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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training  
and Responsible for Labour  
Minister of State for Tourism and Small Business

### **Nine communities receive Open for Business Awards**

WHISTLER – A record nine B.C. communities were honoured with the B.C. Small Business Roundtable’s Open for Business Awards yesterday as part of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) annual convention in Whistler.

The Open for Business Awards recognize local policies, projects and programs that support small business. This year’s recipients are Grand Forks, Kelowna, Langley, Parksville, Port Coquitlam, Salmon Arm, Smithers, Surrey and Vernon. As an incentive to promote an open-for-business culture, the BC Small Business Roundtable is providing \$10,000 to each winning community to fund a local, small-business friendly program that aligns with the principles of the B.C. Small Business Accord.

This year, for the first time, the B.C. Small Business Roundtable received submissions from all eight economic regions and short-listed 13 community finalists. Award evaluations were based on local measures that make it easier to do business in that community, including enhancing small-business competitiveness, recognizing the contributions of small businesses to the community, and promoting the principles of the B.C. Small Business Accord. The evaluation criteria reflected the accord by recognizing that when small businesses are celebrated and supported by their communities, they are more likely to be competitive and innovative.

The B.C. Small Business Roundtable was established in 2005 to be the voice for small business to government. Through its diverse sector membership of small-business owners and association leaders, the roundtable helps government develop strategies to support the growth and success of small business throughout the province.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Tourism and Small Business –**

“Small businesses are the heart and soul of the community, and the Open for Business winners are helping it beat a little stronger in their municipalities. Communities across our province can look to the winners for best practices and help make B.C. the most small-business friendly jurisdiction in Canada. Congratulations to the winners. Every day you help support small business and live the spirit of the B.C. Small Business Accord.”

##### **Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development –**

“Local government plays a key role in helping to build liveable communities for British Columbians, as does small business, which accounts for 98% of all businesses in B.C. The Open for Business Awards are an opportunity to recognize the tremendous contribution that local

governments and small businesses make through their innovative partnerships, which help support community prosperity.”

**Sue Adams, managing partner, The Whistler Grocery Store –**

“As a member of The Small Business Round Table who had the privilege to be part of the adjudication process for the Open for Business Awards, I was most impressed with the number of municipalities that work very closely with business organizations within their communities. I know as a small-business person how hard it is to stay informed of the issues and opportunities while operating a business and building success. I rely heavily on my local chamber of commerce and other business organizations who stay in tune with services governments at all levels are offering. It was obvious that many municipalities in B.C. truly understand the value of small business in their community.”

**Quick Facts:**

- The B.C. government is committed to building a strong economy that creates jobs for B.C. families, and small business is an important part of that effort.
- In April 2013, the Small Business Roundtable’s Most Small-Business Friendly Community Awards were re-launched as the Open for Business Awards.
- The Open for Business Awards foster collaboration with local government and encourage communities to adopt the B.C. Small Business Accord.
- “Small business” is defined as a business with fewer than 50 employees, or self-employed without paid help.
- 98% of B.C. businesses are classified as small businesses.
- Small business provides 55% of private-sector jobs in B.C., and employs more than one million people.
- B.C.’s small-business community contributes 31% of the province’s gross domestic product.
- One of the key barriers small businesses face is unnecessary red tape, and B.C. is No. 1 in the country for regulatory reform.
- The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently gave B.C. an “A” for regulatory reform – the only province in Canada to receive an “A.”

**Learn More:**

B.C. Open for Business Awards: [www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca/Awards/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca/Awards/Pages/Default.aspx)

B.C. Small Business Roundtable: [www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca)

B.C. Small Business Accord: [www.gov.bc.ca/smallbusinessaccord](http://www.gov.bc.ca/smallbusinessaccord)

Business products and services: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)

Regulatory reform: [www.gov.bc.ca/regulatoryreform](http://www.gov.bc.ca/regulatoryreform)

Information on starting and growing a business in B.C: [www.gov.bc.ca/businessandinvesting](http://www.gov.bc.ca/businessandinvesting)

WorkBC: [www.WorkBC.ca](http://www.WorkBC.ca)

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