

VIEA

Mission Possible a 50-year
vision for Vancouver Island



The 6th Annual State of the
Island Economic Summit

October 15 & 16, 2012

Proudly sponsored by *Douglas* magazine



What is VIEA?

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) is a collaborative partnership spearheading regional economic development for the Vancouver Island region.

VIEA provides opportunities for communities, First Nations, businesses, and other key stakeholders to collaborate on broad-based economic development programs to improve the region's overall capacity for economic vitality. This regional alliance embraces all of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Port Hardy as well as the Northern and Southern Gulf Islands.

As a small, grassroots organization with an ambitious mandate, VIEA was born in 2006 with seed money from the provincial government and a task, simply put, to promote Vancouver Island.

VIEA is a registered non-government, non-profit society funded by memberships, sponsorships, and gate receipts from public events. Membership is open to anyone and has a sliding fee scale to fit the budgets of individuals, small business, local government, and corporations. Your support is needed and appreciated.

VIEA's primary goals are to:

- *promote a sustainable and diversified economy for all residents of the Vancouver Island region;*
- *promote strong communities, First Nations, and careful stewardship of Island resources;*
- *provide regional leadership for regional business attraction, retention, and expansion;*
- *promote regional initiatives that strengthen economic capacity.*

Vancouver Island is a hotbed of progressive ideas and provincially significant initiatives.

VIEA PROJECTS

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance is involved in projects that build capacity, provide research data, and/or coordinate efforts to promote Vancouver Island to investors both on the Island and further afield. VIEA is currently developing initiatives to attract foreign investment to small businesses and to increase economic capacity in rural areas.

PREVIOUS VIEA PROJECTS HAVE INCLUDED:

Welcoming Communities — Through multi-agency connections, VIEA headed a broad-based regional partnership to develop an immigrant integration strategy for Vancouver Island. The project aimed to increase capacity building to create greater awareness and understanding of contributions and needs of newcomers. It also strengthened regional collaboration around issues of immigration, settlement, multiculturalism, racism, workplace

diversity, and building and sustaining welcoming, inclusive communities.

Collaborative Workforce Strategy — VIEA spearheaded the development of a comprehensive Vancouver Island labour market strategy that analyzed and facilitated solutions to the human resource needs of key industry sectors in the region. The strategy covered workforce/labour and skilled labour shortages, as well as workforce transitions, and was funded by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development and Labour Market Agreement Program.

Hiring, developing, and keeping effective employees represents one of the greatest challenges faced by employers. To help businesses access skilled staff, VIEA managed this project to assess the human resource needs of key industry sectors, review current and projected labour market supply to identify gaps, and work with stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive labour market strategy.



KEVIN OKE PHOTOGRAPHY

PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT



“It is more important than ever that we work together as a region to diversify and strengthen our economy. As a founding supporter of VIEA, Coastal Community Credit Union encourages Island businesses, organizations, and governments to join VIEA to benefit all Vancouver Island.”

— Joe Cristiano, Senior VP of Marketing, Coastal Community Credit Union

The Link Project: Linking Island Leadership

— By reviewing what was and wasn't being done in Vancouver Island communities, First Nations, and within industry alliances, the Link Team identified missing puzzle pieces within an overall picture of Vancouver Island leadership to create a benchmark of activity and provide ideas for improved collaboration.

The Link Team visited communities, businesses, and First Nations leaders across the Island to learn about initiatives, future plans, and perceived challenges while also conducting research into various levels of community and regional planning. In the process, they built and strengthened linkages throughout the Island.

Two direct results from the Link Project are the partnership between VIEA and the Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (CAVI) project on Water Sustainability for

Vancouver Island and the creation of the business-to-business tradeshow Linking Island Business, now entering its third year. The project was funded by the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

One of the most pressing needs on Vancouver Island is creating awareness of the role that regional collaboration plays in strategic economic development.

With that in mind, the project aimed to:

- promote awareness of the value of regional collaboration in support of economic development;
- conduct research on economic development investment in the region;
- conduct interviews with Vancouver Island leaders to identify common economic issues;

- develop a strategic plan to address common economic development issues on regional basis;
- host a leadership forum to share collected data and ideas; and
- produce a report outlining obstacles, outcomes and recommendations.

Reports from these and other projects are available at www.viea.ca. VIEA membership application forms and on-line registration for the 2012 State of the Island Economic Summit are also available on the website.



BECOME A VIEA MEMBER

The benefits of joining VIEA are in being part of sustaining a viable economy on Vancouver Island. Where will our children live and work? What opportunities will we create for them? The value proposition is the opportunity to engage with business, community, and government leaders from one end of the Island to the other while supporting efforts to promote Vancouver Island and ensure a vital economy.



“As an independent, non-partisan organization, VIEA provides an important forum for our leaders in business, government, and education to work together to position Vancouver Island as a player in the global marketplace. MNP is proud to be a member and sponsor of VIEA because we believe strongly in the value of regional economic development.”

— Garth Busch, CA, Regional Managing Partner at MNP, a chartered accounting and business management firm



Vancouver Island Economic Development Initiatives

ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT

In baseball vernacular, the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) appreciates the “swinging for the fences” work of provincial and federal government initiatives, along with organizations and businesses positioned to hit home runs with trade missions geared to attract millions and billions of dollars in economic activity.

Recognizing that more than 80 per cent of Island businesses are “small,” VIEA is focusing on attracting immigrant buyers for small enterprises looking for successors, and young entrepreneurs seeking niche opportunities. Attracting a new generation of small business owners from amongst new immigrants is seen as critical to the problem of aging demographics in communities everywhere on Vancouver Island.

The plan is to attract investors to specific opportunities by:

- *identifying target markets and engaging communities of international influence;*
- *building a database of investment prospects along with a portfolio of distinct investment opportunities, enlisting ongoing participation of public and private partners;*
- *facilitating connections between qualified investors and Island proponents.*

“Given the tremendous changes taking place at the federal level in immigration policy and regulations, the time could not be better for qualifying potential immigrants through the provincial programs,” says immigration lawyer David Aujla. “The federal government is moving out of the business immigration field, having recently suspended both the entrepreneur and the popular investor program, and, as a result, is allowing the provinces to pick the business candidates they may want. With the province involved, we are seeing rapid processing of candidates who can now be approved for entry within four to six months to transition into a business they wish to purchase or establish.”

Building Rural Capacity and Attracting Foreign Investment

VIEA has determined that promoting opportunities for First Nations, local government, and business people to work together holds promise for improved relations and economic vitality — especially in building sustainable economic capacity in rural areas.

BUILDING RURAL CAPACITY

“With high numbers of young people, more and more members with advanced education, access to resources, and strong desire for self-reliance, aboriginal peoples are increasingly participating in the growth of the Island economy,” says Dan Smith of the First Nations Summit and VIEA Board of Directors.

Improved relations between Vancouver Island communities and First Nations is one of three economic priorities identified in the 2010 Link Project. “Our research tells us that many Vancouver Islanders know little about the more than 50 First Nations in the region and generally lack understanding of the potential contributions and current challenges of First Nations,” says VIEA Past Chair Bill Benoit.

First Nations and organizations serving them are actively developing their communities to improve circumstances. Many are engaging in economic development, pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities, and are open to business partnerships. Yet, cultural differences and misunderstandings present barriers to realizing these opportunities.

VIEA is working to promote understanding from an economic development perspective. “The plan,” says VIEA Chair Dave Willie, “is to provide context for dialogue with key leaders amongst aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples to identify and reduce barriers so as to increase potential for mutually beneficial economic development and business partnership.”

The project will inventory economic development initiatives and identify economic

activities and opportunities for business partnerships while providing a guide for ongoing communications to continue opening doors to work together. VIEA expects to launch this project, funding permitting, to help build rural economies around the Island. Opportunities exist for sponsors who will benefit from the profile associated with bringing this initiative to First Nations and rural communities.

ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT

VIEA recognizes the tremendous need for a new generation of entrepreneurs coupled with significant small business investment opportunities associated with an aging demographic on Vancouver Island. This widely recognized trend is consistent regionally, provincially, and nationally.

By building relations with established communities of Canadian immigrants, VIEA believes that a network of small business investment and investor information can attract investment from within an existing international weave of family and business relations already connected to Canada.

By working with communities already engaged in economic development and with private sector businesses, financial consultants, and commercial realtors who are active in the marketplace, a representative portfolio can be assembled to direct prospective investors to the sources for qualified opportunities. VIEA can facilitate a progressive, grassroots business-attraction strategy designed to increase the number of buyers in a market certain to have an over-abundance of business opportunities.

VIEA expects to launch this project, funding permitting, to help attract business successors and investors to Island communities. Opportunities exist for sponsors who will benefit from the profile associated with bringing a new wave of entrepreneurs to small businesses.

Leadership in Water Sustainability

by Eric Bonham, Kim A Stephens, and Tim Pringle

Sustainability on Vancouver Island is founded not only upon the wise use of our natural resources, but also on creative collaboration with the business sector, political decision makers, and administrators. The result is viable business opportunities and innovative partnerships that demonstrate the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The complementary roles of the Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (CAVI) initiative and the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) encourage such partnerships with the aim of facilitating effective and practical changes on the ground.

DISCOVERING THE BIG PICTURE

In looking at the big picture, CAVI and VIEA both suggest we should be looking at a 50-year vision for Vancouver Island. "Perhaps the most important objective," says VIEA President George Hanson, is bringing together settlement, ecology, and economy in balance.

"VIEA collaboration with CAVI created an opportunity for early success in moving forward, and the CAVI Forum within the 2011 Summit provided a springboard to Island-wide action," says VIEA Chair Dave Willie. "Together we can achieve much ... just imagine the strength of committed individuals all working towards a common focus."

MISSION POSSIBLE

The CAVI vision is based on a model of collaboration among business, industry, government, academia, and community sectors. The vision emerged from the challenging mantra "What do we want Vancouver Island to look like in 50 years?" as first articulated at the 2006 Water in the City conference and is founded upon the principle of water sustainability.

The CAVI program is being delivered under the umbrella of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia, a not-for-profit society that is helping the Province implement the Living Water Smart and Green Communities initiatives. A guiding premise is that water sustainability will be achieved by designing with nature and implementing green infrastructure policies and practices. How we get there relies on a change in mindset.

INTER-REGIONAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The immediate CAVI process has been one of incremental steps taken through partnerships with the Capital Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Nanaimo Regional District, and Comox Valley Regional District. These districts account for approximately 90 per cent of the population of Vancouver Island. This top-down bottom-up model engages both the

decision-makers and communities as they work towards mutually attainable goals.

Vancouver Island is a hotbed of progressive ideas and provincially significant initiatives. Regional districts and their municipal partners are advancing watershed-based strategies and programs. Yet there is no formal mechanism for inter-regional collaboration.

To fill this gap, CAVI has brought together the four regional districts to align their efforts and implement the Vancouver Island Inter-Regional Education Initiative. The desired outcome is a common understanding of core concepts for designing with nature; and those involved in land use and/or water use will utilize those core concepts to reduce their water footprints, protect stream health, and adapt to a changing climate.



LOOKING AHEAD

Effective change will be the result of a new form of governance, one that recognizes the collaborative role of business, local government, and community and enables the creation of a healthy economy within a sustainable environment. Achieving a shared vision for Vancouver Island is mission possible!

As part of the program for the 2012 State of the Island Economic Summit on October 15 and 16, the CAVI team will present a two-and-a-half hour seminar reporting on business to date. For more Summit information, visit www.viea.ca.



CAVI AND VIEA CHAMPION A 50-YEAR VISION

An important step in this process of creating a 50-year vision for the island has been the development of the VIEA-CAVI partnership that embraces both economic viability and environmental sustainability.

Forming alliances that encourage both socially and ecologically responsible practices then leads to the new way of doing business as usual. This opens the door to both creative and diverse solutions towards long-term sustainability.

Launched in 2006 at the Water in the City Conference in Victoria, the Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (CAVI) initiative is about this long-term vision for balance. The vision is water-centric because water is a form maker: watersheds are defining landscapes that serve the needs of human settlements and provide natural habitats and their ecological systems.

Water features include coastlines, riverfronts, lakes, riparian areas, aquifers, and other elements that contribute to the values of land for habitat, agriculture,



recreation, and real estate. In numerous ways, the built environment has to adapt to watershed features and water movements to maintain viable settlements. This designing with nature approach is fundamental to achieving water sustainability and, therefore, life sustainability from any perspective.



VIEA's annual Economic Summit, this year on October 15 and 16, is a concentrated networking opportunity.

"The Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation furthers economic development, business retention and tourism for Nanaimo & region. VIEA is a key partner in positioning Vancouver Island as a fantastic place to do business and the Summit is an important meeting place for building collaboration between communities. The NEDC is proud to be sponsoring the Premier's keynote address this October."

The 6th annual State of the Island Economic Summit will feature Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of Canada, giving the opening luncheon address at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo, October 15, 2012.



"Mr. Carney needs no introduction to anyone who has been following news of the Canadian and world economy for the last several years" says Bill Benoit, Past Chair of the Vancouver

Island Economic Alliance (VIEA).

"We are thrilled to have someone of the Governor's international reputation bringing his knowledge and insight to this year's Summit."

Governor Carney will make his presentation in Nanaimo upon arriving back in Canada from annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Tokyo, Japan. This will be his only public address in British Columbia in 2012. His presentation is sponsored by Coastal Community Credit Union.

The 6th Annual State of the Island Economic Summit

OCTOBER 15 & 16, 2012

VIEA's Economic Summit has emerged as the event of its kind on Vancouver Island. The business-to-business tradeshow is a concentrated networking opportunity with qualified prospects, and the presentational content is assembled to specifically address topics that are important to economic vitality.

The Summit is also deliberately priced to be affordable to a wide range of interested business, community, and government attendees. At \$395, the event is approximately half the cost of comparable conferences with such high-calibre and relevant content.

"We understand the value in supporting the continued development of our local economies and believe that it is up to all of us to help our island communities grow and thrive," says Adrian Legin, Coastal Community's President and CEO.

On October 15, there will be in-depth sessions on Island Resources Industries, Transportation Services, and Infrastructure featuring Mike Corrigan, President and CEO, BC Ferries Corporation and Water Sustainability, along with a panel of city managers on local government challenges and opportunities.

Premier Christy Clark will start the second day of the summit on October 16 with her keynote address. The rest of the schedule will include presentations on Attracting Youth and Foreign Investment, First Nations Partnerships, Marine Tourism, Business Collaboration, stories from entrepreneurs who are thriving in a stressed economy, The Best Bang for Your Marketing Dollars, and a panel addressing the complex future of forestry from log exports to specialty cellulose to biofuel.

Evan Parliament, former CAO for the District of Sooke and new VIEA board member, has attended several of the annual Summit events and says, "The Economic Summit provides a unique opportunity for local government, industry, and community leaders to congregate and dialogue together. Industry leaders make up the economic engine that is Vancouver Island and local government needs to address its infrastructure needs by attracting private investment. Inventive solutions and mutual benefit start with leaders from across public and private sectors participating and networking at this annual event. The Summit is always a quality, can't-miss event."

→ *This year, with Governor Carney speaking — well, you'd better register early!*

i FOR MORE INFORMATION

Summit registration and sponsorship opportunities:

www.viea.ca
summit@viea.ca

2012 SUMMIT SPONSORS INCLUDE: Coastal Community Credit Union, Canadian Western Bank, Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation, CTV, Island Radio, Glacier Media, *Douglas Magazine*, Impact Visual Communications, MNP, Coast Capital Savings, Quality Foods, ProReg, Lewis & Sears Marketing & Event Management, Array Studios, Coast Bastion Inn, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, Island Coastal Economic Trust, BC Salmon Farmers Association, Vancouver Island University, Community Futures-Island Region, SW Audio+Visual, Certified Management Accountants of BC, Small Business BC