



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

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ABOUT PORT ALBERNI September 2008

New residents, retirees and new businesses are coming to Port Alberni because:

- Our housing prices and prices for uptown commercial properties are considerably lower than anywhere else on south or central Vancouver Island and the southern half of British Columbia
- We have a new hospital and an incredible range of recreation facilities as well as a very interesting array of heritage facilities
- We are very centrally located on the Island
- 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).

The three largest projects that have been announced for Port Alberni thus far in 2008 are the \$45 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 \$520,000 trail building project through the City
- the addition of convention facilities to the Best Western Barclay Hotel
- the redefinition of Port Alberni as an outdoor adventure centre

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

- a \$45 million hotel/condominium development
- a \$10 million marine commercial/industrial mall
- a \$ 2.8 million upgrade of the Alberni Pacific Railway
- a 30-unit riverfront townhouse complex

There are two major malls on the top end of Johnson Road; these are the new Pacific Rim Mall and the newly renovated Alberni Mall. The Pacific Rim Mall includes Wal-Mart, Extra-Foods, Staples, Canada Post Office, Lordco, Starbucks, A & W, and Warehouse One. The Alberni Mall includes Canadian Tire (one of their largest franchises on the Island), Mark's Work Wearhouse, Boston Pizza, and Dollar Giant.

Other developments that were completed in Port Alberni in the last 12 months include:

- the \$7 million Chances RimRock Gaming Centre (stunning interior) near the Alberni Mall
- the spectacular several million dollar all-wood Tseshaht Administrative Building
- a \$1.4 million addition to the public library at our Community Centre

Other steps Port Alberni has taken to attract investment include:

1. Implementation (July 2008) of a commercial revitalization tax-exemption bylaw that provides new commercial and multi-family improvements over \$50,000 in our uptown area with a 10-year tax break
2. A commitment that taxes for the commercial class of properties will be held at a zero percent (0%) increase for the next five years
3. Implementation of an industrial revitalization tax-exemption bylaw providing tax breaks for any new industrial construction in the City (4 years remaining in this program)



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4. A reduction of taxes for the industrial class of property by \$425,000 a year for the next five years for a total of \$2.1 million in tax savings for that sector
5. Support for a variety of festivals and events in 2008 including:
 - the 3rd Tall Ships Festival which attracted 12,500 visitors and 3,00 residents
 - the 8th annual 'Thunder in the Valley' drag racing event which attracted 10,000 spectators
 - BC's first ever hosting of the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge beginning December 28; this is expected to bring several thousand visitors and international television coverage
6. Support for the Alberni Valley Tourism Council which 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
7. Joint ventures with our two Aboriginal neighbours who are both investing heavily in their future, and exploration of opportunities with other First Nations who have signed off on treaty agreements bringing more certainty into business decisions and more money into the community
8. Support for cruise ship visitations to 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
9. Sponsorship of forward-thinking initiatives such as:
 - a Climate Change Committee which produced a report in June that Council is acting on
 - a 'Sustainable City' project which produced a report in July that Council is acting on
10. Continued investment in our drinking water which is already among the cleanest and most abundant supplies on Vancouver Island
11. Continued investment in our infrastructure which is already generally capable of handling a much larger population
12. Support for the Wood Tech 21 Society which is making headway on the wood modification and bio-refinery components of their 9-point vision of an integrated forest industrial complex in Port Alberni
13. Advocacy for continued operations of our deep sea port and the privately owned and world famous Martin Mars water bombers .

These facts do not convey Port Alberni's very friendly and generous nature. We are known as 'the community with a heart' for our consistently high level of donation to charitable causes and individual cases of hardship. In addition, we have a terrific sense of community. New residents of all ages tell us they have made more friends within a year of living here than they have in a lifetime living elsewhere. Every major event is 'staffed' by literally hundreds of volunteers.

For additional facts about our community please go to:
<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/facsheet/cf021.pdf>

For the 2006 Census Profile of Port Alberni including our adjacent Electoral Areas, please go to:
<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/59940000.pdf>

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

Pat Deakin
Economic Development Manager