

Mayor's Message October 2015

During this year's Small Business Week, October 18 to 24, I invite you to mark the occasion with us, and I encourage you to give our local small businesses additional reasons to celebrate.

So far this year, the Town of Gibsons has issued 472 business licenses. Approximately 83 per cent of these business responded to our 2015 Business License Survey, and based on their responses, the majority of our local businesses are in the business and professional services, retail/wholesale, and health/social services areas.

First, the good news: over the last year, there was a trend to higher revenues than in the previous year. Respondents were generally positive when asked whether they expected their business to expand over the next five years. However, there is room for improvement in the pool of potential and experienced employees on the Coast; the availability of training; and the ability to obtain office and store supplies locally.

The primary role of your local government is to provide and maintain the essential physical infrastructure and services needed by the community, while planning for future changes that may affect the infrastructure. Most of the revenues required for this work come from local taxes; like most other local governments, we recognize the importance of stimulating local economic development through such methods as zoning and permit assistance, as well as by marketing the Town's many assets, both built and natural. We work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures and other strong proponents of business and entrepreneurialism to build a positive, nurturing environment for small business in Gibsons.

My challenge to you is to support local businesses, and invest in our community by shopping locally at every opportunity. While the introduction of fibre optic technology has enabled several of our storefront businesses to supplement their local income with an online presence and extended reach, your continued patronage is encouraging to your friends and neighbours who operate these businesses – not only in terms of the bottom line, but with a reassuring sense that we are all invested in their success.

It takes optimism and creativity to open a small business, and tenacity to hang in there when times are lean, in a town like ours which grows in the summer, and returns to its usual numbers in the fall. With its new elementary school, affordable housing prices, abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, and a local government intent on helping businesses to thrive, Gibsons has much to offer someone who might wish to move here and start a business. Let's encourage the businesses already operating here, and let's all work together to create the reputation that Gibsons is open for business.