



THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

NEWSLETTER

2024 FALL/WINTER EDITION



MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS:

- Mile High Bounce
- NEXT GENeral Mercantile & Refillery

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Kane Fraser of MNP LLP and Trenisa Durfeld of Community Futures (Cariboo Chilcotin) welcomed everyone to the 2024 Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards evening on October 26, 2024. The Chamber sends a big thankyou to MNP LLP and Community Futures (Cariboo Chilcotin) who were the Diamond Sponsors this year.

Monica Lamb-Yorski/Williams Lake Tribune (photo credit)

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President's Message



As we transition into fall, I want to reflect on the busy and successful summer season we've experienced at the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre. Our Visitor Centre saw a notable increase in foot traffic this summer, welcoming guests from around the world. It's a testament to the incredible natural attractions in our region and the role

our Visitor Centre plays in helping visitors make the most of their time in the Cariboo.

In addition to a beautiful summer, our Chamber has been actively engaged in several important initiatives. We recently recorded interviews with provincial election candidates, Lorne Doerksen (Conservative Party) and Michael Moses (NDP), providing our members with valuable insight into their platforms and plans for our community. These interviews were part of our ongoing efforts to foster open communication between local businesses and policymakers.

Our focus on recruitment and retention of professionals in Williams Lake has also been a top priority. We continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure we have the necessary resources and strategies in place to attract and keep skilled workers in the area. This effort is critical for the long-term sustainability of our local economy, and we're excited about the progress being made.

The 27th Annual Business Excellence Awards was on October 26th. This Kentucky Derby-themed event celebrated the best of the best in our business community, honouring the hard work, innovation, and resilience of our local entrepreneurs. This was a memorable evening of recognition and celebration.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Chamber and our shared mission to make Williams Lake a thriving place to live, work, and visit.

Paul French

President, Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

*Businesses working together to
make our community even better*

The Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

is "The Voice of Business": Businesses working together towards economic and social well being to make our community a better place to live. We promote the well being of business and foster a work, shop and play at home atmosphere.

Executive Director's Message

Dear Members,

As the beautiful colours of fall settle over our community, the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce continues to drive forward with exciting initiatives and events designed to enrich our local economy and showcase the talent and spirit that make Williams Lake so special. Here's a look at what we've been up to:



one of the most pressing issues facing our local economy—bringing to and retaining skilled professionals in Williams Lake. We've identified key areas of focus and are in the process of establishing working groups that will drive solutions for attracting and supporting talent in our region. If you are interested in joining these efforts, please reach

out to the Chamber office for more information. As always, we are deeply grateful for your continued support and participation. Your engagement is what allows us to foster a thriving business community here in Williams Lake.

Tamara Garreau, Executive Director
Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

The highly anticipated **27th Annual Business Excellence Awards** were held October 26th, we came together to celebrate the best of Williams Lake's business community at Sacred Heart Hall, with this year's theme being the Kentucky Derby. This gala event recognized outstanding local businesses and strengthened community connections.

In August we hosted our first **Lahal Tournament & Market**, in partnership with Williams Lake First Nation, we brought together local vendors and community members for a day of cultural exchange that featured an array of market stalls showcasing the creativity of local artisans. It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Indigenous culture while supporting local businesses.

We're proud to announce that the Chamber has been awarded the **Indigenous Experiences Grant** for our upcoming **Spirit Speaks Indigenous Exploration Project**. This initiative will highlight Indigenous stories, culture, and heritage in and around Williams Lake, offering both residents and visitors an immersive cultural experience. Stay tuned as we continue to develop this exciting project that honors the rich history of our region's First Nations.

In early September, we held a **Recruitment & Retention Planning Session** aimed at addressing

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Kim's Korner

Summer at the Visitor Centre: A Global Journey!

What a summer it's been at the Williams Lake Visitor Centre! From local events to welcoming guests from around the globe, we've had an unforgettable season.

We were also thrilled to stay open 7 days a week this summer, thanks to the fantastic addition of our summer students. They were true adventurers, going on familiarization tours to experience everything Williams Lake has to offer. From checking out all the local campsites and hotels, to visiting the Xat'sull Heritage Village, they truly dove into learning about the region. And their big trip? A quick jaunt out to Highway 20 that ended in style with a breathtaking floatplane tour provided by Stewart's Lodge. Talk about getting a bird's-eye view!

We also saw a big increase in visitors this year, especially from the East Coast of Canada and the USA. And it wasn't just our neighbors to the south and east coming to explore. We were thrilled to greet visitors from Australia and New Zealand, bringing that Southern Hemisphere sunshine to our corner of the world. Among the more unusual destinations? Guests from Japan, Nigeria, Luxembourg, Israel, and Brazil! Talk about a world tour right here in Williams Lake.

And let's not forget our European friends. September surprised us by being even busier than July, with waves of European and American visitors flocking to Bella Coola to witness the breathtaking sight of grizzly bears in their natural habitat. We love this annual tradition of wildlife enthusiasts descending upon the Cariboo region—it brings a special kind of excitement to the fall!

Thanks to all who visited, and here's to more adventures and stories from around the world in the seasons to come!

Kim Abel
Visitor Centre Manager



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Mayor's Message

A lot has happened since my last message, and I am pleased to report that the City continues to experience investment and growth, with 108 building permits issued for 2024 to date.

As of October 15, the City issued 100 new business licences this year, bringing the total to 1,111. Construction of the urgent and primary care center is anticipated to commence soon, the Glen Arbor expansion is expected to be complete in mid-2025, and plans for the water treatment plant are underway.

The 96th Annual Williams Lake Stampede was an immense success again this year, and we were pleased to have Dale Taylor recognized as honorary parade marshal. As always, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many volunteers and organizations who make the Stampede events such a success year after year.

Over the summer, I joined members of Council for the Tsqew't specific claims victory celebration in Esk'et. We were pleased to commemorate their landmark settlement to ensure reparations for the historical loss of water rights – a process that took 21 years. As well, I attended the Tsilhqot'in National Government's war chief memorial in July. We are honoured to stand with Indigenous neighbours in the spirit of partnership and reconciliation.

As most of us are well aware, on July 21st, the City of Williams Lake activated its Emergency Operations Centre in response to the River Valley Wildfire. I am sure the entire community echoes my deepest gratitude to all of the organizations and individuals involved for their quick and focused response to this emergency. The City continues to focus on emergency preparedness and

disaster risk reduction. The City received grant funding from the Province's Community Emergency Preparedness Fund to support our community in disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and hazard and vulnerability risk assessment. Funding was also received to enhance the Fairview Drive emergency booster station.

The City of Williams Lake was honoured to be part of the official unveiling of the "Every Child Matters" Crosswalk in our downtown in September. The crosswalk is a beautiful reminder of the power of relationships and coming together in the spirit of reconciliation, and was made possible in partnership with the Orange Shirt Society, Cariboo Friendship Society, Williams Lake First Nation, and provincial grant funding.

I was also honoured to be invited to attend the Cattlemen's Association AGM again this year. It is always an informative event, and I thank the Cattlemen's Association for their ongoing stewardship and commitment to best practices.

The Union of BC Municipalities convention in September was a good opportunity for the City's delegates to advocate for Williams Lake. We had many productive meetings and will continue to advocate for businesses in our entire region.

As I write this, we are heading into the Business Excellence Awards. I am looking forward to celebrating all of the businesses who were nominated for a Business Excellence Award this year! Thank you all for your investment in Williams Lake – I appreciate each and every business in our community.

Surinderpal Rathor
Mayor, City of Williams Lake

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Williams Lake First Nation Chief's Message

**Weytk-kp
Xwexweyep.**

Our community continues to move forward, guided by our shared vision of enhancing the quality of life for all. We are preparing for the next phase of our projects and the exciting opportunities it will bring.

This summer began in a good way with our National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration at Boitanio Park. Soon after, our Father's Day Pow Wow gathered us to celebrate our traditions through dance, drumming, and lahal.

July brought important developments. We enacted the Williams Lake First Nation Business Licence Law, which will help create our WLFN Business Registry, connecting customers within and beyond our community. Our Joint Development

Agreement with West Fraser reflects our commitment to sustainable forestry, with our stewardship values at the forefront.

September was a month of reflection and growth, from hosting our Third Annual Speaking Our Truth Pow Wow to unveiling the "Every Child Matters Crosswalk" in partnership with the City of Williams Lake and other organizations. These moments serve as reminders of the importance of our shared journey. Looking ahead, we eagerly await the grand opening of the Osprey Nest Social House & Eatery, and we continue to welcome community-driven projects through the Williams Lake Community Forest Grant.

I want to extend my warmest wishes for health and happiness to you all in the coming year.

Kukwstép-kucw,
Chief Willie Sellars



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT **Mile High Bounce**



At Mile High Bounce we believe play is an important part of life. Our goal is to get your heart racing, your cheeks flushed, and an ear-to-ear smile on your face – regardless of age!

For the past 3 years we have been building a party rental business that revolves around customer satisfaction and quality products. Since 2022 we have added a variety of new units every year. We are constantly looking for fresh experiences we can offer our customers. Our lineup is always changing, but currently includes bouncy castles, water slides, obstacle courses, a dunk tank, interactive games, giant yard games, portable mini-putt, and add-on products.

Fun is our highest priority – second only to safety. Our Inflatable Amusement Devices are regulated by Technical Safety BC. We pride ourselves on being fully insured with all inspections up to date and visibly displayed. We follow best industry practices to ensure you and your guests can enjoy your event without worry.

The people of the Cariboo have been a great inspiration – guiding our business growth with suggestions of what they want to see offered in the community. We look forward to showing you the new and fun things we have planned for 2025!

See what we have to offer and keep an eye on what comes next at www.MileHighBounce.ca. Also check us out on Facebook @Mile High Bounce or Instagram @100MileHighBounce.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

NEXT GENERAL MERCANTILE & REFILLERY

Dani Gastaldello is a young, environmentally conscious ‘hippie’ who moved from Vancouver Island and has made the Cariboo her home since relocating here for the second time in 2013. She is dedicated to her vision, passion, and commitment to creating a cleaner, healthier planet for her children. Her business, NEXT GENERAL Mercantile + Refillery, has been operating since November 2020 and is preparing to celebrate its fourth anniversary. Initially located in Delainey’s Mall on Oliver Street, NGMR moved to a new spot on Third Ave N last year after Christmas.

The store offers a diverse selection of refillable products, ranging from skincare to household cleaners, aimed at reducing plastic waste and providing healthy, non-toxic options for consumers. Customers can bring their own containers to refill various items, including household cleaners, shampoos, conditioners, hairspray, laundry products, and bath and beauty essentials. Additionally, there is a refill program for local businesses in the Williams Lake area, allowing them to discuss their needs and the incorporation of a refill system into their operations.

Customers can obtain containers, lids, and dispensers for their refills or bring their own from home. Dani is committed to elevating recycling efforts by focusing on reducing plastic usage from the start. Since its inception, NGMR has successfully prevented over 350,000 pieces of plastic from entering the community through its refill initiatives and by offering a wide range of plastic-free alternatives for everyday products. The store also features items such as baby products, jewelry, dog treats, beeswax food wraps, reusable bags, and upcycled second-hand clothing from a company in Kelowna, along with a significant selection of products from local vendors.

In running her store, she has prioritized connecting with quality local vendors to minimize the carbon footprint associated with transporting products over long distances and to support local artisans. Over 90% of the store’s inventory comes from small businesses



Photo credit: AH Photography

in BC and Canada, with the majority being women-owned companies.

The NGMR team also provides a platform for local vendors to sell their goods. “I seek out individuals who share my vision—those who strive to reduce waste before it reaches my store. I look for products that are transparent in their practices, free from parabens and toxins, and offer fragrance-free options,” she noted. The store also emphasizes the importance of education, providing resources and information to help customers make informed choices about their

purchases and the impact of their consumption on the environment.

Dani’s commitment to sustainability extends beyond just the products offered in her store. She actively engages with the community through events like the bi-annual clothing swap hosted with neighbouring business Thriftbucket, hosting workshops in the new location, and social media, encouraging others to adopt eco-friendly practices in their daily lives. By fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility, she hopes to inspire more people to join the movement towards a cleaner, healthier planet.

As NEXT GENERAL Mercantile + Refillery approaches its fourth anniversary, Dani reflects on the journey so far and the positive changes she has witnessed in her community. She is proud of the impact her business has made in reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable living. With plans for future growth and new initiatives, Dani remains dedicated to her mission of creating a better world for future generations.

For those interested in exploring the offerings at NEXT GENERAL Mercantile + Refillery, you can visit their location at 66 Third Ave N, check them out on Facebook or Instagram, or visit their website at www.nextgeneralmercantile.ca. You can also reach them by phone at (250) 398-2167 for any inquiries or to learn more about their refill programs and sustainable products.

Thoughts from Victoria

Thank you very much to the Chamber of Commerce for the opportunity to once again provide some thoughts regarding provincial politics.

I want to thank everyone for their support during this last provincial election that at the writing of this column has yet to become clear. Voters in British Columbia have been split on which party they wish to govern and therefore it has created a very close race. By the time you read this that will all be sorted out, but it does mean that we will have very close final numbers. The reality is that for so many MLA's, me included, that the most important thing, no matter what the outcome of the election is that the people of our ridings chose us to represent our area and fundamentally that is what I intend to do no matter the outcome.



The Cariboo - Chilcotin is an amazing place, but we certainly do have several challenges. I'm grateful for the opportunity to try to represent in the best way. I know the people of this incredible riding. I look forward to future engagements with our business community and want to say thanks once again to the Chamber for their commitment to providing video interviews during the campaign for our community to witness.

Congratulations to all the business excellence nominees and of course, all the winners. You really do set the bar for Excellence!

Lorne Doerkson - MLA

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Lorne Doerkson
MLA for Cariboo-Chilcotin

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Todd Doherty, Member of Parliament, Cariboo-Prince George

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

My last update came in the Spring, as Parliament was preparing to rise for the summer. Since then, much has changed.

Over the past nine years, Canadians have witnessed the continued failures of the Trudeau government. It's clear that Ottawa is disconnected from the everyday struggles that hardworking families, businesses, and communities face.

Under Prime Minister Trudeau, we have seen a government more focused on virtue signaling than on delivering results for Canadians. Whether it's the skyrocketing cost of living, the national debt ballooning to unprecedented levels, or the housing crisis that has left young Canadians without a clear path to homeownership, the Liberal government has failed. Time's up for Justin Trudeau.

Today, families are finding it nearly impossible to make ends meet. Groceries, gas, utilities—prices are going up across the board, and wages are not keeping pace. Inflation continues to chip away at the savings of hard-working Canadians, while policies like the carbon tax make the problem worse.

Despite endless promises, this government has failed to create meaningful economic growth. Instead, they have chosen to tax more, spend more, and regulate more. Our small businesses, the backbone of our economy, have been burdened by red tape, making it harder for them to thrive.

Trudeau's government has plunged Canada into an era of reckless spending. Our national debt has now far surpassed \$1 trillion, and future generations will be left to pay the price. Fiscal responsibility has become a foreign concept in Ottawa.

The Liberals have consistently failed to prioritize the needs of Canadians while spending billions on programs that yield little benefit to everyday citizens. Their irresponsible approach to managing public finances cannot continue. We need a government that recognizes the importance of living within its means—just like Canadian families do every day.

Then there's the housing crisis. Young Canadians are finding it impossible to afford their first home, while others are struggling under soaring rent prices.

The Trudeau government's approach to housing has been all talk and no action. While they continue to promise solutions, the dream of homeownership

for many Canadians drifts further out of reach.

It's time for a government that will get Canada back on track. Under a Conservative government, we will work tirelessly to address the cost of living crisis by Axing the Tax, Fixing the Budget, cutting red tape, and encouraging investment that will create jobs and opportunities for all Canadians. We will restore fiscal responsibility in Ottawa and ensure that every tax dollar is spent wisely.

Our plan to Build the Homes will focus on increasing the housing supply and incentivizing development while making sure young Canadians have a fair shot at homeownership.

Now, more than ever, Canadians need leadership that puts their priorities first. A Conservative government will bring back common sense, reward hard work, restore fiscal responsibility, and focus on building a stronger, more prosperous Canada.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we will restore hope for Canada.

Sincerely, Todd Doherty
MP, Cariboo — Prince George



Todd Doherty

Member of Parliament (Cariboo-Prince George)

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Williams Lake & District 27th ANNUAL BUSINESS

The 27th Annual Business Excellence Awards took place on **Saturday, October 26th**, at the **Sacred Heart Hall** and was a night to remember.

Themed around the **Kentucky Derby**, this celebration brought together the business community in true derby style, with a touch of southern charm and plenty of excitement. We encouraged everyone to embrace the spirit of the Derby to come dressed to impress – with hats and fascinators, and they did!

CJ's Southwestern Grill catered the event, serving up a delicious three-course meal that was surely satisfying. And to keep the evening lively, we were entertained by **Kerry Chelsea**, a talented local stand-up comedian, whose humor brought the house down.

Guiding us through the evening's events was **Lorne Doerkson**, our esteemed emcee for the night. With his charismatic presence, Lorne kept the evening running smoothly and ensured that all our deserving nominees receive the recognition they deserved.

The Business Excellence Awards was a special opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of local businesses, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. Whether you were a nominee, a sponsor, or attended as a supporter, this was your chance to network, celebrate success, and enjoy an evening of celebration with your peers.

The night also featured **silent auctions, awards presentations, Brittany Hutchins FlashMe Photobooth and lots of fun** in keeping with the Kentucky Derby theme.



Taseko/Gibraltar's Matt Graham, left, Luke Fox, Kosta Sainis and Ben Pierce, accept the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce Ken Wilson Memorial Award presented by Kane Fraser of MNP LLP.

Photo by Monica Lamb-Yorski/Williams Lake Tribune



Williams Lake First Nation members William Magnus Lulua, left, Danika Murphy, Shawna Robbins, and DancingWater Sandy accept the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce Newsmaker of the Year Award for the movie "Sugar Cane", presented by Monica Lamb-Yorski of the Williams Lake Tribune.

Chamber of Commerce EXCELLENCE AWARDS

OUR WINNERS FOR THE NIGHT:



Not-For-Profit

16 nominations (Sponsored by Community
Futures Cariboo Chilcotin)
Winner: **BGC Williams Lake**

Retail Excellence

3 nominations
(Sponsored by Royal Bank)
Winner: **Woodland Jewellers Ltd.**

Newsmaker of the Year

5 nominations
(Sponsored by Williams Lake Tribune)
Winner: **Williams Lake First Nation: Movie
"Sugar Cane"**

Production & Manufacturing Excellence

4 nominations (Sponsored by MNP LLP)
Winner: **All-Craft Kitchens En' Counters**

Tourism & Hospitality Excellence

10 nominations
(Presented by Williams Lake Visitor Centre)
Winner: **Williams Lake Stampede
Association**

Greatest Improvement

4 nominations
(Sponsored by: Evolve CPA)
Winner: **Kit and Kaboodle**

Hugo Stahl Memorial

4 nominations
(Sponsored by City of Williams Lake)
Winner: **Jazmyn Lyons (The Realm of Toys)**

Service Excellence

25 nominations
(Sponsored by WL & District Credit Union)
Winner: **Bean Counter
Bistro & Coffee Bar**

Ken Wilson Chamber Business of the Year

(Sponsored by MNP LLP)
Winner: **Taseko/Gibraltar Mines**

Business of the Year

(Sponsored by Community Futures
Cariboo Chilcotin)
Winner: **Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation
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Williams Lake & District 27th ANNUAL BUSINESS



Madison Batty, left, and Krista Harvey of BGC Williams Lake accept the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Not-for-Profit Award, presented by MJ Vigeant.

Photo by Monica Lamb-Yorski/Williams Lake Tribune



Kerry Chelsea entertained guests during the 27th Annual Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.

Photo by Monica Lamb-Yorski/Williams Lake Tribune



MLA Lorne Doerkson and Chamber Executive Director Tamara Garreau.

Photo by Monica Lamb-Yorski/Williams Lake Tribune



Tanya Hutchinson, Visitor Centre Counsellor & Special Projects Coordinator, presenting the Tourism and Hospitality Excellence Award to the Williams Lake Stampede Association.



All these Lovely Ladies are on the Chamber's Board of Directors. Names from Left to Right: MJ Vigeant, Sandi Jessee, Philippa Mahon, Geraldine Bob, Vanessa Riplinger, and Beth Veenkamp.



The enjoyable and well attended Business Excellence Awards evening was held on Saturday, October 26.

Chamber of Commerce EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Monica Lamb and Beth Veenkamp.



*Sandi Jessee, Williams Lake
Chamber's First Vice President.
Photo by Lorne Doerkson.*



*Trenisa Durfeld and Sheila Boehm.
Photo by Lorne Doerkson.*



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Recruitment & Retention Planning Session: Shaping the Future of Williams Lake



On September 4, 2024, the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District, hosted a Recruitment & Retention Planning Session at Signal Point. This four-hour event brought together 38 community members to discuss strategies for attracting new residents to Williams Lake and retaining them long-term.

Recruitment & Retention Initiatives

An overview of current efforts was shared, emphasizing the importance of coordinated community strategies to enhance recruitment and retention in the region.

Survey Results: What Newcomers Love About Williams Lake

Recent survey data was presented, highlighting key factors that attract new residents, such as affordable housing, job opportunities, and the area's small-town charm.

What Makes Williams Lake Special?

Participants engaged in a brainstorming session, identifying some of the unique qualities that make Williams Lake an attractive place to live and work. Key highlights included:

- **Location:** Central, with a rural lifestyle and short commutes.
- **Job Opportunities:** A strong local economy with opportunities for

career growth.

- **Education:** A local university campus offering diverse learning opportunities.
- **Outdoor Activities:** Year-round options like skiing, mountain biking, fishing, and hiking.
- **Affordability:** Beyond housing, Williams Lake offers an overall lower cost of living.
- **Community:** A welcoming atmosphere with a sense of belonging.

To move forward, participants proposed actionable steps that could be implemented locally to enhance recruitment and retention:

- Launching a **Good Neighbour Program** to foster community connections.
- **Positive Community Messaging** to challenge misconceptions and highlight the benefits of life in Williams Lake.
- Developing a **Welcome Package for Families** to help newcomers integrate quickly.
- Expanding educational programs, including micro-credentials.
- **Beautification Projects** to enhance the visual appeal of the downtown area.
- **Affordable Housing Initiatives** to ensure diverse and accessible housing options.



- Collaborating to create a **Young Professionals Network** aimed at retaining young graduates.
- Establishing a **Multipurpose Recreation Facility** for year-round community use.

Participants selected eight key priorities to focus on over the next 1-2 years:

1. **Good Neighbour Program**
2. **Welcome Package for Families**
3. **Grow Your Own Program / Common Landing Place**
4. **Change the Narrative**
5. **Affordable Housing**
6. **Daycare Expansion**
7. **Young Professionals Network**
8. **Multipurpose Recreation Facility**

The Recruitment & Retention Working Group will continue to develop these initiatives and provide regular updates during the Chamber's monthly



General Meetings. These collaborative efforts aim to make Williams Lake an even more vibrant and welcoming community for both newcomers and long-time residents.

We look forward to sharing the progress of these projects as they unfold in the coming year.

For more information, or to get involved, please contact the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce 250-392-5025.



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Celebrating Indigenous Culture and Community Engagement

By Tanya Hutchinson

As a proud Secwépemc from the Esk'etemc nation, my role as Special Projects Coordinator at the Visitor Centre has allowed me to immerse myself in promoting Indigenous culture and traditions. My dedication to weaving these elements into the visitor experience has fostered stronger connections between Indigenous communities and those who come to learn and engage.

This past season has been transformative, marked by events that celebrated Indigenous resilience, creativity and artist expression. On National Indigenous Day, I joined the community in celebration, witnessing the rich cultural expressions that bring people together. The Tourism Discovery Centre hosted an Indigenous Market that created an important platform for artisans and vendors to showcase traditional crafts, highlighting the importance of cultural preservation and economic empowerment. Attending the Métis Music Fest deepened my appreciation for how music unifies Indigenous identities. I also helped with the Williams Lake



First Nation Competition Pow Wow as part of my community engagement, further enriching my understanding of Indigenous culture

I took in the Tweedsmuir flight tour, I gained a deeper appreciation for the profound connection Indigenous communities have with their land. Soaring over the Painted Mountains and Monarch Ice Fields,

remembering stories brought the landscape to life, revealing its rich history and cultural significance. With a bird's-eye view, you can see the connection between the territories of the Nuxalk, Tsilhqot'in, Dakelh, and Secwepemc.

One of the most enriching experiences this year was my visit to the Xat'sull Heritage Site. It was here that I felt a profound connection between the Secwepemc people and our ancestral lands, broadening my understanding of the significance of these relationships. Similarly, attending the 10-year anniversary of the Tsilhqot'in Nation's historic title win strengthened my commitment to Indigenous land rights and the ongoing struggle for recognition and sovereignty.

Another powerful moment was witnessing a



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blanket ceremony at an Indigenous celebration honoring elders in a historic land title win. I learned the importance of acknowledging the wisdom and experience passed down through generations. During Orange Shirt Day, I stood in solidarity with residential school survivors, supporting healing and reconciliation through drum songs and ceremony.

My involvement in the March with Arch event offered an opportunity to support public awareness and solidarity for reconciliation and justice through music, stories, and social media engagement. These moments continue to shape my approach to creating culturally respectful spaces at the Visitor Centre. I am in the process of designing a sacred space that will feature a welcome sign in the three primary languages of our local nations, enhancing the cultural richness of the area. Drawing from firsthand experiences with Indigenous traditions, I aim to create a space

where visitors can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for these sacred practices.

One of the key projects I've been working on is the preservation and integration of Indigenous languages. Through visits with Elders and language keepers in the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, and Dakelh communities, I've gained a deeper appreciation for the richness of their languages and cultures. My goal is to incorporate these languages into the Tourism Discovery Centre, tourism website, social media, and brochures, celebrating the voices of our collective heritage. By integrating these languages into the visitor experience, we not only honour the wisdom of our Elders but also offer guests an authentic connection to the land and its stories, ensuring that this invaluable legacy is shared and appreciated by future generations.

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For more information about the Chamber Plan and to schedule a consultation contact Ryan Brink at 250-302-1152 or rbrinkteam@gmail.com



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Made in the Cariboo Craft Fair: A Celebration of Local Talent!

Get ready to for the festive spirit of the Cariboo! The **Made in the Cariboo Craft Fair** is just around the corner, and this year's event promises to be better than ever! Mark your calendars for **Saturday, November 23rd**, when the **Tourism Discovery Centre** will transform into a marketplace of local creativity from **10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**.

Whether you're on the hunt for unique holiday gifts or simply want to indulge in some locally made treats, there's something for everyone. With artisans from all over the region showcasing their talents, you'll find a delightful range of handmade treasures. From luxurious bath products and exquisite jewelry to finely crafted leatherwork, cozy wool bedding, and intricately carved woodwork—this is a shopper's dream!

But that's just the beginning! The fair will also offer **home-baked goods, chocolates and fudge**, and even **canned goods** to stock your pantry. For fans of handcrafted beauty, there's **beadwork,**



knitting, and crocheting, while those looking for something extra special can enjoy offerings from a **local distillery**.

Feeling hungry or thirsty after all that shopping? Enjoy drink specials and delicious food available for purchase, making this a full day of festive fun!

With so many options to choose from, the **Made in the Cariboo Craft Fair** is sure to spark your holiday spirit. Bring your family, bring your friends, and come support the incredible talent that makes our region shine!

We can't wait to see you there!



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2024 Provincial Candidate Interviews

As part of the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce's ongoing efforts to keep our members informed and engaged in the democratic process, On October 9th we hosted candidate interviews for the upcoming provincial election. These interviews, conducted by our Chamber President, Paul French and recorded by Rick Magnell owner of Origin 8, featured candidates from two major parties—Lorne Doerkson from the Conservative Party and Michael Moses from the New Democratic Party (NDP).



Lorne Doerkson
Conservative Party of Canada

Lorne Doerkson emphasized his commitment to economic growth, fiscal responsibility, and creating jobs in our region. He spoke about the importance of supporting small businesses, reducing taxes, and ensuring that government policies are aligned with the needs of entrepreneurs and local industries. Lorne acknowledged the staffing shortages and suggested streamlining recruitment processes while expanding local healthcare infrastructure to ensure residents have access to essential services. Lorne's vision for the future includes leveraging the natural resources in our region responsibly while investing in infrastructure to boost economic development.



Michael Moses
New Democratic Party (NDP)

Michael Moses brought a fresh perspective to the table, focusing on the importance of social equity, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability. His priorities for Williams Lake and the broader Cariboo region include making life more affordable for working families, improving healthcare access, and ensuring that Indigenous rights and climate action are at the forefront of policy discussions. Michael highlighted the need for federal investment in green energy projects and social services, both of which he believes are crucial for building a resilient future in our community.

Both candidates shared valuable insights into how they would address key issues facing our region, from job creation and housing affordability to climate action and healthcare access. We encourage all of our members to watch the recorded interviews to hear directly from the candidates and stay informed.

The full interviews with Lorne Doerkson and Michael Moses are available on our website www.wlchamber.ca. We hope this initiative provided you with the information you needed to make an informed decision for the future of our community.

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Explore Cariboo: A Regional Tourism Partnership

The Cariboo region is rich with natural beauty, diverse activities, and cultural heritage. To showcase everything this stunning area offers, the Explore Cariboo partnership is a collaboration among the City of Quesnel, City of Williams Lake, Cariboo Regional District, District of Wells, District of 100 Mile, Quesnel & District Chamber of Commerce, Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce, and the Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Partnership Program (Co-op Program).

Each partner contributes financially to create and maintain the Explore Cariboo website, a comprehensive platform that highlights the region's seasonal itineraries,



events, and experiences. This valuable resource, available at www.explorecariboo.com, allows visitors and locals alike to plan their perfect Cariboo adventure, no matter the season.

The website is regularly updated with new itineraries and events tailored to the region's key attractions, including outdoor activities like hiking, fishing, and grizzly bear watching, as well as cultural experiences like local markets and festivals. The collaboration ensures that the Explore Cariboo platform is a one-stop destination for exploring the beauty and unique

offerings of the Cariboo, helping to boost local tourism and economic growth.

We encourage everyone to explore the region through this site, where you'll find information to make your next adventure unforgettable.



Member to Member

Any members looking to join the member to member program, or if you have questions about it, contact Tamara at 250-392-5025 or tamara@wlchamber.ca



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