



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

2015 British Columbia Economic Development Awards Winners

Richmond, BC, May 5, 2015 – The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) announced the winners of the 2015 BC Economic Development Awards at the BC Economic Summit Awards Banquet held Tuesday, April 28th, in Richmond, BC.

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

1) **Marketing Tool Award:**

The BCEDA Marketing Tool Award recognizes achievement in marketing tools that support economic development:

Community Less than 20,000 Population: Destination Osoyoos - *"Snowbird Attraction"*

Community More than 20,000 Population: Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation – *"Business in Nanaimo 2015"*

2) **Marketing Initiative Award:**

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

Community Less than 20,000 Population: Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation – *"Thriving Communities Metrics"*

Community More than 20,000 Population: Venture Kamloops – *"VK Venture Advisors"*

3) **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: Regional District of Fraser-Fort George - *"Robson Valley"*

Community More than 20,000 Population: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission – *"Okanagan Young Professionals"*

4) **BCEDA Chairman's Award: Kevin Poole, City of Vernon.**

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, Pat Bell, Burns Lake Recovery Team members, and many other deserving recipients. Kevin is only one a few who have won both the Economic Developer of the Year Award (2009), and now the Chairman's Award.

5) **Stan Rogers Memorial Award:**

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

City of Surrey – *“Innovation Boulevard”*

“While effective economic development is a shared function of all levels of government, it is most effectively implemented at the local and regional level,” said BCEDA President Scott Randolph. He noted that communities across the province continue to make significant investments in the development of their economies and stated “economic development has long been credited as being one of the main engines of economic growth and diversification.”

This marks the 25th 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.

“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 450 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.

2015 Economic Development Award Winners

Community Project Less Than 20000

This award recognizes a community or regional partnership that works together in on-going economic development work and activities.

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George – Robson Valley

In 2010, The Regional District, which includes the communities of Valemount and McBride, received funding to develop a plan to identify economic opportunities for the Robson Valley as a single economic unit, rather than separate independent communities. Since then, they have created a marketing and implementation program to promote the opportunities identified as those most likely to succeed and which could be influenced through local efforts.

Marketing plans and activities were developed in accordance with five target market sectors including independent professionals and active retirees, tourism, agriculture, forestry and senior government services.

The support and engagement of the local community is key to the program's success. Marketing collateral with the Robson Valley Region branding including table tent cards, pamphlets, window stickers, shopping bags and product tags were all made available for free for local businesses to utilize to help build brand awareness in the Valley and encourage Valley residents and business owners to carry the message to their networks, business customers and family and friends from outside the valley. Inquiries from the web have been received from across Canada and internationally with people requesting information about relocating to the Robson Valley Region.

The Valemount Mayor was quoted in a media article as saying "By joining with communities across the Robson Valley, our voices are louder and the opportunities to live, work and play here are great."

Community Project Greater Than 20000

This award recognizes a community or regional partnership that works together in on-going economic development work and activities.

Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission - "Okanagan Young Professionals"

There are important demographic and economic implications present in the Okanagan – from being one of the oldest census cities in Canada and seeing new/recent graduates leaving the Region, to the "sunshine tax" and the impending need for 75,000 new workers in the next 5 years. In response, the Okanagan has created programs to focus efforts around the retention and attraction of young professionals and their families. While there are a few groups facilitating activities in the areas of professional development, mentorship, networking, volunteering, arts and culture, their

communication and identity is often fragmented and disconnected, leading to difficulties in market and scaling efforts.

Established in 2012, the OYP Collective, powered by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC), has become the collective umbrella that fosters and supports the existing groups by opening lines of communication, helping cross-pollinate memberships, and hosting its own events and activities all with a focus and vision of creating a dynamic and engaged culture for young professionals in the Region. The OYP Collective is guided by the “Members of Influence” – representatives from almost every industry sector and Okanagan geographic boundary. This advisory team guides, directs and challenges the OYP Collective to be better and do more. By having a large cross section of industries represented, the OYP Collective is able to keep its finger on the young professional pulse of the Region.

The OYP Collective has fostered valuable partnerships and relationships with several organizations and furthered the vibrant culture that young professionals look for when choosing a place to call home. Many of our community partner groups (Kelowna Jaycees, Urban Red, Gennext Kelowna, Digital Okanagan, etc.) have seen a 20-30% increase in their membership numbers since the OYP started in 2012.

The OYP has gained significant traction over the last three years:

- To date the OYP has raised over \$260,000 in funds and services for non-profits and charities.
- Over 3000 volunteer hours of business service (accounting, web development, business planning, etc.) have been provided to local not-for-profit agencies.
- Social media reach has increased exponentially to 1019 followers on Twitter, 1162 likes on Facebook, 660 monthly website visitors, and 455 newsletter subscribers with a weekly reach of up to 1500.
- 30 newcomers were connected to the Okanagan and 7 direct job placements in 2014.
- Employers in the region have started to use the OYP Collective as one tool in their attraction efforts of young professionals from centres outside the Okanagan Region. The OYP has also recently been sought to revamp the career fairs at the regions’ two public post-secondary institutions – Okanagan College and University of British Columbia Okanagan – and has provided direct assistance in placing professionals with local employers.

Marketing Tool Less Than 20000

This award recognizes innovative and effective marketing tools used for attracting, retaining and fostering business as well as communication vehicles used by economic development organizations.

Destination Osoyoos – Snowbird Attraction

Destination Osoyoos researched, planned, developed, and implemented a comprehensive Snowbird Attraction Campaign in 2014. Throughout 2012 and 2013 we started by interviewing individuals and couples that wintered across the border in warmer states. We learned why they did it and what they wanted while wintering. In 2014 we started to put all the marketing tools and resources together for a planned 2014/15 winter season launch. In July 2014 we opened up a Discover Osoyoos Centre in our main lobby to accommodate visitor and relocation enquires. In September, we created a volunteer Ambassador Team made up of 8 snowbirds to help identify local activities, organizations, services, products, price points, etc. that snowbirds would be interested in and that would meet their socio-economic needs. They have been key in welcoming new snowbirds to the area on behalf of Destination Osoyoos and the Town. In October we started production of an Osoyoos Snowbird Guide / Brochure for wintering in Osoyoos. We sold ads to local accommodators to make the project more cost efficient. The project cost to date has been just short of \$30,000. Included in the guide is Osoyoos specific information, why snowbird's are choosing Osoyoos, climate information, general statistics, location, maps, winter accommodation information and recreational activities. 80,000 guides were printed and all will have been distributed during 2014/15. 42,000 copies of the guide became an insert in the Western Producer newspaper and were racked in AB, SK, MB, and some northern areas of BC. This proved to be the right resource to reach our target market. Immediately our communication channels lit up and did not stop with phone calls, emails, snail mail, and walk in enquires for more information.

Between January and March 2015, our accommodators have reported a 35% increase over last year in the number of long term stay Snowbirds to Osoyoos. Accommodators have had to set more rooms aside to accommodate this demand. They have been able to keep more staff on during this winter season thereby providing a more stable level of employment income. Local restaurants and stores have been reporting best winter month revenues ever. There is now a buzz on our down town Main Street that was not there several years ago. Locals are complaining that they can no longer get their usual Main Street parking spot whenever they want. Our resorts have learned to adjust their offerings to meet the price points of this population sector and as a result have been reporting successful sold out events and meals. Local realtors have stated that property sales have started to increase based on a trend analysis that has shown that snowbirds don't generally buy until their third visit to Osoyoos. However, Destination Osoyoos has testimonial evidence that some snowbirds are purchasing during their first long term stay. Our RV parks are sold out and there is a strong demand for more RV spaces for next year. Our local tourist attractions that have elected to stay open during the winter season have reported significant growth in traffic as a result of this influx of returning and new snowbirds to the area.

Marketing Tool Greater Than 20000

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Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation – Business in Nanaimo 2015

The Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) is proud to present the 2015 Business in Nanaimo Magazine! This is the second annual production of Business in Nanaimo, and provides an in-depth look at the Nanaimo & region business community, including key sectors, success stories, major projects and growing trends. This 2015 edition features articles discussing the new Medical Cannabis Facility (Tilray), technology incubator SquareOne, Nanaimo’s newest outdoor retailer Cabela’s, the increasing prevalence of foreign investment in the region, breakdown of seven key industry sectors and other compelling business stories.

The Business in Nanaimo Magazine has been a great asset both in attracting new investment to the region and familiarizing newcomers with the regional business community. With Nanaimo’s new transportation connections to Calgary and Seattle, having this publication has been helpful in illustrating the many competitive advantages of living and doing business in our region.

Marketing Initiative Less Than 20000

This award recognizes innovative and effective marketing initiatives used for attracting, retaining and fostering business as well as communication vehicles used by economic development organizations.

Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation – Thriving Communities Metrics

The Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation (LCIC) is the regional economic development office representing the communities of Rossland, Warfield, Trail, Montrose, Fruitvale and Regional District of Kootenay Boundary Areas A and B. The LCIC strives to develop a creative, dynamic and competitive business environment and works collaboratively with the communities in the Lower Columbia region, local agencies, organizations and businesses to develop and implement strategies that assist in strengthening the local economy and foster economic growth.

The “Thriving Communities” Metrics is a marketing initiative designed to collect, publish and educate local residents on economic indicators, drivers, and activities of interest to the community at large. By showcasing, highlighting and educating residents about the truly positive and sometimes quite surprising facts about the local economy of the Lower Columbia region, we create engaged residents, raise community awareness and at the same time increase LCIC’s profile.

Based on our new residence survey, 75% of new residents first visit our area as tourists, fell in love with the lifestyle and found a way to live here; this campaign targets these visitors. By strengthening local knowledge with positive impressive economic

development stats and instilling confidence in our local economy these ambassadors will in turn communicate the information to their visitors ultimately attracting investment and retaining residents of our region.

By showcasing our region has a dynamic and thriving economy. The Metrics will instill confidence in our region, in turn, our residents are proud and excited to share these informative statistics that most don't even know exists. Our residents look forward to seeing the metric every month and are genuinely excited to share this information with their colleagues, friends, family and visitors. The information is always relevant, timely and interesting. Local municipalities use these metrics to share these positive facts with their council and constituents. As well, local key employers use these metrics to include in internal newsletters to share with their employees.

These Metrics are delivered through various marketing channels including; print, radio, web, billboards and email lists and viewed over 800,000 times.

The Trail Chamber of Commerce is continuously using these metrics to showcase the health of our economy to potential investors. Recently potential investor was referred to LCIC from the Chamber because he saw the billboard and wanted more information. We continue to work with this investor to find the right fit. One of our metrics highlighted the number of jobs posted on the local job board; the number of hits to the website increased, as did the number of job placements that month. This is a direct tangible result of how this campaign has been successful.

Marketing Initiative Greater Than 20000

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Venture Kamloops – VK Venture Advisors

The VK Venture Advisors is a program offered through the Business Expansion and Retention department of Venture Kamloops. The program is designed to engage both upcoming entrepreneurs as well as the business community, and is a very effective community outreach program in this regard.

The program itself is run similar to the popular CBC television show “The Dragon’s Den” and leverages the popularity of the series. The Entrepreneur is coached by the Venture Kamloops staff to produce a standard venture capital style presentation or “deck”. They then make a presentation to a panel of local business leaders and collect constructive feedback and valuable community connections. This intensive mentoring session is designed to give the entrepreneurs the very best possible foundation from which to build or expand on their business, while at the same time giving local business leaders the opportunity to give back to their community.

Every year the VK Venture Advisors helps a minimum of 8 presenters. Since 2012, the VK Venture Advisors has supported 32 different entrepreneurs, representing a minimum of 25 new full time equivalent jobs and a handful of part time positions still in existence today. The contribution of a new full time position to the economy varies dramatically depending on the industry, but no matter what industry any new full time position will easily represent a much larger benefit to the economy than the cost to operate this program. Many of these presenters represent such industries as mining support, manufacturing and technology, which represent high value impact to the local economy in Kamloops.

A major component of the VK Venture Advisor program is the contributions in kind made by the advisory panel. These professionals range from accountants, lawyers, and bankers to marketing professionals, IT specialists and executive directors. Using an average hourly rate of \$100 (some of these professionals have a much higher billing rate) and assuming an average of 8 participants a meeting (typical attendance is higher) the total contributions in kind from the professional community are approximately \$10,800 per year. This represents a return on investment of 79.8% alone.

Stan Rogers Memorial Award:

City of Surrey – “*Innovation Boulevard*”

[Innovation Boulevard](#) is an agile partnership of health, business, higher education and government creating new health technologies to improve peoples’ lives. The shared goals are to:

- Grow companies in the health technology sector.
- Implement intelligent solutions in the health care system.
- Attract talented clinicians and researchers.
- Improve health outcomes for patients.

Innovation Boulevard (IB) removes a key barrier to health care innovation by providing access for companies and researchers to the hospital and healthcare professionals. For example, a company can speak directly with a doctor to validate or refine a technology idea. Innovation focuses on three technologies:

- Medical devices
 - Example – Portable brain monitor
- Independent living
 - Example – Home monitoring for seniors
- Digital health
 - Example – Mobile skin cancer diagnosis

IB capitalizes on the co-location of BC's busiest hospital and a research university with significant health technology research expertise located in a growing downtown core. The

shared need to accelerate health technology innovation led to the creation of BC Leadership Chair position co-funded by the Surrey Memorial Hospital Foundation and Simon Fraser University (SFU). Dr. Ryan D'Arcy, a neuroscientist and entrepreneur, holds a dual role as a professor at SFU and Head of Health Science Innovation at the Fraser Health Authority. Dr. D'Arcy has created powerful new connections between these two institutions.

The project has created several dozen jobs in Surrey by attracting a handful of companies from other cities to set-up in the newly created Innovation Hub located across the street from Surrey Memorial Hospital. The Innovation Hub is 22,000 square foot facility that brings together universities, private businesses, clinicians and government in close proximity to facilitate advances in health care.

As the Innovation Hub is opening within a week after this application is being written, precise numbers are not available at this time. The exact number will be available in the next week if required.

The project aims to build a health cluster which is a long-term project. The early success of creating jobs within the first two years has surpassed our expectations. We expect long-standing jobs will be created as more new businesses form.

Within the first two years there have been numerous impacts including new infrastructure, funding, research projects and partnership that will be identified in Question 4.

The founding partners were the City of Surrey, Simon Fraser University and the Fraser Health Authority. The partnership has grown quickly to include:

- Fraser Health Authority
- 4 post-secondary institutions
 - Simon Fraser University
 - Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 - BC Institute of Technology
 - University of British Columbia
- City of Surrey
- 4 industry associations
 - BC Technology Industry Association
 - Life Sciences BC
 - BC Innovation Council
 - MEDEC
- 45+ businesses
- Developers
 - Lark Group
 - PCI
 - Century Group

- The first 'Innovation Boulevard-grown' technology was commercialized in 2014. Conquer Mobile's surgery simulation program for iPad went from idea to product within one year. The iPad app trains nurses to use the correct surgical implements during surgery.

Funding

- \$36.6M in funding to SFU and the University of Toronto for a National Centre of Excellence called AGE Well to conduct industry-focused research to use technology to help older adults age.

Infrastructure

Three new research labs have opened to date. The labs, embedded in a care facility, a hospital and a university, provide access for companies and researchers to accelerate health technology development and adoption.

- Retirement Concepts Innovation Centre at Guildford Senior's Village– independent living technologies
- Neurotech Lab at Surrey Memorial Hospital – brain technologies
- Digital Health Hub at Simon Fraser University – Health computing solutions

New Research Projects and Collaborations

- 65 new research projects, and industry/academic collaborations.

Partnerships and Social Capital

- 50 person working group establishes connections across organizations.
- 5 events attracted over 1,200 people

Profile

- 25 earned media stories on television, print and online.