business investments, and work towards strategic infrastructure investment, land use planning, and community enhancement.

BCEDA services include an annual summit and networking event, educational and professional development opportunities, public relations, advisory services and resources and partnering with communities and the Province of BC to market British Columbia for business investment.

Summaries

Community Project

Population Less than 20,000

Shuswap Launch-a-Preneur is an entrepreneur support program and pitch competition designed and hosted by Enactus, Okanagan College, Salmon Arm Economic Development Society and Community Futures Shuswap. The purpose of the program is to assist individuals and teams to successfully plan for and launch their business in the Shuswap, while at the same time competing for prize packages in true “Dragon’s Den” fashion!

The three-month program is divided into two stages: Training and Competition. The first stage consists of a series of six evening workshops supplemented with resources and one-on-one business mentorship support to assist entrepreneurs to validate their business model and prepare a detailed business plan. The second stage is an optional Final Night Competition where each season, participants compete for close to \$40,000 in prizes and in-kind donations designed to assist them to launch their business in the Shuswap.

Following the close of Season 4 of Shuswap Launch-a-Preneur:

- There are **34 businesses** currently in operation in the Shuswap Region that were established by individuals that went through the program. This includes a cross-section of business sectors including agriculture, technology and commercial (among others).
- To date, close to **40% of participants** in the Shuswap Launch-a-Preneur program proceeded to launch their business. We expect this number to continue to increase over time as participants continue to work to launch their ideas.
- These **34 businesses** are estimated to be employing more than **72 full-time positions, 15 part-time positions**, and there are **4 patents pending**.

Shuswap Launch-a-Preneur has grown into a program with strong community ownership and pride, including:

- Over **52** local businesses providing sponsorship consisting of seed capital and in-kind prizes, designed to assist with business start-up. Sponsorship includes accounting packages, legal fees, business consulting, advertising packages and much more. Each season the total value of prize packages participants are competing for is close to \$40,000.
- More than **20** business leaders from Salmon Arm volunteer to mentor teams on a one-on-one basis throughout the program – many staying on as volunteer mentors to the teams well beyond the duration of the program.
- Close to **300** community members each season (Sold out crowd) attend the final competition night at the community theatre to support and encourage the presenting teams.

Community Project

Population More than 20,000

Foodie Fridays (FF) is an initiative that was developed by the City of Prince George Economic Development, Planning and Development, and External Relations departments. FF is a weekly lunch event held on the front lawn of City Hall that offers the public access to local food truck vendors and restaurateurs in one location. FF was launched Friday August 5, 2016 and ran every Friday for 8 weeks, ending September 23. We wanted to create a way for businesses to raise brand awareness, increase sales, and serve a clientele they normally would not have access to. We also wanted to give businesses access to the 10,000 people who work downtown, some of whom might not normally eat out, and attract new people downtown. To initiate early adoption, the City waived all permit fees for vendors, provided free electricity hook-ups, organized musical events and music infrastructure, provided adequate seating with park bench relocation, and provided free online and radio promotions for the businesses. On the busiest day, there were 8 participating vendors, but on average, there were 5 participating vendors. Depending on weather, 100-350 people participated in each FF.

Impacts of Foodie Fridays are:

- ~1500 people came downtown over a period of 8 Fridays (avg of 188/day)
- Businesses increased their regular sales by around \$500-\$1,000 per day in 1 ½ hrs (~50-150 customers on good weather days with an average sale item of \$10)
- Positive product awareness through physical presence at FF and radio advertising
- One vendor was approached by new customers who were unaware of his existence in town before FF
- FF is continuing in 2017 with more dates (June 2 until August 25)
- 5 of 6 vendors who participated in 2016 are committed to participating in 2017
- The vendors have developed a positive relationship with the City
- The event has been so successful, specifically closing the roads in front of City Hall to entice people gathering and foot traffic, that politicians and managers are entertaining the idea of permanently closing the roads to foster more of the “FF” atmosphere year round.

Economic Development Marketing Innovation

Population Less than 20,000

Deltaport Logistics Centre (DLC) is a major logistics hub that can accommodate over 4 million square feet of state-of-the-art intermodal, goods-handling, light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution services. Sitting on approximately 300 acres and located only 30 kilometres from downtown Vancouver and the U.S. border, the initial 90 acres (Phase 1) of the DLC has been leased to a number of high-quality tenants. Tsawwassen First Nation is now offering the remaining 200 acres (Phase 2) to the high demand, low availability industrial land marketplace.

Deltaport Logistics Centre is strategically located directly adjacent to Port of Vancouver Deltaport, Canada's largest container-port complex and bulk commodities terminal in one of the world's highest demand commercial real-estate markets. DLC is optimally positioned to capitalize on growing trade volumes associated with Deltaport and the expanding international container industry.

Development of a communications plan:

- Branding
- Handout materials – designed to demonstrate the innovation and investor confidence of dealing on Treaty First Nation Land.
- Website
- TEDC Newsletter
- Event Activations
- Media Relations
- Partnerships including with Construction firms.

Economic Development Marketing Innovation

Population Greater than 20,000

The Campbell River Investment Portal/Microsite is an intuitive online economic development toolkit that makes it easier for Campbell River to promote the community's advantages, share information and support local business growth. Businesses in turn can use the investment portal to engage in several essential activities including: research the local business climate, understand current industry trends, analyze and segment customers, analyze industry specific competitors, uncover local opportunities, survey key location factors and find available properties. The investment portal is supported by a strong educational component to help businesses ask the right questions and analyze the data correctly to make well informed business decisions.

Analytics confirm that between February 8, 2017 and April 28, 2017 there were 643 unique visits from a range of locations including 15 visits that originated in the United States, as well as visitors from Poland, Russia, France and Australia. In just under three months the site has garnered the interest of several private sector investors, as well as federal and provincial government staff who saw the portal and subsequently explored new opportunities in Campbell River. This experience generated enough interest to fuel additional discussions between the City of Campbell River's Economic Development Officer and representatives from the government entities.

Stan Rogers Memorial Award

Ground was broken on the **Okanagan Centre for Innovation** (OCI) in 2014, just one year after the community led working groups convened in 2013. The building was intentionally designed to foster collaboration and collision of ideas, with leased space built around a common atrium and a rooftop patio for community use. Environmental components like living walls, fully operable windows to encourage natural air flow and a full height atrium to distribute natural light were incorporated and the building was built to high sustainability standards.

The OCI opened its doors in April 2017. The 105,000 s.f. facility, complete with rooftop patio, restaurants, cafes and a juicery, has a range of tenants including FreshGrade, BananaTag, Intraline Medical Aesthetics Products, WTFast, Wheelhouse Ventures, Martketer, The Profile Co-Working Space, Accelerate Okanagan, Interior Savings and BDC.

Since the convening of the community led working groups in 2013, the Okanagan tech sector has experienced tremendous growth, due in part to the collaborative and supportive innovation ecosystem fostered by provincial, federal and local government, post-secondary, business support organizations and industry. The commitment to enhancing the tech sector is evident in initiatives like the OCI. From 2013 to 2015, the tech sector grew by 30% to over 600 technology companies, 7600+ tech workforce and a \$1.3-billion impact to the regional economy. Local tech companies are already reporting positive impacts from the OCI as a central hub for tech in the region. The COEDC expects the growth momentum in the sector to continue to grow as a result.