

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

2014 British Columbia Economic Development Awards Winners

Richmond, BC, June 23, 2014 – The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) and Diamond Partner BC Hydro announced the winners of the 2014 BC Economic Development Awards at the BC Economic Summit Awards Banquet held Tuesday, June 10th, in Richmond, BC.

This year's award winners are (detailed descriptions follow):

1) **Marketing Award:**

The BCEDA Marketing Award recognizes achievement in marketing that supports economic development:

Community Less than 20,000 Population: North Peace Economic Development Commission - *"Take the Fly YXJ Pledge"*

Community More than 20,000 Population: Venture Kamloops – *"Website Redevelopment & Report Builder"*

2) **Community Project:**

The BCEDA Community Project Award recognizes an organization that has implemented various economic development initiatives that provide economic benefits to a community or region.

Less than 20,000 Population: Seyem' Qwantlen Business Group, *"First Nation Community Economic Development Capacity Building"*

More than 20,000 Population: City of Langley, *"Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy"*

3) **BCEDA Chairman's Award:** Bruce Flexman, AdvantageBC

"It was amazing to see so many submissions for the awards this year. It speaks to the amount of work being done at the community level across British Columbia to build stronger local economies" says BCEDA Chair Scott Randolph. "BC Communities collectively invest over \$60 million a year in Economic Development and Tourism programs and our association is proud to provide the support necessary to help them achieve their goals. Our thanks goes out to all who submitted projects for consideration this year. Their efforts to build stronger communities, and thereby a stronger provincial economy are to be commended and congratulated."

This marks the 24th year that BCEDA has presented these awards. The awards are presented to association members working on community-based economic development projects in BC and are an excellent way to recognize individuals and groups that produce outstanding work in economic development that has helped to make a difference in supporting and expanding local economies.



"It continues to amaze me the incredible efforts put forward by communities and economic development professionals to ensure strong local economies. This awards program continues to generate keen interest amongst economic developers across the province and this year set a record for the number of entries received," said Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO, BCEDA. "During this past year I have been fortunate to visit every region of the Province and it is clear to me that many communities are implementing creative and bold strategies to encourage economic growth. Narrowing it down to a few winners is becoming increasingly difficult for our judges."

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Contact:

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About BCEDA

The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is the leading professional association of economic development practitioners in the Province of BC. BCEDA currently has over 370 members from communities throughout the province. BCEDA provides services that help member communities grow and expand new and existing businesses, attract new business investments, and work towards strategic infrastructure investment, land use planning, and community enhancement.

BCEDA services include an annual summit and networking event, educational and professional development opportunities, public relations, advisory services and resources and partnering with communities and the Province of BC to market British Columbia for business investment.

2014 Economic Development Award Winners

BCEDA CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

Presented to Bruce Flexman, AdvantageBC

Annually, the Chair of BCEDA, presents an award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to BCEDA and economic development throughout British Columbia. These are in addition to the BC Hydro Economic Development Awards. This year, the award was presented to Bruce Flexman, President of AdvantageBC. Throughout the years, Mr. Flexman has attended nearly every BCEDA event and spoken on the subject of BC's tax advantages. Mr. Flexman and AdvantageBC have increased economic activity in the province by promoting British Columbia as a favourable location for international business.

MARKETING

The BCEDA Marketing Award recognizes achievement in marketing that supports economic development.

Community Less than 20,000 Population: North Peace Economic Development Commission - *"Take the Fly YXJ Pledge"*

The North Peace Regional Airport worked successfully to recruit a third carrier to service the region. With the explosion of industrial activity in Northeast BC, the growth of the airport to facilitate the development of business and industry, as well as, the movement of the workforce are vital to the successful advancement of our communities. The arrival of a third carrier opened up access to new markets, achieved competitive fares, and increased capacity for the movement of passengers. In partnership between the North Peace Regional Airport, North Peace Economic Development Commission and Vantage Airport Group, the 'Take the Pledge to Fly YXJ' Campaign was launched in April. The campaign ran for three months and saw local governments, business organizations, industry participants, and community groups take the pledge, committing to make the North Peace Regional Airport their first choice for air travel.

Community More than 20,000 Population: Venture Kamloops – *"Website Redevelopment & Report Builder"*

Venture Kamloops knew it was time to redevelop their website to ensure that it was 1) responsive - easily viewed on mobile devices and tablets 2) user friendly and 3) highly optimized for search engines. Local advertising agency Fresh Inc. was contracted to compile research from other "award winning" economic development sites and to understand through an audit where traffic was going, what people were looking for and how to best lay out the site. The site was redeveloped after much research and a Report Builder feature was custom developed on the site where visitors can easily review information on Kamloops and build a customized report that can be downloaded as a pdf and printed or shared via email.



COMMUNITY PROJECT

The BCEDA Community Project Award recognizes an organization that has implemented various economic development initiatives that provide economic benefits to a community or region.

Less than 20,000 Population: *Seyem' Qwantlen Business Group, "First Nation Community Economic Development Capacity Building"*

Seyem' Qwantlen Business Group (SQBG) is wholly owned by the Kwantlen First Nation, located in Fort Langley, BC, responsible for lands, resources and economic development on behalf of the nation. Since inception, February of 2011, SQBG has expanded its employee base from 1 to 60 employees, successfully operating 5 companies and one non-profit. Activities are diverse, with its strength in new business startup, and economic development. Prior to 2011 there were no economic development activities the community was engaging in. Today the economic development arm of the nation brings in over \$7,000,000.00 in revenues and is expected to increase by slightly less than 30% with expected revenues of \$9,000,000.00.

More than 20,000 Population: *City of Langley, "Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy"*

The City of Langley Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy explores the economic realities of brownfield redevelopment in the City of Langley, and positions the City as a partner in the continued redevelopment of the community. This innovative report considers brownfield redevelopment from the perspective of the land owner/developer, identifying barriers to redevelopment and a range of strategies and resources available to accelerate the pace and/or likelihood of brownfield redevelopment in the City of Langley. Brownfield Redevelopment can be categorized as green or sustainable development. The purpose of which is two-fold: (1) clean contaminated sites, and (2) concentrate development in developed areas, thereby limiting urban sprawl. Also, since Brownfield Redevelopment and Reuse tends to focus on commercial or industrial properties, this initiative serves as a catalyst to encourage future growth, attract more employment, and increase the city's tax base, while taking advantage of existing municipal infrastructure.