

THE CHAMBER.

GREATER VICTORIA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEWS RELEASE

May 4, 2020

Bruce Williams named new CEO of The Chamber

Community connections vital to sparking economic recovery in Greater Victoria

VICTORIA, BC – The Board of Directors of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce has selected Bruce Williams to become the organization's next CEO, effective June 15.

John Wilson, chair of The Chamber's Board of Directors, says Williams was chosen after a rigorous process that examined an extensive list of candidates from across Canada.

“Bruce has proven himself as a highly capable leader in Greater Victoria. We’re delighted he’s agreed to take the helm at The Chamber as we work to restart our economy after a very challenging time,” Wilson says. “Bruce is well-known and trusted as someone who cares deeply about our community. He’s also had tremendous success connecting with people in business and government, which will be vital in his new role at The Chamber.”

Williams had been serving as interim CEO of the South Island Prosperity Partnership, which evolved from an economic development committee that originated with The Chamber. He is co-owner of the Spark Strategic Group and has served as a business executive with Bell Media and as a broadcast producer, on-air host and television anchor with CTV.

“I want to recognize the exemplary and inspired leadership created by Catherine Holt over the past four years,” Williams said. “Catherine crafted an efficient, effective and extremely influential organization. She along with current and past Chamber board members and staff should be proud of the organization they have formed.

“Recognizing the current state of our economy due to the COVID-19 crisis, I feel The Chamber can remain strong and resilient as we work with and support small, medium and large businesses. Greater Victoria has always been a strong, healthy, sustainable and inclusive community and I’m proud to be assuming this role to engage us all with our new economy.”

Williams will take over from current Chamber CEO Catherine Holt, who announced she was moving on from the role in January.

“Of course, at that time we had no inkling we would soon be facing unprecedented economic turmoil caused by a global pandemic,” Holt says. “Fortunately for The Chamber, we have been able to build a small but mighty team that has proven it can rise to the occasion. With Bruce’s exceptional skills as a communicator, I can’t think of a better organization to help Greater Victoria get through this challenge. We have the foundation for one of the most robust economies in Canada, and I look forward to the day when all businesses can thrive once again.”

Since 1863, The Chamber has served Greater Victoria by working together to build good business and great community through advocacy, networking, professional development and innovative services as changing times require. Find out more at VictoriaChamber.ca.

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BACKGROUND

Bruce Williams biography

Bruce Williams is one of Vancouver Island's most recognizable faces. As a public figure and former broadcaster, he is known for his integrity, altruism and unique ability to create successful partnerships and collaborations.

Williams is well known for his impeccable communication skills. His in-depth knowledge of economic development and strong connections to leaders and decision makers have made him an effective engagement and development strategist for business, non-profits and First Nations.

Williams' background includes experience as a CEO, as well as diverse roles on senior management teams. He has chaired non-profit boards and spearheaded fund-raising campaigns.

Career Highlights:

- Interim CEO, South Island Prosperity Partnership
- On air host and producer for TV and Radio in Ontario and British Columbia
- Senior Management Team member (client and community relations, facility manager - CTV Vancouver Island)
- Strategic Mentor, Leadership Victoria and Leadership Vancouver Island
- Greater Victoria United Way Campaign Cabinet Chair (three terms)
- Fundraising Chair for Jeneece Place, a Children's Health Foundation Vancouver Island project

Board Member:

- College of Chiropractors of BC, Vancouver Island University Foundation (two years as Chair)
- United Way of Greater Victoria
- Greater Victoria Economic Development Agency (now South Island Prosperity Partnership)
- Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation
- CFAX Santas Anonymous

Accolades

- Named one of the Top 20 Influencers on Vancouver Island by *Douglas* magazine

- Named one of the region's 20 Most Powerful People by the *Nanaimo Daily News*
- Recipient, Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal for community service
- Recipient, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce Award as Citizen of the Year
- Chairs Award of Distinction, United Way Centraide of Canada