



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

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ABOUT PORT ALBERNI: August 2008

A huge range of demographic and other information on Port Alberni is brought together at the following site: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/profiles.asp>

I would be happy to discuss the information after the reader has reviewed it.

I think there are a number of things Port Alberni has going for it as a place to invest:

- Our prices for uptown commercial properties and our housing prices are lower than anywhere else on south or central Vancouver Island; this is attracting retirees, new residents and prospective businesses.
- We have a new hospital and an incredible range of recreation facilities as well as a very interesting array of heritage facilities.
- About 440,000 vehicles drive through Port Alberni each year on their way to the Pacific Rim National Park on the west coast; this has been partly responsible for the increased commercial and retail activity on Johnson Road (the highway corridor).
- Our \$50 million Pacific Rim Mall project was completed in the last quarter of 2007. That development includes a Wal-Mart, Extra-Foods, Staples, Canada Post Office, Lordco, Starbucks, A & W, and a few others. Warehouse One opened a shop there Aug 7 (2008).

Other developments that were completed in Port Alberni in the last half of 2007 include:

- the \$7 million Chances RimRock Gaming Centre (stunning interior)
- the spectacular several million dollar all-wood Tseshaht Administrative Building
- a \$1.7 million Boston Pizza restaurant in the Alberni Mall
- a \$1.4 million addition to the public library at our Community Centre
- a \$650,000 Dollar Giant in the Alberni Mall

The three largest projects that have been announced for Port Alberni thus far in 2008 are the \$40 million build of a new high school, Catalyst Paper Corporation's investment of \$11 million in new pulping technology for one of their 2 paper machines here and a 55-lot single-family dwelling subdivision which has almost sold out in the few weeks it has been on the market.

This year Port Alberni will also see:

- a start on construction of the ~ \$4 million Hupacasath Tsu-ma-as Cultural Centre
- a \$1.6 million upgrade on our sewage system
- a \$900,000 improvement to Harbour Quay (near the uptown area)
- a \$650,000 uptown commercial revitalization program
- a start on a \$500,000 trail building project through the City
- the beginning of a major recycling program in the Alberni Valley

A few significant projects in the planning stages in Port Alberni are:

- a \$10 million marine commercial/industrial mall
- a \$ 2.8 million upgrade of the Alberni Pacific Railway
- a 30-unit riverfront townhouse complex

Although Port Alberni's community profile on the Invest BC website is slightly dated (we are working with them to bring it current), it will give you an additional perspective:

<http://investbc.gov.bc.ca/CommunityProfiles/Display/default.aspx?page=community&pCommunityID=477>

Yet more information we would like you to know about Port Alberni includes:



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1. in July 2008 we implemented a commercial revitalization tax-exemption bylaw which means that new commercial and multi-family improvements in our uptown area will not be taxed by the City for a 10 year period
2. taxes for the commercial class of properties are being held at a zero percent (0%) increase for the next five years
3. we have an industrial revitalization tax-exemption bylaw in place which means that any new industrial construction will not be taxed by the City (4 years remaining in this program)
4. taxes for the industrial class of property are being reduced by \$425,000 a year for the next five years for a total of \$2.1 million in tax savings for that sector
5. we hosted a Tall Ships Festival July 11 and 12, 2008 which attracted 12,500 visitors and 3,00 residents
6. we hosted the 8th annual 'Thunder in the Valley' drag racing event which attracted about 10,000 spectators
7. we are hosting the 2009 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge beginning December 28 this year; this is expected to bring several thousand visitors and play-off games will be televised by TSN
8. The Alberni Valley Tourism Council has just launched a new website and video (please see: <http://www.alberni-valley-tourism.com/>); the Council is also working with Community Foundations Tourism BC to bring our marketing and product development to the next level
9. Two of our Aboriginal neighbours are both investing heavily in their future and two others have signed off on treaty agreements bringing more certainty into business decisions and more dollars into the community
10. Two cruise ships have announced they will be visiting Port Alberni in 2009; the visits were unsolicited and the companies apparently made the decision to visit based, in part, on the fact that the McLean Mill National Historic Site and the Alberni Pacific Railway steam train are the two most demanded tours for cruise ship passengers arriving in Nanaimo
11. The City sponsored a Climate Change Committee which produced a report in June that Council is acting on
12. The City convened a 'Sustainable City' project which produced a report in July that Council is acting on
13. Our drinking water is very clean and in abundant supply
14. Our infrastructure is generally capable of handling a much larger population.

Please contact me for clarification on any of these items or to discuss anything else that has arisen for you in considering Port Alberni.

Sincerely

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