

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

BC Economic Development Association 2021 award winners announced

CHILLIWACK, B.C., March 12, 2021 - The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) and FortisBC teamed up once again to announce the winners of the 2021 BC Economic Development Awards at the BCEDA's annual awards presentation held virtually last night.

These awards recognize BCEDA members for outstanding work in supporting their local economies, and making a meaningful difference in their communities. For over 30 years, the BCEDA has given these awards to individuals and groups who have dedicated their time to community-based economic development.

Congratulations to the following 2021 BC Economic Development Award winners:

Economic Development Marketing Innovation Award

The BCEDA Marketing Innovation Award recognizes achievement in marketing initiatives that support economic development.

Winner (community less than 20,000 population): Columbia Valley Community Economic Development Office for *Live Columbia Valley*.

Winner (community more than 20,000 population): Tourism Kamloops for the *Kamloops Luv'n the Loops Passport*.

Community Project Award

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

Winner (community less than 20,000 population): Merritt and Nicola Valley Destination Marketing Society for the *Experience Nicola Valley Marketing Program*.

Winner (community more than 20,000 population): City of North Vancouver for *The Shipyards – Destination* and City of Richmond for the *Richmond Food Recovery Network*.

Economic Recovery and Resiliency Award

This category, new for 2021, includes submissions for programs, activities, and projects that represent a successful recovery initiative from natural and man-made disasters, including COVID-19, as well as submissions that represent replicable measures undertaken to promote long term resiliency and/or sustainability from future disasters.

Winners (community less than 20,000 population): Village of Burns Lake for *Burns Lake Business Accelerator Program*; City of Terrace for *Terrace Shop Local Passport* and City of Quesnel for *Business Support Team*

Winners (community more than 20,000 population): City of Surrey for *Surrey Makes PPE*, City of Langford for *I AM Langford* and Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation for *Chilliwack Economic Recovery Network (CERN)*

Chairman's Award

The Chairman's Award is presented annually to recognize a member of BCEDA who has made a significant contribution towards the economic development profession, as well as the goals and/or mandate of the BC Economic Development Association.

Winner: Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer at Northern Development

Joel joined Northern Development in 2012 as Director of Communications and became the CEO in October of 2016. Joel has a passion for Northern BC and building a more robust economy. NDI provides the regions with First Nations Government and Local Government intern. This program offers paid internships for recent graduates, allowing them to spend a year living and working in Northern BC. In the early months of COVID, the trust quickly adapted their Business Façade program to include interior renovations to accommodate social distancing in businesses. They also have Business Development programs that assist businesses in the North to be competitive and succeed. They provide so many programs that directly benefit economic development for every first nation and community in Northern BC.

Joel's commitment to the north and the profession of economic development helps build strong communities in Northern BC and throughout the Province.

"As economic recovery has moved into the forefront, we couldn't be more proud of the work done by BC's Economic Developers. It was one year ago yesterday, that the WHO declared COVID19 a global pandemic. It seems fitting that, in addition to our traditional award categories, we have added a new category dedicated to economic resiliency and recovery. We received a record number of nominations put forward by communities and economic development professionals showcasing the creativity and smart strategies that encourage economic recovery and resiliency in their regions," said Dale Wheeldon, president and CEO at BCEDA. "This year's theme is Economic Revival: Charting a Path Forward for BC Communities and all of the nominated projects are great examples of the partnerships required for success. It is always very difficult for our judges to narrow down the winners and my sincere thanks goes out to everyone who submitted projects for consideration this year. Their efforts to build resilient communities, and thereby a resilient provincial economy, are to be congratulated."

The awards are presented and sponsored by FortisBC.

"FortisBC is passionate about supporting the communities in which we live and work," said David Bennett, director, Renewable Gas and low carbon fuels at FortisBC. "We're pleased to partner with the BCEDA year over year on initiatives such as the summit and economic development awards as we know the projects being recognized have a positive impact on BC communities."

For more information about the BCEDA and the summit, visit: bceda.ca.

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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 450 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.

About FortisBC

FortisBC Energy Inc. is a regulated utility focused on providing safe and reliable energy, including natural gas, propane and thermal energy solutions. FortisBC Energy Inc. employs more than 1,800 British Columbians and serves approximately 1,008,400 customers in 135 B.C. communities. FortisBC Energy Inc. owns and operates approximately 49,000 kilometres of natural gas transmission and distribution pipelines. FortisBC Energy Inc. is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., a leader in the North American regulated electric and gas utility industry. For further information visit www.fortisinc.com.