

Comox Valley Economic Development and Tourism (CVEDS) Q1 2019 – Strategic Priorities Report Summary Highlights

Innovate 2030 – Regional Comox Valley Economic Development Strategic Plan Process

With the establishment of the Innovate 2030 Advisory Committee, an Innovate 2030 Forum (Jan. 23-25) was hosted attracting 100+ business leaders, industry reps, elected officials to participate in a range of sessions, survey's and focus groups lead by the consulting teams. Ongoing industry and sector meetings occurred during this quarter to provide important input into the plan's development, these will continue through the spring, while the project website is continually being updated. A Business and Community Online Survey was compiled (launch in April), and the planning for two public Open Houses (April 8 and May 23) occurred, with the April 8 Open House attracting over 70 attendees that engaged directly in survey questions, feedback forms and with the consultants. Further, an Employee Housing Summit was developed in collaboration with the CV Coalition to End Homelessness, featuring leading affordable housing specialists and project managers (May 23).

Destination Marketing Grant Applications and Collaborations

Two major event marketing campaigns were undertaken during this quarter; Après Ski Comox Valley, the largest winter marketing campaign ever undertaken, and the Comox Valley Dine Around Festival, the largest in its 10 year history. The Après Ski Campaign saw the creation of 9 new ticketed concert events, several of which sold out, and 75+ performances activated in downtown Courtenay or Comox restaurants and pubs to increase skier's length of stay by offering a robust après ski line-up. The Dine Around Festival expanded to feature over 10 new culinary events and tours, including a new Dine Around Festival launch event, to drive out of town visits and increased business activity during this generally slower season; the launch event and 7 of the culinary events sold out. Destination BC (DBC) Cooperative Marketing Partnership Program 2018/19 reporting was completed for destination marketing initiatives that totalled \$500k, and \$175k in new matching funds were successfully applied for and secured for the 2019/2020 program.

International Seafood Buyers Mission

The Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (JTT) has confirmed the 2019 International Seafood Buyers Mission to attend the BC Seafood Festival and Expo. The mission will attract up to 50 qualified seafood buyers from the US, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Southeast Asia, and the EU to participate in the program designed to showcase BC seafood producers and products to increase awareness & consumption of BC seafood species. In addition, Trade and Investment Representatives from the buyer's country of origin will also join the mission to help facilitate buyer's interactions with local produces, processors and associations.

BC Provincial Nominee Program – New Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot

CVEDS applied and was accepted to be a confirmed participant in this regional pilot representing the Comox Valley communities of the Town of Comox, City of Courtenay, and CV Regional District areas A, B, and C. This initiative has been established to attract entrepreneurs with a desire to start a business and settle in regional communities. As part of this new program, CVEDS hosted and participated in the regional community training session, as well as participated in the official media launch event of the pilot at the Union Street Grill in Courtenay in March.

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