INVEST in BC

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YOUR GUIDE TO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES OUT WEST:
• The state of the provincial economy
• The latest statistics and indicators
• Zoom in on B.C.’s regions
• Powered by clean energy
• Doing business with First Nations
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98% of electricity generated in British Columbia is renewable—the province is leading the transition away from fossil fuels towards a cleaner future.

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* For those applicants that qualify.
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INVEST-BC

BCEDA PARTNERS

Diamond: FortisBC
Platinum: BC Hydro | Cando | City of Penticton | Destination BC | Indigenous Services Canada | Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
Gold: Co-Operatives First | Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium | ExecutivePulse | Ross Bernstein | The Schallert Group
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ON THE COVER
Castlegar, on the banks of the Columbia River in the Kootenay region, offers a balance of opportunity, affordability, recreational amenities and scenic beauty. Photo by Lee Orr

INFLUX: Like other communities on the Sunshine Coast, Lund is luring new residents with its affordability and coastal lifestyle.
LETTER FROM THE PREMIER

The future is bright in British Columbia

We are leading the way with a fast, strong economic recovery as the world emerges from a global pandemic. British Columbia is known around the world as a wonderful place to live, visit, and do business. We have a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. We have a highly skilled workforce, a booming population, and a provincial credit rating reflecting a strong balance sheet, as well as the depth and diversity of our economy. All of which makes British Columbia a terrific place to invest. Our province’s landscape is famous for its beauty. It is also a source of jobs, community, and incredible opportunity. The natural resources sector has been—and always will be—foundational to the economy of our province.

Our mining sector is booming with seven new mines proposed for the province in the coming years. That represents an investment of $4 billion. Some of those mines provide the crucial raw materials necessary for the transition to a low-carbon future. People also look to B.C. because we have high sustainability standards for resource extraction.

We are the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Through full partnership with First Nations, we are on a path to greater certainty for major natural resource projects. This has resulted in major new projects getting the green light. In March alone, the new Artemis gold mine in northern BC was approved to begin construction. It will be the first new mine in almost a decade. Cedar LNG, whose majority owner is the Haisla Nation, received approval for its low-emission, $2.4 billion project near Kitimat. This is the largest Indigenous owned infrastructure project in North America.

We are also a global leader in cleantech and advanced manufacturing. We are uniquely positioned to thrive in the low-carbon economy of the future. As a major source of clean hydroelectric power, B.C. is already a clean-energy superpower and future demand will require us to produce even more. British Columbia is an unbeatable place for any investor with a premium on high environmental standards and strong democratic institutions. We know our high standards in B.C. are a competitive advantage in luring and keeping investment. We are expanding our economy responsibly and sustainably, while creating good jobs and providing the services people need. We are also investing in training, including a new $136-million trades and technology centre in Burnaby, as well as a new university in Langford. Our affordable childcare program is freeing more people to join the workforce.

And we are streamlining our permitting processes so they will not be an unnecessary barrier to growth. B.C. is on the move. I could not be more excited about our future.

David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
On behalf of the Government of Canada, welcome to *Invest in BC* magazine, the official publication of the BC Economic Development Association.

Amazing things are happening across British Columbia. Communities and business across the province are coming together and building for the future.

Like the BC Economic Development Association, the Government of Canada is committed to supporting this growth by creating the economic conditions today that will lead to a stronger tomorrow.

In British Columbia, investors and entrepreneurs have a partner in PacifiCan, the federal economic development agency for British Columbians. Our vision is enduring prosperity for all British Columbians.

This means being laser-focused on innovative businesses growing at home while competing abroad, creating quality jobs and supporting inclusive growth in communities across BC.

I encourage you to read this magazine and learn more about the opportunities in beautiful British Columbia.

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The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan  
Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada (PacifiCan)
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO, BC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Our Momentum Remains Intact

Welcome to the official publication of the British Columbia Economic Development Association, Invest in BC 2023. Our aim is to provide you with a brief but informative overview of British Columbia, and to encourage you to invest in our diverse province. Our magazine strives to offer valuable insights into the economic regions of British Columbia, as well as the latest trends in our ever-evolving economy. We urge you to not solely rely on the information provided in this publication, but to reach out and discover more for yourself.

Having had the privilege of travelling to various areas of the province and witnessing the great work being done by local and Indigenous governments, I feel proud to say that British Columbia is a strong and diverse economy offering unparalleled opportunities. Despite global issues, our economic momentum remains intact, thanks to our talented workforce, high quality of life, openness to newcomers and our ability to be resilient in times of crisis.

Our association has grown to include over 500 members representing a range of communities, Indigenous groups, businesses, chambers of commerce, Crown corporations, tourism groups, financial institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions, all committed to building a prosperous British Columbia. We strive to bring together the right people at the right time to create valuable partnerships and promote growth.

As the leading provincial association of economic development practitioners in B.C., we offer services that help member communities expand and attract new businesses and work towards strategic infrastructure investment, land use planning and community enhancement.

We are proud to work alongside the Province of B.C. in supporting existing businesses and highlighting B.C.’s opportunities to investors abroad. Investing in B.C. is an opportunity not to be missed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, my staff or any of our members to discuss anything related to economic development in British Columbia.

Dale Wheeldon
President and CEO, British Columbia Economic Development Association

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, BC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

BCEDA Supports Communities

Welcome to the 2023 edition of Invest in BC. The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is pleased to renew our partnership with Canada Wide Media to produce this magazine, showcasing our communities. BCEDA represents over 500 economic development professionals in every region of the province.

Municipalities, regional districts, and Indigenous communities spend over $80 million per year on economic development and tourism programming in British Columbia. BCEDA leverages that investment by supporting economic development professionals in communities across the province with marketing tools, professional development programs and resource materials.

Like other organizations, BCEDA adapted over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to support our members. We delivered our annual summit remotely, worked with partners to support shop local programs, and held webinars to share best practices and innovative approaches to economic development activities in a changed world.

BCEDA also continues to support communities through our Economic Disaster Recovery Program. Following wildfires and floods, BCEDA volunteers have provided outreach, identified immediate business needs, connected business owners with resources and helped communities to plan their economic recovery.

Economic development officers are experts on their communities. As you browse through this magazine, when a community or opportunity catches your attention, I encourage you to reach out to the person responsible for economic development in that location.

The British Columbia Economic Development Association is here to assist economic developers, local, regional, Indigenous and provincial governments, and businesses working together to build a robust and sustainable economy through education, collaboration and partnerships.

Amy Reid
Chair, British Columbia Economic Development Association

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SUSTAINABLE ADVANTAGE

British Columbia’s economy continues to outperform the nation. With its new StrongerBC Plan, the government hopes to keep things that way.

SUNNY OUTLOOK: The District of Elkford in the Kootenay region is one of many small communities thriving thanks to strong commodity prices.
n the face of global uncertainty around inflation, rising interest rates and geopolitical tension, Canada’s westernmost province looks well poised to persevere.

Of all the provinces, British Columbia was one of the quickest to recover from the disruption of COVID-19. Business activity, housing starts and major project investment returned to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021, the Chartered Professional Accountants of B.C. reported in their B.C. Check-up 2022. The number of active businesses has made up for losses in 2020 and now surpasses the 2019 level by a considerable margin.

“B.C.’s economy has remained a picture of resilience through the pandemic,” Central1 Credit Union chief economist Brian Yu wrote in an economic analysis last fall. “Employment has more than rebounded, unemployment rates have returned to pre-pandemic lows and labour scarcity is an increasing issue for businesses.”

Technology and health care saw robust growth in 2021, Yu’s analysis pointed out. Generally strong commodity prices proved a boon to B.C.’s natural resource industries. The sectors seeing the greatest increase in business formations were information and culture (+8.7%), professional services (+7%) and food manufacturing (+5.1%) while wholesale trade (-3%) and tourism (-1.9%) continued to retrench.

But today even the tourism and hospitality sector has reason to be hopeful. China’s reopening following three years of stringent COVID-related travel restrictions is expected to provide a boost to trans-Pacific tourism. Culinary tourism stands to gain too. In late 2022, the Michelin Guides bestowed stars on eight Metro Vancouver restaurants. Tripadvisor’s Traveller’s Choice 2023 “Best of the Best” awards named Vancouver among the world’s 20 premier foodie destinations. Looking ahead, the world soccer governing body FIFA has named Vancouver a host city for the 2026 men’s World Cup, the most-watched sporting event on the planet.

The provincial inventory of projects proposed or under construction with a budget over $15 million stood at $389 billion as of the third quarter of 2022. Among them, all actively underway, are the LNG Canada natural gas export terminal in Kitimat ($36 billion), the associated Coastal Gaslink pipeline ($14.5 billion), Site C hydroelectric project ($16 billion) and Trans Mountain oil pipeline ($30.9 billion). These projects lie primarily in the northern and Interior parts of the province, helping spread economic activity to the hinterland.

Last year saw an unprecedented situation, where the number of job vacancies in B.C. exceeded the number of people looking for work, Business Council of British Columbia senior policy advisor Jock Finlayson and chief economist Ken Peacock noted in a Year in Review article published in December. “As the economy slows in 2023, labour market
conditions are likely to ‘normalize’ somewhat, such that the number of job seekers again exceeds the number of job vacancies,” they predicted.

Centrall forecasts 1.5% population growth in 2023, 1% employment growth and an unemployment rate averaging 5.9%. The credit union projects real GDP growth of 1.3% this year and 2% next, against a backdrop of continued inflationary and interest-rate pressures globally. Consumer spending will continue to inch upward, despite a pullback in the housing sector related to the rise in interest rates.

So, while growth may be slower than in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, the provincial economy is expected to keep moving forward.

**BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE**

B.C.’s consistently positive economic performance so far this century can be attributed to a combination of luck, desirability as a place for talented people to live and a maturing industrial base no longer subject to the oscillations of natural resource pricing. Last year the provincial government came out with a uniquely comprehensive plan to further harness these advantages to support clean and inclusive growth going forward.

Built partly on the work of University College London professor and economic advisor Mariana Mazzucato, the StrongerBC Economic Plan identifies priorities including supporting people and families by enabling higher after-tax incomes, providing more accessible health and child care and expanding educational opportunities; building resilient communities able to withstand the challenges of climate change, offer affordable housing and provide 21st-Century infrastructure such as high-speed internet; and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The plan outlines a pathway to a greener economy, one that will meet B.C.’s existing climate commitments and position the province as a leader in environmental and social responsibility by supporting clean technology adoption. It outlines ways to foster innovation across the economy by developing the talent pool and encouraging industries that add value to natural resources.

Some specific actions by the B.C. government pursuant to StrongerBC include the Future Ready strategy, which provides funding for training in sought-after skills; creation of the InBC Investment Corp. to provide venture capital to companies committed to growing here; development of a Trade Diversification Strategy and an Industrial and Manufacturing Action Plan; and establishing an ESG Centre of Excellence to promote the adoption of environmental, social and governance principles. Expect more spaces for students in B.C. post-secondary institutions, a Mass Timber Action Plan to promote the use of this low-carbon building material and a new Indigenous-led economic development agency focused on First Nations communities. StrongerBC calls for all new buildings to be carbon-neutral as of 2030.

“Since launching the plan, we have accelerated the timeline on closing the digital divide – giving more communities access to high-speed internet,” said Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation. “We’ve also expanded access to affordable child care to help parents balance the needs of home and work. And we’re making record investments in crucial economic infrastructure and housing, while providing support for growing new sectors such as life sciences, clean technology, and agritech.

“The StrongerBC Economic Plan is working with a continued focus on having the backs of businesses and workers as we work through challenging times together and build a strong and sustainable economy that works for everyone,” Bailey added. “An economy that is built for all is an economy built to succeed.”

**GOOD TASTE:**

Culinary tourism got a boost following recognition by the Michelin Guides and Tripadvisor

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**B.C.’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS**

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FIRST NATIONS MEAN BUSINESS

A new generation of Indigenous-owned enterprises stands ready to partner with outside investors.

Fresh off winning a landmark legal settlement that awarded it $65 million and control over 38,000 square kilometres of its traditional territories in northeastern B.C., the Blueberry River First Nation opted to start up a company last fall.

Blueberry River Resources will devote more than half the settlement money to restore lands degraded by industrial activity, through subsidiaries including a greenhouse operation raising native plants and a land restoration contractor. But its mandate doesn’t stop there. It aims to create sustainable opportunities and self-sufficiency for Blueberry River First Nation members in areas such as renewable energy and carbon capture and storage. It will work with energy exploration and production companies whose activities were severely curtailed by order of the Supreme Court of B.C. before a recent...
series of agreements between the First Nation and the B.C. government.
Similar organizations are popping up or expanding across British Columbia. Deeply rooted in their communities, Indigenous-owned companies offer manpower, logistical support and local knowledge in often remote locations where such services are hard to come by. They can also lend resource companies operating in these areas a measure of social licence, helping them meet their environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments.

Last fall, a joint venture between the Gitga’at Nation’s Gitga’at Development Corp. and Waiward Industrial LP was awarded the main industrial site services contract for LNG Canada, the massive liquefied natural gas terminal now under construction in Kitimat. Gitga’at Waiward had previously won a contract to supply structural steel to the project.

“This announcement represents an excellent opportunity to showcase what true partnerships look like,” said Joe Bevan, CEO of Gitga’at Development Corp. “It speaks to the commitments made by LNG Canada to use local contractors, aligning with economic reconciliation and the trust developed thus far. The economic success of the region’s First Nations is paramount to a robust regional economy.”

Further north, the Tahltan Nation Development Corp., established in 1985, is in many ways the template for all the First Nations-owned companies that came after. It continues to expand the suite of services it offers to mineral exploration, utility, forest and aviation companies and governments in the Stewart–Cassiar corridor.

In the opposite, southeast corner of the province, the Ktunaxa Nation and metallurgical coal miner Teck Resources have been building on a comprehensive Impact Management and Benefits Agreement signed in 2016. Five years later it led to a deal to jointly manage the conservation of 7,000 hectares purchased by Teck for conservation purposes.

In 2022, the B.C. Assembly of First Nations launched a new Centre of Excellence in economic development that it hopes will share best practices of development corporations among all 204 First Nations in the province—no easy task considering the range of circumstances facing rural and urban First Nations. Near downtown Vancouver, the Squamish Nation and Westbank Projects have embarked on Sen̓áḵw, a high-rise community featuring 6,000 rental apartments that is expected to change the face of the city.

Meanwhile Vancouver-based Raven Indigenous Capital Partners just closed a second venture capital fund worth $100 million with a mission to finance startup and growth-stage Indigenous businesses that until now often struggled to get the money they needed.

You name it, if there’s a project you need help with or a service you need supplied, there’s probably an Indigenous business that can do it.
THE CLEAN ENERGY ADVANTAGE

With its abundance of renewable energy, B.C. makes it easy for companies to meet their emissions-reduction targets.

Last year, at its open-pit mine outside Princeton, Copper Mountain Mining began replacing its fleet of diesel haul trucks with hybrid vehicles that carry their heaviest loads along a kilometre-long ramp equipped with electric trolley lines. The move proved timely: not only will it cut the mine’s carbon dioxide emissions by 30%—moving Copper Mountain towards its goal of net-zero emissions by 2035—it shielded the company from the jump in diesel prices following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The availability of funding and incentives from both BC Hydro and the provincial government’s CleanBC program made the firm’s decision that much easier.

A growing number of companies are looking at electrifying existing operations or moving operations to B.C. to take advantage of its almost emissions-free electrical supply. With BC Hydro’s help, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, Canada’s largest port, is studying the feasibility of electrifying all its operations. Even natural gas producers in B.C.’s northeast are converting their pumps and processing systems to clean electricity to lower emissions and fulfill their climate commitments.

HYDROGEN HIGHWAY: Hydra Energy is building the world’s largest hydrogen fuel station in Prince George, part of a network of stations to supply emissions-free green hydrogen for hybrid heavy-duty trucks.
“In B.C. we are very fortunate to have an ample, abundant supply of clean hydroelectricity,” says Diana Stephenson, senior vice-president of Customer and Corporate Affairs for BC Hydro, the government-owned electrical utility. Ninety-eight percent of the province’s electricity is generated from renewable sources. Unfortunately that still leaves almost 70% of the energy used in the province, for everything from transportation to home and commercial heating, to be supplied by fossil fuels. But perhaps not for long. The provincial government’s CleanBC Plan aims to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions 40% by 2030. With the help of incentives, businesses and residents alike are making the switch to cleaner energy sources.

“Of our 25 largest customers here in British Columbia today, we know that three-quarters of them have aggressive ESG [environmental, social and governance] targets that they themselves need to meet in the coming years,” Stephenson says. In 2021 BC Hydro unveiled its Electrification Plan, which dedicated $260 million towards helping customers replace fossil fuel use with clean electricity. The utility is offering industrial users discounted rates, project funding and assistance with siting new facilities.

It’s also reaching out to businesses looking for clean sources to power their operations, such as data centres and hydrogen fuel producers. To use one example, Hydra Energy broke ground last year on what promises to be the world’s largest hydrogen refuelling station in Prince George. Part of a planned network across western Canada to supply hydrogen to diesel-hydrogen hybrid heavy-duty trucks, the facility will produce “green” hydrogen from water using two five-megawatt electrolyzers.

But can BC Hydro meet all these new demands for power and keep it green? “Right now we are in a good position from a supply perspective,” Stephenson says. Hydro’s 30 existing hydroelectric plants are projected to meet supply through 2030, and the Site C project under construction on the Peace River is expected to add a further 8% to the current supply when it comes online in 2025.
The utility maintains a rolling Integrated Resource Plan that anticipates load requirements for the next 20 years. It contains provisions should demand grow faster than forecast, such as energy efficiency measures and voluntary time-of-use rates. There is also potential for development of other renewable energy resources such as wind and solar that can be put into service more quickly than a hydro dam. Businesses putting down roots in B.C. can expect their renewable power to stay that way, in other words.

You'll hear a similar message from B.C.'s other major energy utility, FortisBC supplies hydro-generated electrical power to customers in parts of the southern Interior as well as natural gas provincewide. It too is working with customers to help them make the energy transition.

This year, for example, FortisBC announced a successful pilot with Providence Health Care to install a high-efficiency thermal gradient header system at St. Vincent's; Brock Fahmni, one of the hospital network's long-term care homes in Vancouver. In addition to saving about $100,000 a year in heating costs, the system provides cooling that is increasingly necessary in seniors' housing due to rising summer temperatures. With its savings, Providence opted to subscribe to FortisBC's Renewable Natural Gas program that uses methane derived from biomass, bringing the facility’s net carbon emissions for heating and air conditioning close to zero. The hospital network is now looking to make similar upgrades in all its long-term care homes.

In bringing about the switch to low-carbon, renewable energy, British Columbia is just getting started, and its resources are vast. “Now, more than ever, businesses in many jurisdictions, they’re experiencing energy instability. They’re experiencing price volatility. They’re experiencing a call to arms to step into a lower-carbon, electrified future and looking for tools and ways to do that,” BC Hydro’s Stephenson says. “We are in a particularly strong position of having clean energy and supporting our provincial government’s goal to step into this space.”
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Bullish Outlook

Growth is rotating back to B.C.'s metropolitan hub after a pandemic pause

When Red Bull went looking for a North American site to premix the ingredients used in its energy drinks, it left few stones unturned. For this, only the second such facility in the world after the company’s headquarters in Austria, it needed a supply of high-quality agricultural produce, a workforce with a range of skills, competitive costs and the ability easily export to the 175 countries where it sells its products by land, sea and air.

This year it settled on a 15-acre property within the Chilliwack Food and Beverage Processing Park in the eastern Fraser Valley. The company credited the location’s proximity to the Port of Vancouver and the U.S. border in its decision.

You’ll hear different versions of the same reasoning why most businesses look to locate first in the Lower Mainland, in B.C.’s southwest. Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and the Sea-to-Sky Corridor extending north account for most of the province’s population, most of its consumer market and most of its economic output. Combining a large, diverse, well educated labour pool, easy access to world markets, fertile farmland and a mild climate, the Lower Mainland is the engine of B.C.’s economy. It’s an internationally
**REGIONAL POPULATION**
3,319,499

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**
4.2%

**TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY**
- Health care & social assistance: 12.8%
- Retail trade: 11.9%
- Professional, scientific & technical services: 11.2%

**FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2022-32**
255,600

**BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2022)**
$17.4 BILLION

**HOUSING STARTS (2021)**
28,756

**VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q3 2022)**
$104.8 BILLION

**BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2022)**
39,922

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**ENHANCED MOBILITY:**
The $2.8-billion Broadway Subway project in Vancouver, currently under construction, is part of a plan to extend the SkyTrain rapid transit system to UBC.
recognized centre for disparate industries from mining exploration and finance to filmed entertainment to athletic fashion design.

Further, Central 1 Economics expects the province’s economic growth, job creation and housing demand to rotate back towards Metro Vancouver in the coming year as tourism and immigration recover from the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers are increasingly bringing their workers back into centralized offices for at least a few days a week.

“With business activity normalizing, business investment spending is expected to accelerate in metro areas,” Central 1 chief economist Brian Yu wrote in the credit union’s 2022–23 Regional Economic Outlook. “The flow of remote workers will slow or potentially reverse. These trends will propel growth back towards the Lower Mainland/Southwest, and Metro Vancouver specifically.”

**21ST-CENTURY ECONOMY**

Much of that growth is in fast-growing, export-oriented industries. A survey by office leasing company CBRE found Vancouver to have the fastest job growth in technology among all North American cities in recent years. CBRE’s Tech30 report said the city added 28,300 information technology jobs between 2018 and 2021, a 44.2% increase. Despite the job cuts by major technology firms over the past year on a global level, Microsoft, PlentyOfFish, Tipalti Inc. and Masimo Corp. all expanded their office footprint in downtown Vancouver. The city remains attractive for technology recruitment both due to the quality of the Canadian workforce and Canada’s relatively welcoming immigration policies compared to the United States.

The list of knowledge-based industries growing in the region extends well beyond software development too. In January, Surrey-based No Meat Factory was the recipient of $42 million in venture capital to expand its production and marketing of vegan meat alternatives. In 2021, CTK Bio, the cleantech offshoot of Korean cosmetic industry supplier CTK, likewise set up its Canadian headquarters in Surrey. The plant is slated to expand by 100,000 square feet in 2024.

Spurred by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, 350 manufacturers south of the Fraser River are collaborating on a Supply Chain Resiliency Program, providing an inventory of 823 unique industrial capabilities that could pivot their existing processes to support the production of key resources in the face of emergencies.

**MAJOR INVESTMENTS**

Capital allocated for major projects in the Lower Mainland grew faster in both absolute and relative terms than in any other region over the past year, rising 20% to more than $100 billion, the Certified Public Accountants of B.C. note. The Lougheed Town Centre development in Coquitlam, announced in 2021, is a 87-billion project. Also under construction is the $2.2-billion replacement of St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver’s False Creek Flats.

Major transit improvements are also on the bill, notably the $2.8-billion Broadway Subway line, which will extend SkyTrain rapid transit system west from Clark VCC Station to Arbutus Street in Kitsilano. Plans call for the line to run all the way to the University of British Columbia at the tip of Point Grey by 2030. SkyTrain is also being extended eastward through Surrey and Langley in a $4-billion announcement confirmed in 2021.

Surrey, which is on track to surpass Vancouver as B.C.’s largest city in the next decade
or two, is the region’s manufacturing hub, with some 8,000 advanced manufacturing and robotics suppliers alone creating a robust local supply chain. City council recently approved build-out of the South Campbell Heights business park, adding needed industrial land to the marketplace. In recent years Campbell Heights became the headquarters of laboratory equipment supplier Alliance Scientific as well as a regional distribution centre for Amazon, Sobey’s (owner of Canada Safeway) and pharmaceutical distributor McKesson Canada.

In 2022, the University of British Columbia announced it would build a Surrey campus. Simon Fraser University, meanwhile, is adding a new Quantum Algorithms Institute and BC Centre for Agritech Innovation at its SFU Innovation Plaza in Surrey City Centre. Federal and provincial funding was announced for the BC Centre for Agricultural Innovation based at SFU Surrey, a collaboration between nine colleges and universities with a goal to help farmers leverage new innovations around food production and processing technologies. The institution also has based its Fuel Cell Research Lab Centre of Excellence, Powertech Labs and Sustainable Energy Engineering hubs in the municipality.

**VALLEY BOUND**

As Vancouver and its suburbs grow denser and more costly, migration of people and businesses continues to the less crowded, more affordable Fraser Valley to the east. Chilliwack was the second fastest-growing city in Canada between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, surpassed only by another B.C. city, Kelowna. Its population grew 12.1% to 113,767 over the five-year period. (Another Fraser Valley municipality, the Township of Langley, grew even faster, by 13%, but was not included in the list of census metropolitan areas.)

Agriculture remains a pillar of the Fraser Valley economy, and because much of it is supply-managed (including dairy, poultry and egg production), it is close to recession-proof. As for industrial space, land that not long ago cost half a million dollars per acre now typically fetches $3.5-5 million, which is causing owner-occupiers and developers alike to upgrade their properties for more intensive uses. Examples include the Beedie Group’s 15-acre Skyline Business Park, Denciti’s 12.5-acre Fraser Gateway and the Chilliwack Food and Beverage Processing Park centered on the Molson Coors brewery.

The nearby City of Abbotsford continues see expansion of the Abbotsford International Airport, which now hosts more 500,000 passengers annually. The city’s profile rose in 2021 with the relocation of the Vancouver Canucks farm team to the Abbotsford Centre from Utica, NY. The American Hockey League franchise is now known as the Abbotsford Canucks.

Some of the most ambitious plans for community development are coming out of Mission, a small city north of the Fraser River. Last year Mission adopted a Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan into its official community plan that will guide the redevelopment of nearly 300 acres stretching along 3.5 kilometres of Fraser River frontage. The plan calls for a mix of commercial, institutional, light industrial and residential uses combined with parks and open spaces. The city also adopted a plan for the Silverdale area of southwest Mission that, upon completion, will effectively double the city’s population with 20,000 new homes and more than a half million square feet of retail and office space.

Recent land settlements with the provincial and federal governments have enabled the urban Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations to emerge in recent years as the leading real estate developers in Metro Vancouver. Collectively, the three nations have 25,500 new homes in various stages of development. Some of these are owned by an individual First Nation, like the Musqueam’s recently opened Lelem complex near the University of B.C. and the Squamish’s massive Senakw project on Kitsilano Point. But they also have a joint venture, MST Development Corp., with a property portfolio worth an estimated $5 billion.
Located at the heart of Metro Vancouver, New Westminster is less than 30 minutes from downtown Vancouver, YVR and the US border. With five SkyTrain stations, New West is easily accessed by public transit, and it has industrial connections via river, road and rail.

**COMPETITIVE**

Businesses that locate here enjoy competitive lease rates and a strong, supportive community. New Westminster continues to make the cost of doing business even more attractive in many ways with an integrated business licensing approach that reduces red tape and speeds up approvals. It is also part of regional, inter-municipal licensing programs for construction, building maintenance, and food truck businesses.

**PROGRESSIVE**

As Western Canada’s original city, New Westminster has a history of creating opportunity and setting trends, and it takes care to understand the current issues and opportunities for businesses. New Westminster also offers BridgeNet, a city-owned fibre network that allows for multiple internet service providers to offer high speed internet access at competitive rates.

**SUPPORTIVE**

New Westminster collaborates meaningfully with local business associations and participates with regional initiatives such as Invest Vancouver and Project Greenlight. Supported by an active and engaged economic development office with a designated business license liaison, and bolstered by its reputation as a central, competitive and progressive community, the City of New Westminster is invested in seeing businesses thrive and grow. Be part of the success. Invest in New West.

If you have questions about doing business in Burnaby, please contact the Burnaby Board of Trade at 604-412-0100.

Thriving town centres, charming urban villages, a vast selection of commercial spaces and award-winning educational institutions bring businesses to Burnaby.

The City’s supportive Council, its diverse and welcoming residents, and its focus on safety and climate action initiatives – from energy efficient buildings to EV charging stations – keep them here.

We welcome you to join us in calling Burnaby home. Burnaby is open for business!
NEW WESTMINSTER IS PROGRESSIVE, CENTRAL AND BUILT FOR THRIVING BUSINESSES

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NEW WESTMINSTER IS A CITY OF OPPORTUNITY.

Businesses that locate in New Westminster enjoy competitive lease rates in unique spaces, and a strong, supportive centrally-located community. The City-owned fibre network, BridgeNet, also provides reliable, high-speed internet access and a competitive edge to thrive and grow. Come see what others have discovered.

INVEST IN New West
BC's Fraser Valley is rapidly emerging as one of Canada's most dynamic business centres. With over 500,000 residents and 17,000 businesses, the region draws interest from investors, entrepreneurs and innovators from around the world.

The economic development functions of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Langley Township, Maple Ridge and Mission have self-formed as the Fraser Valley Alliance, a partnership focused on attracting foreign direct investment through demonstrated sector strengths in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, agri-business, clean technology and information communications technology.

“The FVA partnership allows us to showcase the region’s strengths as an applied technology corridor that’s investment ready,” says Stacey Crawford, Director of Economic Development for the City of Mission. “This approach allows us to have a much greater impact and reach than if we all tried to do this on our own.”

Wendy Koh with the Province's Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation strongly agrees. “Having a single, unified voice is an incredibly powerful tool for our global network of trade and investment representatives,” she says. “This partnership makes it so much easier for international investors to understand the Fraser Valley’s value proposition.”

The Fraser Valley’s economic growth has been fueled by immigration and migration, including by Metro Vancouver residents and businesses seeking affordability, lifestyle and room to grow. The region’s access to markets, large skilled workforce, and the significant multicultural and multilingual population help attract foreign investors and those looking to export to new markets.

The region is home to leading post-secondary academic institutions including the University of the Fraser Valley, Trinity Western University and Kwantlen Polytechnic University, which offer a full range of degrees, skilled trades programs and specialized education. All work with industry to ensure the region offers a steady pipeline of skilled talent to the business community.

The Fraser Valley’s excellent transportation network, proximity to the USA and trade centres, international airports and deep-water ports, are critical assets for attracting and retaining foreign investors. Cascade Aerospace, Brenntag, TYCROP, E-One Moli Energy Corp., Genesis Robotics and Lumex Instruments are just some of the major employers in the Fraser Valley’s expanding advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and technology sectors.

As Canada’s most productive agricultural sector on a per hectare basis, the Fraser Valley is also home to some of Canada’s best-known food and beverage producers and is an emerging centre for research and innovation in the agri-technology sector.

“The Fraser Valley offers such an incredible value proposition to international companies looking to enter the North American market or to grow their existing businesses,” Crawford says. “BC’s Fraser Valley will be Canada’s next applied technology investment corridor.”

Please visit investfraservalley.ca today to learn why the Fraser Valley is best investment destination in Canada. Connect: #investfraservalley @investfraservalley
Fraser Valley: Five Communities. One Region. Endless Opportunity.

British Columbia’s Fraser Valley is one of the fastest growing economic regions in Canada. With a rapidly growing population, an exceptional lifestyle, and a strong, diverse economy rich in opportunity, the Fraser Valley is primed for your investment.

Our central location is home to a diversified economy anchored by our established strengths in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, ag-tech, clean technology, and information and communications technology. Our growing communities boast an educated, diverse, and skilled workforce that will help your business grow now and in the future.

The Fraser Valley Alliance (FVA) is an economic development partnership between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Langley Township, Maple Ridge and Mission working together to attract foreign direct investment.

Visit investfraservalley.ca today to learn why the Fraser Valley is your best investment destination in Canada.
2023 Partners

- Fortis BC
- Indigenous Services Canada
- BC Hydro
- Destination British Columbia
- cando
- City of Penticton
- British Columbia
- Co-operatives First
- Pulse
- The Schallert Group
- Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium
- Rupert Port Authority
- Welcome BC
- LocalINTEL
- Microsoft
- GIS Planning
- Cityviz
- Greentech Asia
- WEBC
- Futurpreneur Canada
- Cowork Penticton
- Downtown Penticton BIA
- ETSI BC
- Meet in Penticton
- Vannstruth Consulting Group
- Okanagan College
- 468 Communications

#BCEDA23
VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST

▷ Campbell River
▷ Comox
▷ Courtenay
▷ Cowichan
▷ Duncan
▷ Esquimalt
▷ Ladysmith
▷ Lake Cowichan
▷ Langford
▷ Nanaimo
▷ North Cowichan
▷ Parksville
▷ Port Alberni
▷ Port Alice
▷ Port Hardy
▷ Port McNeill
▷ Powell River
▷ Qualicum Beach
▷ Saanich
▷ Sidney
▷ Sooke
▷ Tofino
▷ Ucluelet
▷ Victoria

Fairer Shores

The Island economy is growing more sophisticated, diversified and attractive for workers and companies alike.

Along with the Thompson Okanagan, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast was a favoured destination for remote workers newly enabled by technology and the COVID-19 pandemic to take their jobs out of higher-cost cities like Vancouver. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the Island’s mild climate, access to the ocean and genteel cities and towns, the region’s population grew by 8.2% between the 2016 and 2021 censuses. Nanaimo was one of the five fastest-growing census metropolitan areas in Canada, expanding a 10.3% during that span. The Victoria suburb of Langford, not included in the list of CMAs, grew an astonishing 31.8%.

But Vancouver Island had a diversified and prosperous economy to begin with, one focused on public administration (Victoria is British Columbia’s capital city), tourism, higher education and research, the forest industry, fishing, farming, manufacturing and advanced technology.

Construction is under way on almost $15 billion in large capital projects, including the $167-million Nanaimo Correctional Centre. Victoria’s Core Area Wastewater Management Project was completed in 2021. Following the completion of the John Hart Generating Station Replacement Project near Campbell River, BC Hydro has begun work on the John Hart Dam Seismic Upgrade Project.

THOUGHTFUL GROWTH:
Fast-growing Nanaimo (above) is nurturing technology businesses and the circular economy while trying to protect its natural assets.
Economics forecasts that Vancouver Island/Coast will have the strongest employment growth in the province in 2023 at 3.1%.

Langford’s torrid growth has a lot to do with the availability of developable land there and in its neighbouring western communities of Colwood, View Royal, Metchosin and Highalnds—demographically, the Capital Region is moving westward. A new multi-school downtown campus is being built in the municipality to accommodate new classroom space for the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, the Justice Institute of B.C., Camosun College and the Sooke School District serving area students.

The community is also opening new industrial space with Langford Heights Business Park and Pacific Ridge Business Centre. In 2021, Plexxis Software decided to move its entire headquarters from Brampton, Ont., to Langford, along with 100 jobs. It now calls the Plexxis Tower in the Lakepoint district its home base.

Further up the Island, Nanaimo recently completed a new city plan that will support thoughtful growth while protecting natural and physical assets and supporting fluid and efficient mobility. The city projects that it will continue growing to 145,000 residents by 2047. The number of businesses has been growing along with the number of people—up 9% over the past decade. In just the last five years, the number of sole proprietorships has gone up 8.1%.

Already a centre for health services for the mid-Island, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital recently opened an acute care ICU. Vancouver Island University continues to grow; students from more than 90 countries have attended its International MBA program.

A new 178-room Courtyard by Marriott hotel is opening in 2023. Later this year a high-speed passenger ferry service between Nanaimo and Vancouver is due to launch, making the city even more accessible for business and leisure travelers. Telus has partnered with developer Omicron to build 197 rental homes on a vacant portion of the telecommunications company’s office in downtown Nanaimo.

EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY
Nanaimo is home to some innovative economic development initiatives too. Businesses looking to develop sustainable processes can take advantage of support from the Circular Economy Accelerator program. Likewise, eight mid-Island communities have banded together to nurture a technology cluster under the Vancouver Island Tech Attraction Project.

Further up-Island, the City of Campbell River has likewise invested in initiatives supporting a healthy business ecosystem including CRadvantage, a municipally owned high-speed broadband network; TECity; a virtual business hub; the Modern Entrepreneur at the 50th Parallel professional development series; and NexStream Tech Competition, made possible through a partnership with the Campbell River Area Angel Group. The City is a proud regional partner supporting the new Circular Economy Accelerator Program run by Vancouver Island
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On the Island’s west coast, Port Alberni has taken control of its future with the purchase of a prime, 43-acre sawmill site, the Somass Lands, and has invited expressions of interest from developers. The community became the headquarters of the Coastal Restoration Society in 2022. The non-for-profit dedicated to marine habitat cleanup, invasive species mitigation and research expects to ramp up to 200 employees over the next couple of years.

Growing businesses in the Alberni Valley include Coulson Aviation, which specializes in coastal firefighting operations and employs 130 people locally, and the Dock + Food Hub on the waterfront, which includes a commercial kitchen. Canadian Maritime Engineering (90 employees) has plans to build a 300-metre floating drydock in the harbour.

The City-owned heritage train station is being seismically upgraded and will become home to a 6,700-square-foot taphouse and restaurant in late 2023.

The city is a hub for a growing list of First Nations-owned businesses too. Having just concluded a $21-million Specific Claims action with the Government of Canada dating back to 1913, the Tseshaht First Nation intends to invest the funds in environmental, economic and social initiatives.

Opposite Vancouver Island on the ferry-accessed Sunshine Coast, Powell River continues to attract migrants drawn by its relative affordability and coastal lifestyle. The city has seen over $170 million in construction since 2018. Both the city and Tla’amin Nation are working to foster the construction of more housing to meet demand as well as open up land for business development.

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**STEP INTO**

**Places Unknown**

**Langford is knocking**

**WHAT WILL YOU EXPERIENCE FIRST?**

Find yourself at the base of a waterfall in the morning, and the peak of a mountain in the afternoon. Bask in the serenity of a quiet lake, breathe in the calm of the forest, or feel your heartbeat race as you explore exhilarating trails.

**Langford.ca/PlacesUnknown**
Somass Sawmill
Built in 1934 by Bloedel, Stewart and Welch, in its heyday, Somass Sawmill boasted the longest freestanding building in the Commonwealth at 1,200 feet long over two rows of train tracks. It employed 1,200 people. It was permanently closed in July of 2017 by then-owner Western Forest Products.

Fish Processing Building
This is a 17,500-square-foot concrete block building owned by the Port Alberni Port Authority and leased by Port Fish (P.A.) Ltd in 1997. It was best known for processing hake and groundfish and featured the only remaining surimi processing line in Canada. It closed in 2011 and sat empty for ten years.

Alberni Engineering
Opening its doors in 1914, Alberni Engineering built hundreds of fishboats, tugs workboats and boom boats from one fabrication site. It was purchased by Canadian Maritime Engineering (CME) in 2013 and renamed Canadian Alberni Engineering. CME also acquired Kamma & Blake, an aluminum boat builder, in 2014.

Martin Mars Water Bombers
Seven Martin Mars’ were built for the US Navy during WWII. They were the largest Allied flying boat to enter production. Four were later converted for use as civilian firefighting water bombers. The Coulson Group bought two of them in 2007, retiring one in 2012 and the other in 2015.

Beloved Old Foundations

Image: Somass Sawmill (View Looking South Down Alberni Inlet), 2023
Exciting New Beginnings

Waterfront Mixed-Use Development
The City of Port Alberni bought the 43-acre site, and in doing so, has taken control of its future. The $5.3 million purchase marks the beginning of Council’s Strategic Plan to provide greater access to the waterfront for residents and visitors and to ensure marine-based industries thrive. The remediation of the site and deconstruction of former sawmill buildings using circular economy principles has started.

Seafood-Focused Food Hub
A combined $2 million investment by the Port Alberni Port Authority, the Province of BC, the City of Port Alberni and the Island Coastal Economic Trust converted the plant into a Canadian Food Inspection Agency certified Food Hub operation. Five seafood-focused anchor tenants are growing. Others use the commercial kitchen on a part-time basis.

Shipbuilding
Canadian Maritime Engineering has grown its ship building and repair business from 35 to over 90 employees during the pandemic and has added two more fabrication sites.

Aerospace
The Coulson Group is now modifying Boeing 737s, Hercules C-130s and helicopters for forest fire-fighting purposes. The number of aircraft maintenance technicians has grown to 140 from 50 over the past three years.

Some have described these and other developments as new beginnings from old foundations. However, one wishes to characterize the transformations, it is an exciting time.

For more information contact
patrick.deakin@portalberni.ca
Or visit
www.chooseportalberni.ca
EASY LIVING: The Fairmont Empress Hotel on Victoria’s Inner Harbour (top); Powell River Harbour (above); Fresh produce can be found at the Willows Market in Campbell River (right)
CUSTOMIZED APPS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY
To Drive Engagement & Increased Sales!

PROVIDING DATA INSIGHTS
To Inform Your Community’s Businesses!

468 Insider apps reward people for visiting places, creating incentives for commerce at the local level and generating valuable data. Easily and cost effectively create your own branded app to support economic development.
Migrant Haven

The southern Interior’s economy has been bolstered by an influx of remote workers

With its sunny climate, abundance of lakes, mountains and vineyards and moderate cost of living, the Thompson Okanagan region is a choice destination for the growing ranks of remote workers able to do their jobs from anywhere, as long as there’s high-bandwidth internet access. Research conducted by the City of Penticton, host community for the BCEDA 2023 BC Economic Summit, showed that, contrary to expectations, just 9% of people who moved to the South Okanagan community in 2022 were over 65. More than three-quarters were working-aged migrants aged 19-65 and 27%, young families with children. Just 21% of these new arrivals described themselves as retired.

Migration isn’t just a factor in Penticton. The population of the Thompson Okanagan as a whole rose 10.7% between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, more than any other region. Kelowna and Kamloops both saw population increases in the double digits over the five-year period, placing them among Canada’s five fastest-growing metropolitan areas. The Kelowna area was the national leader, growing 14% between the last two censuses to 220,000.

NEXT DESTINATION:
Nestled between Okanagan and Skaha lakes, Penticton will host the BCEDA 2023 BC Economic Summit.
The region’s economy has long been sustained by a diverse mix of industries: forest products, agriculture, tourism, mining, manufacturing and transportation. But the influx of self-employed and remote workers in recent years has served to increase consumer demand and driven home price gains throughout the region. Housing starts jumped by more than 50% in 2021.

As of 2022, there were 52 major projects collectively worth $12 billion under construction in the Thompson Okanagan, most of them residential and recreational. The largest was the $2.1-billion Wilden Development, a master-planned community in the hills north of Kelowna. Central 1 Economics expects the migration to slow with the end of the pandemic, however, and for rising interest rates to curb further housing cost increases.

In Kamloops, building permits hit a new high of $415 million in 2022, more than doubling since 2016. The city’s downtown is undergoing a renaissance with the addition of new premium office space in 2022 in the form of The Hive’s Building One. The developer plans to add two more mid-rise office buildings in the same block, close to the Centrepoint meeting facility. Two residential towers and equally distinctive mid-rise buildings form the core of City Gardens.

Likewise in Kelowna, the University of B.C. Okanagan is opening a downtown campus. With 12,000 students, the university has exceeded its enrolment targets and needs additional classroom space. It has also announced plans for a new Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Innovation (ICI) building to open its doors at the main campus near Kelowna International Airport in 2025. Okanagan College, meanwhile, opened its new Health Sciences Centre in Kelowna for the fall 2021 term. The college is also more than doubling its on-campus student housing in Kelowna, as well as at campuses in Vernon and Salmon Arm.

Kelowna gained a state-of-the-art museum and conference facility in 2022 with the KF Centre for Excellence. The 60,000-square-foot, fuselage-shaped building at Kelowna Airport features vintage aircraft and exhibits recording the history of aviation in the Okanagan Valley. A big part of that was played by KF Aerospace, founded as an airplane repair shop (Kelowna Flightcraft) in 1970 and today one of the province’s biggest manufacturing and transportation concerns.

**SPREADING PROSPERITY**

To the north of Kelowna, Vernon broke records in 2022 with more than $200 million in building permits issued. The golf-centered Predator Ridge development is expanding with a new village centre featuring new retail, restaurant, hotel and residential space, along with public amenities. Vernon is also welcoming new industrial development with Westmont Group’s Salt Centre, featuring 350,000 square feet of space spread over eight buildings. With its first phase now fully leased, Silver Star Gateway business park has begun construction on two more phases with five buildings, including a retail component.

For its part, the city is investing in livability with plans for a $160-million athletic complex next to the existing Kal Tire Place arena, on the site of the old Kin Race Track. Meanwhile, the Regional District of North Okanagan is building a $40-million Greater Vernon Cultural Centre downtown, featuring museum and performance space.

Beyond city limits, information technology tycoon Markus Frind is making a splash in the wine industry by planting a 900-acre property at the north end of Okanagan Lake with Cabernet Sauvignon and other grapes not previously considered viable this far north. His Frind Estate Winery plans to construct a wine experience centre and restaurant on the property.

In another boost for the tourism trade, the provincial government has announced plans to increase the remaining two- and three-lane sections of the Trans-Canada Highway through the region to be upgraded to four lanes.

The Okanagan’s business support ecosystem is the subject of a new campaign, OKGo, that highlights the growth stories of local companies. Find out more about the region’s manufacturing, aerospace, viticulture, agriculture, digital and cannabis industries at www.ok-go.ca/. Starting in 2021, ETSI-BC, a regional Trust established by the Province of B.C. in 2006, launched a new strategic plan that is seeing significant supports flowing to communities and business support organization within the region. □
MERRITT

FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN IN THE CITY OF MERRITT

Nestled in the beautiful Nicola Valley with rolling grasslands, shimmering lakes and over 2,000 hours of annual sunshine, the City of Merritt is a virtual oasis, offering abundant city amenities neighbouring a tranquil country lifestyle.

LOCATION
Centrally located between Metro Vancouver and the Okanagan, Merritt is one of the province’s most active transportation and distribution hubs, with annual traffic counts exceeding 4 million.

COMMUNITY
Merritt is a diverse, family-friendly community of just over 7,000 people, enjoying a relatively high median household income of $70,000. While seniors flock to the area, with about 28% over the age of 65, the community maintains a sizable young population (45%) under the age of 40.

AMENITIES
Merritt offers plentiful amenities, including a regional airport, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, the Nicola Valley Aquatic Centre, the Merritt Civic Centre (700-person capacity) and the Nicola Valley Memorial Arena (1000-person rink, home to the BC Hockey League’s Merritt Centennials). The city also offers a spray park, tennis courts, skateboard and bike pump tracks, disc golf, golf course, ball fields and bandshells. Residents also enjoy easy access to miles of hiking, biking and ATV trails, and year-round adventures like ice fishing, snowmobiling, boating and camping.

DESTINATION MERRITT
Merritt has gained notoriety as a destination for music festivals, such as the Bass Coast Music and Art Festival and the Canadian Bluemoon Elvis Festival. It is also renowned for the annual Nicola Valley Pro Rodeo and international motorsport events like the Pacific Forest Rally.

Merritt is a superb place to live, work, play, learn, grow, and flourish!

VISIT MERRITT.CA
@city-of-merritt
@CityofMerritt
@cityofmerritt

Flourish UNDER THE Sun

AFFORDABLE SUCCESS. Centrally located between Metro Vancouver and the Okanagan, the City of Merritt is a destination for international events, major retailers, commercial/residential development, and a better quality of life... under the sun.

MERRITT.CA | ECDEV@MERRITT.CA | 250-378-8623

PRINCETON: THE BRONZE SCULPTURE CAPITAL OF CANADA

Located in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, at the confluence of the Tulameen and Similkameen Rivers, Princeton is the southern starting point to the Interior of British Columbia. The natural beauty of the mountains and valleys in the region makes the Upper Similkameen a great place to vacation and enjoy an endless calendar of year-round activities.

Local Economy
Princeton has an extremely diverse economy. In addition to forestry and mining, pharmaceutical cannabis and psilocybin production, tourism, agriculture and ranching drive the local economy.

Recreation, Parks & Culture
From the Bronze Sculpture Walk, the outdoor Princeton Centennial Pool, Princeton Multi-Purpose Arena, Princeton Curling Club and Princeton Golf Course to the Princeton and District Museum, Okanagan Regional Library and Riverside Learning Centre, there are many places to enjoy. There are 14 parks, the Princeton Fairgrounds and the China Ridge cross-country ski trails.

Housing
Regardless of your lifestyle, you are sure to find a home to fit. Choices include carriage houses, secondary suites, apartments, condos and seniors’ housing. If you intend to build, there are standard-size lots and estate-type lots.

Serviced Industrial Lots
Beginning with just 25 light industrial lots, the Town of Princeton has expanded Princeton Industrial Estates twice. Lots range in size from one to five acres within a 101-acre area. These lots are mostly level and each lot has water, sewer, hydro and fibre optic service to the lot line.

Location
Princeton Industrial Estates is just 1.5 km north of the downtown core and close to two major highways (Highway 3 - Crowsnest Highway and Highway 5A). The development has direct access from Highway 5A on Laurie Currie Way. The Princeton Municipal Airport is virtually a stone’s throw away with access on Airport Road, directly opposite Laurie Currie Way off Highway 5A.

Fibre Optic Service
While we’re checking off “pro” side boxes, remember connectivity. Princeton is about as high-tech as it gets with communication technology. The community is serviced entirely by Telus High-Speed Fibre Optic service. This ensures quick, consistent and reliable internet service that you can trust and build your business around.

As we said, there’s a lot more to Princeton than industrial lots, even though there’s plenty of that, too!

Thinking of setting up shop in Princeton, where rivers and friends meet?

@townofprincetonbc

Visit discoverprinceton.ca to learn more.
BY THE NUMBERS

Penticton Lifestyle Attracts Professionals and Remote Workers

Data collected by the City of Penticton since Jan. 1, 2022, shows an influx in skilled and remote workers. Young families and children make up 27% of the new arrivals.

LEARN MORE
Visit StartHerePenticton.com

Age Groups of New Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 65+</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (under age 18)</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 19-65</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing

Top 5 types of housing selected by the new residents:

- House
- Apartment / condo
- Townhouse
- Duplex
- Basement / suite

Why they Moved to Penticton

Top 5 reasons provided by the city’s newest residents:

- Moved for a job
- Retired
- Moved with a partner, who came for work
- Remote worker or work from home
- Plan to open or take over a business

Where they Moved from

- Lower Mainland
- Okanagan
- Ontario
- Alberta
- Northern B.C., Kootenays, Kamloops area

26%  47%  30%  13%  3%  3%
The City has many exciting housing projects proposed, approved or under construction. The following is a snapshot of these projects which are helping to address the need for housing in the community.

**PROPOSED**
The City has received applications for 654 apartments and residential lots. These applications are currently being reviewed and are not yet approved.

- 307 Westminster Ave - 396 units, rental units and ground floor commercial
- 460 Eckhardt Ave W - 6 storeys with 70 units and ground floor commercial
- 206 Marine Way - 16 storeys with 70 units
- 405 Hope Rd - 5 storeys with 26 units and ground floor commercial
- 455 Ellis St - 3 storeys with 15 units
- 944 Churchill Ave - 4 storeys with 16 units
- 1000 Spiller Rd - 131 residential lots
- 1150 Reserve Rd - 50 residential lots

**APPROVED**
The City has issued 846 of townhomes, duplexes or apartments approved and ready to build.

- 350 Wood St. - 6 storeys with 165 units
- 3532 Skaha Lake Rd - 58 apartment units
- 795 Westminster Ave W - 27 storeys with 180 units
- 1104 Copeland Ave - 6 storeys with 226 units
- 901 Government St - 4 townhouses
- 1795 Grooms St - 12 townhouses
- 2400 Skaha Lake Rd - 4 storeys for recovery-focused supportive housing
- 2654 South Main St - 4 townhouses
- 137 Abbott St - 12 residential lots

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**
The City has 459 apartments, townhouse units, and single or two-family residential lots currently under construction.

- 3532 Hendrie St - 6 storeys with 165 units
- 3532 Skaha Lake Rd - 58 apartment units
- 795 Westminster Ave W - 27 storeys with 180 units
- 1104 Copeland Ave - 6 storeys with 226 units
- 1030 Bishop Cl Ave - 14 townhouses
- 779, 783 and 793 Westminster Ave - 1 townhouses
- 799 Argyle St - 17 townhouses
- 3200 Skaha Lake Rd - 4 units for recovery-focused supportive housing
- 2654 South Main St - 4 townhouses
- 137 Abbott St - 12 residential lots

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**BY THE NUMBERS**
Data collected by the City of Penticton since Jan. 1, 2022, shows an influx in skilled and remote workers. Young families and children make up 27% of the new arrivals.

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- Children (under age 18) : 15%
- Age 19-65 : 76%

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Top 5 reasons provided by the city’s newest residents:
- Moved for a job : 26%
- Retired : 18%
- Moved with a partner, who came for work : 21%
- Remote worker / work from home : 16%
- Plan to open or take over a business : 6%

### Housing
Top 5 types of housing selected by the new residents:
- House : 47%
- Apartment / condo : 30%
- Townhouse : 13%
- Duplex : 3%
- Basement / suite : 3%

### Where they Moved from
- Lower Mainland : 23%
- Okanagan : 14%
- Ontario : 13%
- Alberta : 12%
- Northern B.C., Kootenays, Kamloops area : 5%

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Rooted in Community

B.C’s southeast offers lofty vistas and a relaxed pace of life

More distant from major cities than either the Thompson Okanagan or Vancouver Island, the Kootenay region in B.C.’s southeastern corner has long attracted the kind of people who like it that way. Scenic and affordable, yet still connected to the outside world with up-to-date road, rail, air and telecommunications infrastructure, it’s the kind of place for a quieter, community-centered lifestyle.

Yet even here the impact of remote workers fleeing the urban cost of living has been felt acutely. Cranbrook alone has issued building permits worth nearly $300 million over the past five years, more than double the number from the previous five-year period. Broadstreet Properties opened a 292-unit rental complex, Rockyview Place, in 2021 and is contemplating further phases. The city has also come up with a Tourism Master Plan that, combined with an existing downtown revitalization effort, seeks to make the
regional hub more than a stopover on the way to resort towns like Fernie and Kimberley.

Like the rest of the region, Cranbrook is successfully navigating the transition from its historical dependency on the mining and forest industries to a more diversified, 21st-century economy. At the same time the city has been engaged in a unique municipal-First Nations reconciliation effort, the latest example of which is a memorandum of understanding with the Ktunaxa Nation to jointly develop a 52-acre site near the Canadian Rockies International Airport that the proponents aim to turn into a 30-megawatt utility-grade renewable energy project.

Further north, the Village of Canal Flats is positioning itself as a technology cluster with the Columbia Lake Technology Centre, launched in 2018. Anchor tenants BID Group and PodTech employ 70 people at the site, which hosts fabrication shops and a data centre. Invermere is seeing development of its Crossroads area, including the PrairieWind retail project, along with expansions to both Home Hardware and Canadian Tire. The population of Radium Hot Springs jumped 72.5% between 2016 and 2021, thanks to resident attraction and new economic activity.

There were 293 housing starts across the region in 2021, fewer than 2020 but still well ahead of the pace of development in 2018 and 2019. Many of these units are located in integrated resort developments that take advantage of the Kootenays’ unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities. Fernie Alpine Resort is undergoing $250 million in expansions to lifts, resort facilities and accommodations. Likewise Kimberley Ski Resort is building out further hotel and residential units. The Wildstone Golf and Residential Development is under way outside Cranbrook with a budget of $750 million. In the Rocky Mountains, Sparwood is home to a 900-unit residential and recreational golf development to go with the proposed $1.6-billion Baldy Ridge coal mine extension.

Upgrades to the Inland Gas system, meanwhile, are providing a $360-million boost throughout the Kootenay region.

In Accelerate Kootenays, the region has a unique grassroots strategy to build out its electric vehicle charging station network. With the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation, it also has a comprehensive open-access fibre-optic network. Another community-led economic development effort, MetalTechAlley, is harnessing an existing knowledge base in metallurgy, digital fabrication, industrial recycling, cleantech and the industrial internet of things in the smelting town of Trail and applying it to innovation in the circular economy. In Nelson, the Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (KAST) at Selkirk College helps companies and entrepreneurs develop prototypes and bring inventions to market.

Grand Forks, situated on the U.S. border and serving as the hub of Boundary Country, has shown remarkable resilience as a community. To attract businesses and new residents, the community has taken proactive and inventive measures such as creating Invest Grand Forks and developing an Economic Development Strategy.
KOOTENAY

Historic Nelson is home to the Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (KAST).
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

Profiling economic development success in British Columbia's communities

EcDevInAction.ca

#EcDevInAction
A century and a half ago, the Cariboo became a destination for fortune-seekers from around the world after gold was discovered on Williams Creek, near modern-day Quesnel. The Cariboo Gold Rush inspired the construction of the first wagon road to connect the British Columbia interior to the coast.

Today the region remains the hard-working heart of the province. It is not only home to resource industries such as forestry and mining but a staging area for projects throughout northern B.C. With the University of Northern B.C. in Prince George, it is also a hub for innovation in areas as diverse as seniors’ care and environmental remediation.

In contrast to some other regions, the value of major projects proposed or under construction in the Cariboo has continued to creep upward in recent years. Largest among them is the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion, about $4.5 billion of whose budget is being dispensed in the region. As the de facto business hub of northern British Columbia, Prince George has also seen an uptick in business from megaprojects in neighbouring regions, including the Coastal Gaslink natural gas pipeline, the LNG Canada liquefaction plant at its western terminus in Kitimat and the Site C dam near Fort St. John.

Northern Crossroads

The central Interior is leading the way to the energy transition
With this business activity comes the need for workers, who in turn need homes for their families. The 803 housing starts in the Cariboo in 2021, mostly in Prince George and Quesnel, represented a 61% increase over 2020, the Certified Public Accountants of B.C. noted in their 2022 provincial check-up.

In Prince George, building permit values topped $250 million in 2022, up from $220 million in 2020. Among the projects under way are a number of low-carbon fuel production facilities. Tidewater Renewables is building what will be Canada’s largest biodiesel plant at its existing light oil refinery in the city. Expected to commence operations this year, the plant will use renewable feedstock including vegetable oils, animal fat, used cooking oil, canola, soybeans and manure from livestock operations.

Hydra Energy broke ground last September on the world’s largest hydrogen refueling facility, to use green hydrogen produced through electrolysis using emissions-free electricity from BC Hydro. The station, aimed at demonstrating the feasibility of Hydra’s diesel-hydrogen conversion technology for heavy trucks, should be operational in 2024.

And Arbios Biotech is building a chemical plant to produce chemicals used in transportation fuels from woody biomass. The plant has been named Chuntoh Ghuna, meaning “the forest lives” in the dialect of the local Lheidli T’enneh First Nation.

There was a surge in business license applications in Prince George in 2022, with more than 1,700 applications processed. Growing industries include transportation and logistics, with a 66,000-square-foot warehouse space under construction and several more proposed.

**MINING RENAISSANCE**

New developments are under way in the hinterland too. Artemis Gold plans to start major construction of its $2.2-billion Blackwater gold mine this year. The mine is located approximately 160 kilometres southwest of Prince George, accessed via Fraser Lake on the Yellowhead Highway. Meanwhile, Osisko Development is weaving its proposed Cariboo Gold mine through the environmental assessment process. The underground project, located close to the site of the Cariboo Gold Rush of the 1860s in the Wells-Barkerville area, is budgeted at $502 million. The developer expects to receive final permits by the end of 2023.

In 2022 majority owner Taseko Mines opted to extend the life of the Gibraltar copper-molybdenum mine near Williams Lake by a further 23 years. The company attributed its decision in part to the buoyant long-term demand outlook for copper, a key element in the global energy transition. With a workforce of nearly 700, Gibraltar is one of the largest open-pit copper mines in Canada.

In contrast to the often fractious historical relationship between gold miners and settlers and Indigenous peoples of the Cariboo, the trend today is towards reconciliation in action. This is especially evident in Quesnel, where the city is collaborating with the Lhtako Dene First Nation on the creation of a destination park commemorating the area’s history before and after European contact. The two communities are also working together to host the B.C. Winter Games in 2024.

Also in Quesnel, the newly opened Sprout Kitchen Regional Food Hub offers food businesses and community groups throughout the Cariboo access to shared processing and testing equipment, food business advisory services, product development services, analytic services, applied research opportunities and education and training related to food processing and food safety.

There are even signs of revival in the area’s forest industry following timber supply cutbacks in the wake of the mountain pine beetle infestation, which has been linked to climate change. The previously closed C&C Wood Products has been purchased and reopened as Kandola Forest Products, a value-added manufacturer of wood paneling, engineered beams and other contemporary interior design features.

Williams Lake plays a vital role in offering regional services, including health and retail services, to several neighboring communities. The city is pursuing several initiatives, such as expanding community infrastructure and encouraging new residential and commercial developments, as part of an aggressive economic development program.

Similarly, 100 Mile House remains an attractive option for those seeking a rural lifestyle, with housing costs that are 69% lower than the national average. The town is currently experiencing an uptick in new residential and commercial developments, with building permit values doubling in 2022 and the number of new businesses increasing by 13%.

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**CRITICAL MINERALS:** Owner Taseko Mines has given the Gibraltar Mine near Williams Lake (left), one of the region’s largest employers, a new lease on life; construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline under way near Valemount (facing page).
Located on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T’enneh, founded in rich natural resources and a proud industrial heritage at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers, today’s Prince George values its residents, downtown and natural beauty. Its future will be shaped by the resilience, imagination and innovation of a 21st-century business community that provides every resident and enterprise the opportunity to thrive and scale.

**POPULATION/WORKFORCE**
Prince George’s population has grown in the last year to 76,708 in town and 332,000 including the local trade area. This includes 55,000 skilled workers in high paying jobs contributing to the local workforce.

**TRANSPORTATION**
Centrally located, Prince George sits at the crossroads of Highways 16 and 97. Its international airport offers one-hour flights to Vancouver, and proximity to the Port of Prince Rupert reduces travel to the Asia Pacific by two days. Prince George is also a CN Rail intermodal hub.

**DEVELOPMENT**
More than 8,600 thriving businesses contribute to a $6.6 billion export industry. The value of building permits issued in 2022 set a record at a little over a quarter of a billion dollars, a five percent increase over 2021’s then-all-time best. Major developments in low carbon fuels with Hydra Energy, Arbios Biotech and Tidewater Renewables are underway.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
Prince George is a four-season playground for outdoor enthusiasts, boasting 1,600 lakes and rivers within 100 km radius of the city and an exceptional network of parks, including Lheidli T’enneh Memorial Park, Connaught Hill Park and Rainbow Park, along with nature, athletic and neighbourhood parks. Launch your business and lifestyle in Prince George today.

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**Grow Your Business in BC’s Northern Capital**

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AWAKEN YOUR SPIRIT: NISGA’A NATION

Located on British Columbia’s rugged northwest coast, Nisg̱a’a Lands are blessed with soaring mountains, dramatic lava beds, picturesque fjords and thriving rivers and streams. Most visitors enter Nisg̱a’a Lands from Terrace, British Columbia, via Nisg̱a’a Highway 113, one of the most scenic drives on Canada’s Pacific coast. The Nisg̱a’a Nation is a hidden gem for adventure tourism enthusiasts. With breathtaking natural landscapes, the Nisg̱a’a Nation offers endless opportunities for outdoor adventures, including hiking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, wildlife watching or a relaxing day at the natural hot springs. Many amazing cultural tourism experiences are also available, such as guided tours of the Nisg̱a’a Museum and visits to traditional Nisg̱a’a villages.

The Nisg̱a’a Lisims Government and Nisg̱a’a people are busy building capacity, exploring opportunities, and developing our economy for long-term sustainability. The Nation is committed to providing training and support for those who want to get involved in economic development, including business development training, mentorship and access to funding. With a focus on sustainable economic development, the Nisg̱a’a Nation is committed to building a prosperous future for our people while also protecting the natural environment.

From tourism, arts, forestry, energy and mining, there are a range of sectors where businesses can make a positive impact and help drive the local economy. The Nisg̱a’a Nation also offers opportunities for partnerships and joint ventures with local businesses and investors, making it an attractive destination for those looking to invest in the future.

Whether you’re looking for a thrilling outdoor adventure, a once-in-a-lifetime cultural experience, or to get involved in the prosperous economy, the Nisg̱a’a Nation has something to offer. Come and explore the beauty and richness of the Nisg̱a’a Nation and make memories that will last a lifetime.

Learn more at: nisgaanation.ca discovernisgaa.com • nnbi.ca
Contact: Bert Mercer
bertramm@nisgaanation.ca
Sr. Manager of Economic & Business Development
NORTH COAST/NECHAKO

- Atlin
- Burns Lake
- Cassiar
- Dease Lake
- Fort St. James
- Fraser lake
- Granisle
- Hazelton
- Houston
- Kitimat
- Masset
- New Hazelton
- Port Clements
- Port Edwards
- Port Simpson
- Prince Rupert
- Queen Charlotte City
- Sandspit
- Skidegate
- Smithers
- Telegraph Creek
- Telkwa
- Terrace
- Vanderhoof

Although sparsely populated, the North Coast/Nechako region has always punched above its weight in terms of its contribution to the provincial economy. For more than a century it’s provided a vital second transcontinental rail corridor and Pacific Coast port for trade between Canada and Asia. Since the 1950s it has been home to the Kitimat aluminum smelter (now owned by Rio Tinto), the largest manufacturing operation in B.C. And it contains the Golden Triangle, a mountainous area rich in copper and precious metals that for decades has attracted the lion’s share of the dollars spent on mineral exploration in the province.

Today the North Coast is the site of the largest capital project ever undertaken in all of Canada. LNG Canada, a partnership of international energy companies led by Royal Dutch Shell, is midway through building a $36-billion liquefied natural gas export terminal in Kitimat, with a decision on a second phase expected at the end of 2023. It will be complemented by the $14.5-billion Coastal Gaslink pipeline, bringing natural gas from B.C.’s Northeast and Alberta to waiting LNG tankers in Douglas Channel. The business case for the project only got stronger in 2022, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine disrupted natural gas supplies to Europe and other markets—supplies that could potentially be augmented by imports from Canada.

Experience the Culture.      Explore the Land.      Eat and Stay.

once the terminal is operational in 2025.

All in all, Northwestern B.C. accounts for nearly half the major project spend in the entire province, the Chartered Professional Accountants of B.C. noted in their latest B.C. Check-up. In addition to LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink, work is proceeding on the $600-million Fairview Container Terminal expansion in Prince Rupert, the $623-million Mills Memorial Hospital redevelopment project in Terrace, a $75-million port expansion in Stewart and a handful of independent power projects scattered throughout the region.

These energy, transportation and health care projects illustrate how the economy of North Coast and Nechako has diversified beyond the traditional activities of logging, fishing and mining. The combination of high commodity prices and huge capital projects “creates a window of opportunity for Northern B.C. to capitalize on these investments to grow small and medium enterprise, while at the same time utilizing the proceeds of public-sector investments to improve infrastructure, amenities, and services in our communities to make them more sustainable and attractive places to call home,” wrote Joel McKay, chief executive officer of the Northern Development Initiative Trust, in his introduction to the non-profit’s State of the North report for 2021.

In the Golden Triangle, Newcrest Mining is expanding the Red Chris Mine at a cost of $1.5 billion and the KSM copper-gold mine is in pre-construction, with a budget of $8.3 billion. Several other mineral exploration projects in the feasibility and permitting stages. The Yellowhead corridor between Smithers to Vanderhoof, part of the Nechako region, has been affected by forest industry consolidation. Nonetheless, the communities in the area have demonstrated remarkable resilience over the years and have managed to thrive. Recent retail and commercial developments in Houston have led to the establishment of a full-time grocery store and a Tim Hortons, among other opportunities.

Although Canfor Corp. has temporarily shut down its Houston sawmill, it plans to modernize the facility and create more value-added jobs through the addition of a manufacturing plant.

Burns Lake is witnessing a flourishing partnership between local governments and Indigenous communities, which has resulted in the continued support for Babine Forest Products and the development of the award-winning Keyoh Lodge that is owned and operated by Ts’il Kaz Koh, formerly known as the Burns Lake Band.

The North Coast/Nechako is working to turn the current burst of business activity around major projects into a base for stable employment and tax revenues far into the future.
KITIMAT: OPEN FOR BUSINESS, POISED FOR THE FUTURE

On British Columbia’s northwest coast, Kitimat is becoming a major gateway for Canadian natural gas with both the LNG Canada mega-project and Haisla Nation-led Cedar LNG project with Pembina. Kitimat is also home to the long-running Rio Tinto aluminum smelter, which has provided stable employment within the region for decades.

LOCATION
Kitimat has all the charm of a small town, but we are immensely accessible. We are just 30 minutes away from the Kitimat-Terrace Northwest Regional Airport with direct flights to Vancouver and Calgary. Well maintained highways connect Kitimat to the province, and we are a simple seven-hour drive from the northern hub of Prince George.

ADVANTAGES
It is no secret that Kitimat offers great advantages for potential investors and residents:
• Affordable homes, with a median value of $360,000 for single-family houses
• Established infrastructure, with high-speed Internet, industrial rail service, as well as our highway and airport access
• Stunning natural beauty providing access to hiking, fishing, mountain biking, and more

OPEN FOR BUSINESS
Kitimat is ready to support your ambitions and growth. Our Economic Development department can assist you in finding the right opportunities to set your roots in the community and get the best sense of how you can succeed in Kitimat.

Call us at 250-632-8900 to talk to Economic Development today.
@district-of-kitimat
@kitimatdistrict

Kitimat means access
Whether by road, rail or water, Kitimat provides an abundance of resources to support your business.
Our robust industrial sector translates to rewarding employment and business opportunities with year-round recreation options making our community a desirable place to live, work and play.

Our advantage:
• Affordable housing
• Established infrastructure
• Stable industrial base

NORTHWEST BC IS CALLING: VISIT KITIMAT-STIKINE

There’s no comparison to its vast, lush landscapes, endless adventures, short commutes from affordable homes and opportunities in every direction working, adventure-seeking, community loving people who enjoy a high average income and low average housing prices. As an area poised for growth, Kitimat-Stikine residents enjoy world-class health services, transportation networks, education dining and entertainment outlets.

ECONOMY

Kitimat-Stikine is entering a period of prolonged economic prosperity driven by natural resource projects and the largest private sector investment in Canadian history. Its major industries are construction, transportation & warehousing, manufacturing, health care, public administration, education, retail and repair and non-profit services. Top employers include Rio Tinto, LNG Canada, Northern Health and Ledcor. The Regional District offers support for local business development through various resources, including support grant channels.

FIRST NATIONS

Nisga’a, Tsimshian, Tahltan, Haisla, and Gitxsan, Wet’suwet’en, Kitasoo/ Xaixai First Nations have lived in the region since time immemorial and continue to shape the area’s rich culture, deep history and robust economy. The Haisla Nation has received environmental approval for the proposed $3 billion Cedar LNG project. In 2019, exploration expenditures on projects in Tahltan Territory were estimated at over $135.5 million. Production values for active mines in the Tahltan Territory, which include Red Chris and Brucejack, were estimated at more than $817 million. The Ksi Lisims LNG project will export low carbon LNG to markets in Asia via an alliance among the Nisga’a Nation, Rockies LNG and Western LNG.

Curiosity piqued? Find out if the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine is the change you’ve been looking for.

Explore unique opportunities at rdks.bc.ca

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Kitimat-Stikine where hard-workers and adventure seekers meet

With over 100,000 sq km to explore there’s something for everyone in the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

It’s a place where culture, recreation, and business opportunities are endless.
The Port of Prince Rupert handled 24.6 million tonnes of cargo in 2022 and is embarking on an ambitious phase of expansion to ensure a globally competitive, resilient and sustainable Canadian trade gateway continues to anchor the northern BC economy well into the future. The port complex handles a variety of commodities and cargo through numerous terminal operators, ranging from bulk agricultural exports to specialized, refrigerated container handling. In addition, Prince Rupert’s role as a tourism destination is rapidly becoming a key stop on cruise itineraries.

The Port of Prince Rupert offers significant strategic advantages to customers—the shortest transpacific sailing route between North America and Asia; the deepest natural harbour in North America; uncongested rail connection to CN’s vast North American network and the flattest grade through the Rocky Mountains to top tier distribution centres; safe, short and sheltered transit to and from Pacific shipping lanes in piloted waters; exceptional labour and community support; and significant capacity for growth. This year promises to be a pivotal point in the gateway’s development history.

Building Out the Intermodal Ecosystem to Support Canadian Exporters

Multiple projects are underway that, when combined, will form a robust, full-service intermodal gateway. These projects include DP World Prince Rupert’s terminal expansion from 1.6M TEUs to 1.8M TEUs, a two-year feasibility assessment agreement between DP World and PRPA for a second container terminal, progress on two unique transloading facilities—the South Kaien Import Logistics Park and the proposed Ridley Island Export Logistics Project—and a 5 km private haul road that shortens truck distances and diverts container truck traffic away from public roadways.

Accelerating the Global Energy Transition & Sustainability Practices in Shipping

Export demand for western Canadian energy products remains strong through AltaGas’ Ridley Island Propane Export Terminal, Pembina’s Watson Island LPG Bulk Terminal and Drax’s Westview Wood Pellet Terminal. The Vopak Pacific Canada Project, a bulk liquids storage facility, reached a significant regulatory milestone with its environmental effects determination. Shore power was operationalized at Fairview Container Terminal, allowing ships to power down their generators while at berth. Trigon Pacific Terminals, formerly Ridley Terminals Inc., announced $75 million from the National Trade Corridors Fund toward construction of a second berth that will enable the terminal to diversify and double capacity.

Partnering for a Better Northern BC

Cruise ships returned to Prince Rupert in 2022 in a significant way after a two-year hiatus, marking the Port’s busiest cruise season in over a decade. PRPA established a 10-year Terminal Operating Agreement with Global Ports Holding (GPH) to take the cruise development experience to the next level. The Port partners with countless industry-leading organizations and grassroots community groups to ensure local representation in all that it does while sharing the economic benefits it generates with its host communities.

Learn more about the Port of Prince Rupert at www.rupertport.com.
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few southerners stop to think of it this way, but British Columbia is a prairie province. About one-sixth of B.C.’s land mass lies east of the Continental Divide, from the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains down to the rolling plains of the Peace River Country, where most of B.C.’s grain and canola is grown.

The Northeast’s economy is buoyed by its key industry of oil and gas exploration and production, with the agriculture, metallurgical coal mining, and forest industries playing supplementary roles. Natural gas output from the gigantic Montney, Horn River and Liard Basin shale formations is expected to only grow, especially once the Coastal Gaslink pipeline and LNG Canada terminal are operational in 2025. These megaprojects will end up diverting the equivalent of one-third of Canada’s current natural gas production to previously

Energizing B.C.

Sustained by energy and agriculture, the Peace Country runs a little differently from the rest of the province
with the agriculture, metallurgical coal mining, and forest industries playing supplementary roles. Natural gas output from the gigantic Montney, Horn River and Liard Basin shale formations is expected to only grow, especially once the Coastal Gaslink pipeline and LNG Canada terminal are operational in 2025. These megaprojects will end up diverting the equivalent of one-third of Canada’s current natural gas production to previously untapped export markets on the Pacific Rim. That’s expected to support prices for the resource and spur further exploration, feeder pipelines and future production.

The Northeast makes a huge and soon-to-grow contribution to the clean energy conversation as well. The existing two BC Hydro dams on the Peace River generate around 30% of B.C.’s hydroelectric power and a third, Site C, will supply 1,100 megawatts more—ensuring the province’s electrical grid is almost 100% renewable far into the future. Work on the $16-billion BC Hydro Site C project is nearing completion, with reservoir filling to begin as early as the fall of this year and full electrical generation capacity online in 2025. Site C is just southwest of Fort St. John, the Northeast region’s urban hub and location of the North Peace Regional Airport, served by both Air Canada and Westjet. Reflecting the optimism in the area’s economy, the city boasts several new developments. Parkwood, a master-planned, mixed-use community is unfolding on 600 acres, as is The Station Town Centre, a residential/commercial development on 207 acres. Surerus Industrial Park provides 90 acres of serviced industrial land alongside the Alaska Highway. The Landing brings hundreds of thousands of square feet of retail space to the city, anchored by a new Canadian Tire store. In 2023, a new Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment opens, and work is ongoing on Fort St. John’s downtown revitalization. In 2021, the city opened the Centennial Park Festival Plaza, providing a partially open, partially covered public space for programmed events and community gatherings.

Indeed, virtually all the communities in the Northeast have something to celebrate. Dawson Creek has a five-year agreement with Hockey Canada for showcase events taking place at the Ovintiv Events Centre. There are plans for renewable wind farms in the Taylor and Tumbler Ridge areas. Tumbler Ridge continues its resurgence as more than just a mining centre with the potential of becoming a remote working center with pending improvements to the connectivity infrastructure. Not surprisingly, with all this investment and economic activity in the pipeline, the Northeast overall boasts the highest median household income and the highest workforce participation rate—over 70% of adults aged 15-64—in the whole province. For consumer-facing businesses looking to locate here, it’s fertile ground.

**REGIONAL POPULATION**
74,043

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**
N/A

**TOP EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY**
- Retail trade 12.7%
- Construction 12.4%
- Mining & oil & gas extraction 9.7%

**FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2022-32**
1,900

**BUILDING PERMIT VALUES (2022)**
$82.7 MILLION

**HOUSING STARTS (2021)**
113

**VALUE OF MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION (Q3 2022)**
$44.7 BILLION

**BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS (2022)**
465

**RENEWABLE RESOURCE:** Despite cuts to the timber supply, the forest sector (above) continues to diversify the industrial base; the Centennial Park Festival Plaza (left), part of Fort St. John’s downtown revitalization.

Sources: BC Labour Market Outlook, Statistics Canada and B.C. Stats.
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In 2019, $8.9 billion in energy exports were produced in the northeast. The Peace River Region is home to 20,000 drilled wells, including some in North America’s largest gas fields. Ninety percent of BC’s grain production occurs there, along with 38% of BC’s hydroelectric power. Every year, Peace River Region sees 300,000 tourists.

Fort St. John was built on the oil and gas industry, mining operations, forestry and agriculture. That’s why it is the backbone of stable employment, which includes growing opportunities in retail and service. Nearly 7,500 residents have earned post-secondary education, and that number continues to grow thanks to two post-secondary institutions in the city.

RECREATION AND DAILY LIVING
But it’s not just all work and no play in Fort St. John. The young, adventurous community enjoys the great outdoors, festivals and world-class amenities during 304 sunny days each year. Four distinct seasons mean a huge variety of activities, including long summer days by the lake and crisp, bluebird winters perfect for hitting the ski trails. The community’s passionate residents support a robust local arts scene and endless entertainment opportunities. And with the seventh-highest median household income in Canada and a 70.3% employment rate, residents can afford to live their best lives.

INVESTMENT IN FORT ST. JOHN
In 2023, the community will open a new RCMP detachment with energy performance targets in building design, including net-zero energy construction. Centennial Park Festival Plaza, a new open-air concept with a 300-person capacity, was designed to meet the needs of the city’s expanding arts, culture and music scene, and includes locally designed art features.

Recent private investments and opportunities include the Site C generating station on the Peace River, which will provide clean electricity for over 100 years. Fort St. John and the surrounding area will supply natural gas for the recently announced LNG Canada facility in Kitimat, among others, via 40-year export licenses for extended, long-term growth. Private investments also include the Landing, a multi-phase retail development anchored by a 126,000 sq. ft. (11,706 sq. m.) Canadian Tire store, and The Station, a 207-acre residential and commercial subdivision fronting the Alaska Highway.

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