

Business Pulse Update May 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 concerns are ordered alphabetically below.

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 May 2014 follows:

Attitudes

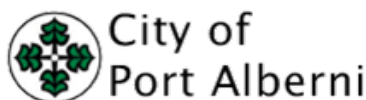
- The Chamber is working to integrate a more positive style of communication into their social media presence. A seasonal employee has been assigned Facebook management to implement this effort.
- Pat & Jackie Little, owners of Hollies Executive Golf Course commissioned a video to celebrate their 10 years of ownership. The Dallas Dalziel video showcases Alberni Valley businesses and venues as a golf ball is hit from one site to another and golfers dance to Pharrell Williams' song 'Happy'. The video has had more than 3,000 views in 2 weeks and been 'plugged' by a BC Golf writer.

Beautification

- The Chamber has purchased six large hanging baskets for the Visitor's Centre and freshened up the aesthetics of their parking lot areas with new paint.
- The City has:
 - trimmed branches from the trees along Johnston Road;
 - power-washed the brick boulevard on both sides of Johnston Road from Tim Hortons to Victoria Quay;
 - power-washed the commercial areas in front of businesses at Harbour Quay;
 - completed hanging flower baskets Uptown;
 - progressed with planting of annuals at Victoria Quay, 10th and Roger, Echo, and Harbour Quay; and
 - installed banners, created by Ditidaht artist, Art Thompson (1948 – 2003) around the City.
- The Arrowsmith Rotary Club has sponsored the annual painting of banners for the Rotary Arts District and these will be hung soon.
- City Council has directed staff to prepare a 'Graffiti Bylaw' with stiff penalties for vandals and fines for businesses who do not remove graffiti within a certain time period.
- City Council continues to identify buildings that are candidates for the Building Standards Bylaw.

Business Succession

- Community Futures continues to advertise businesses through their Venture Connect Program.
- Provincial Nominee Program participants alerted to opportunities here through presentations made by the City at Vancouver seminars, continue to visit the community looking to match their interests with businesses for sale.



Progress on the 'Top Ten to Tackle' List (May 2014; continued from the front page)

Business Training

- There will be an interactive presentation on social media at the June 18 Chamber Dinner meeting. This will provide education for those just starting or at the beginning stages of a social media program.
- The Chamber has scheduled two WorldHost Customer Service programs in June.
- The City hosted an Economic Development Essentials workshop for local leaders, which included representatives from other cities, regional districts, and community organizations.

Employee Attraction

- This issue will be raised at the June 4th Mayor's Liaison Breakfast.

Quay Improvements

- City Council has approved the extension of water services to the top of the Centennial Pier. The Port Alberni Port Authority will extend the service down the Pier to attract new business.

Marketing and Promotion of Our Community

- The Chamber's mobile visitors centre will be ready to go in June. One side of the 1989 McLean Mill Ford Van will feature the train; the other will have 9 pictures of activities that can be done locally.
- The graphic style 'Adventure and Things to Do' map continues in development. The map will use a 'cartoon' approach to its graphics in order to be comprehensible in any language.
- The City of Port Alberni is working with the Industrial Heritage Society to develop new approaches to the marketing of the Heritage Network and their multiple attractions.
- The City and Alberni Valley Tourism have partnered on a 15 second CTV commercial promotion. The commercial will air in Vancouver (82 times), Calgary (12 times) and Edmonton (20 times).
- Tim Hortons has purchased golf shorts for the Chamber's Alberni Valley Ambassadors.

North Port / South Port

- City Council has directed staff to prepare a Commercial Revitalization Tax Incentive Bylaw (CRTIB) for the remainder of the City (beyond Uptown). This will not be as aggressive in its incentives as the Uptown CRTIB is but will nevertheless reward investment.

Second Highway

- The Port Authority hosted a presentation on transportation initiatives it is working towards. The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance also presented a short update on the Vancouver Island Transportation Strategy. Their view is that the province will focus only on the Malahat and BC Ferries concerns over the next few years.

Taxation/Tax Incentives

- See North Port / South Port above.

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