

Mayor's Message – October 2016

Small business, Big vision

October is Small Business Month. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the positive impact our entrepreneurs have on our community and our economy. A 'small' business is defined as one with fewer than 50 employees – and in Canada, the small business sector is the 'little economic engine that could.' It provides the bulk of our jobs and drives economic growth nationally and locally.

In Gibsons and surrounding area, there are four major employers: Vancouver Coastal Health, School District No. 46, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper and the Town of Gibsons. There are hundreds of small businesses in the area, many of them home-based. These provide more jobs than the other four combined, and the business owners continuously work on ways to add value through innovative partnerships, research and product development.

The Gibsons and District Chamber of Commerce is made up of small business owners who envision a stronger economic future for our region. This means developing the tools to grow our small businesses and an environment in which entrepreneurs can achieve their biggest dreams through education and through working to encourage infrastructure providers to enhance our services here on the Coast. Thanks to the substantial investment from Telus, the availability fibre-optic technology has been a game changer for our internet-based businesses, many of which are home-based, who now enjoy superior service and speed, and are able to compete globally as well.

The Town has continued its partnership with the Chamber and our regional partners in Elphinstone and West Howe Sound to promote the area and provide up to date information to those interested in starting a new business, or growing an existing one, by maintaining an online resource www.gibsonsanddistrict.ca. Working with the District of Sechelt, we introduced the Mobile Business License that makes it easier and cheaper to get a license for businesses that work across the Coast.

The economy of the Coast, which has seen substantial growth in tourism and construction, will benefit from the advice and leadership of the Regional Economic Development Board, which is expected to begin its work shortly. Council's strategic plan identifies several actions the Town is taking to support the economy, including investments in the Harbour and the Gibsons Public Market that will continue to make Gibsons a vibrant, welcoming community with an outstanding quality of life and plentiful cultural and economic opportunities.