

Business Pulse Update March 2014

Progress on the 'Top Ten to Tackle' List

The 'Top Ten to Tackle' is a list of priority concerns identified by the business community in Port Alberni during a Business Retention Survey conducted in 2013.

The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce (AVCOC), Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot (CFAC) and the City of Port Alberni (CPA) have collectively committed to address these concerns and report out on progress each month. The report for March 2014 follows:

Attitudes

- AVCOC letter published in Times Colonist newspaper responding to MoneySense ranking of Port Alberni at bottom of Best Places to Live in Canada article.
- 'Anonymous' has created a 'Worst Place in Canada' Facebook page that has rallied the community with respect to the MoneySense article.
- CPA Mayor has talked to a number of media about the designation using the opportunity to promote many facets of the community.
- The 20 people who have been meeting to discuss ways of addressing our image 'issues', the need for beautification and a new branding of the community have been challenged to bring 3 to 5 additional people each to the April 7 meeting. This Open Space format meeting will address three table topics: empty storefronts; a positive social media campaign; and, proclaiming our good life.

Beautification

- Facebook is being utilized to showcase many photographs of Port Alberni's mild spring season and natural beauty.

Business Succession

- CFAC's 'Venture Connect' magazine was promoted at the Abbotsford Sportsmen's show in early March. The magazines were distributed through the three day event. Opportunities in Port Alberni were discussed with many people attending the trade show.
- Venture Connect magazines were also distributed at the Edmonton Boat & Sportsman show.

Business Training

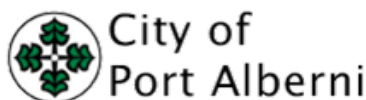
- The nomination deadline for the AVCOC Business Excellence Awards is Fri April 4.
- AVCOC will arrange WorldHost Customer Service Training for employees.
- CFAC is a third of the way through its 4 month 'Sales Mastermind' workshop. The group of small business owners meets bi-weekly and is presented with a series of topics on increasing sales.

Employee Attraction

- Catalyst was highlighted as an example of employment opportunities in the Valley through a display banner and assorted materials at the aforementioned Abbotsford trade show.

Quay Improvements

- A new sign was erected at the Harbour Quay and Chamber office to include wayfinding to the new beach. The map describes the beach features and uses graphics to emphasize how close by it is.



Progress on the 'Top Ten to Tackle' List

(continued from the front page)

Marketing and Promotion of Our Community

- A new trade show trade booth was developed and paid for by the AVCOC, CFAC and the CPA to create excitement about the Alberni Valley. It has already been used twice: at the aforementioned Sportsmen's trade show in Abbotsford and the aforementioned similar event in Edmonton.
- Over 600 people attending the Abbotsford event gave permission to have their names entered into a database for our economic and community development purposes.
- At the Abbotsford tradeshow a \$1000.00 valued tour package was given to one winner who is very excited to be coming to Port Alberni.
- AVCOC has partnered with the McLean Mill to utilize the Mill's 1989 Ford Van as a Mobile Visitor's Centre to distribute brochures, maps and other Alberni Valley promotional material throughout the summer. Visits to various festivals, concerts and popular areas will start on June 14th.
- The design of a graphic map similar to West Coast models has begun. Its purpose will be to promote retailers and it will be distributed at the visitor's centre, through the mobile visitor's centre and all tournaments and major events in Port Alberni.
- CPA continues to advertise Port Alberni as 'Vancouver Island's Most Affordable Properties' to specific target markets through magazine and radio ads.
- CPA is working with the Heritage Network to create Season's Passes & Coupon Books as well as expand their retail offerings. These have three purposes: generate more revenue; increase awareness; and, make it more accessible for locals.
- CPA and Alberni Valley Tourism are partnering to fund our community's participation in a TV ad campaign being orchestrated by CTV and directed to BC and Alberta viewers in June.

North Port / South Port

- Merchants in North Port are currently being courted for AVCOC Directorships in an effort to balance representation.
- The Uptown Merchants will be broadcasting music from speakers on the area's lamp-posts this summer in an effort to create a good shopping atmosphere.

Second Highway

- The Port Authority (one of the founding partners of the Alberni Clayoquot Transportation Committee) has been invited to speak on transportation matters at the AVCOC's June meeting.

Taxation/Tax Incentives

- MoneySense magazine emphasized our low taxes in their article which will provide publicity for this benefit of living in the Valley.

Businesses, organizations and individuals who are doing their part to address these concerns and who would like to see their efforts reported in this monthly update are invited to contact Stephanie Stevens, Economic Development Assistant at 250.720.2835 or stephanie_stevens@portalberni.ca