



THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

NEWSLETTER

2025 SUMMER EDITION

3rd Annual Ladies Night Event showcased a fashion show presented by Seamaiden Boutique Cariboo Dress Hire & CARABootique. In the photo is Courtney Samway (left & owner of Seamaiden) and Tara Henry (Right and owner of CARABootique)

Photo credit Linda McCague



MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS:

- MeadowView Reins
- Orange Shirt Society
- Rapid Response Training
- The Sanctuary Yoga Dome

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President's Message



Welcome to our summer newsletter! Thank you everyone for renewing their membership and a big welcome to all of our new members. A strong membership is what allows us to have a strong voice when advocating to government on your behalf. Remember, if you have questions or any concerns about the Chamber, please contact Tamara or any of the staff working at the Visitor Information Centre. They will be eager to help and can assist you in many ways.

We've been very busy at the Chamber, along with running the Visitor Information Center we've been hosting a number of events such as the 3rd Annual Ladies Night and the 8th Annual Swing Into Success Golf Tournament. We hosted an open house for the federal candidates during the recent federal election. Congratulations to Todd Doherty on his re-election. We're also working with the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin who share the Tourism Discovery Center with us. Having the Museum in the building helps attract tourists and allows them to learn some of our area's history.

The Chamber was successful in helping City council lobby government to get an extension for Atlantic Power and give them a new contract, this is a big win for the city and area. A few of the Chamber directors are going to the annual BC Chamber of Commerce Conference and Policy Session being held in Nanaimo this year. We will be debating resolutions and meeting with other Chambers in the province. We have submitted a resolution on immigration and are hopeful the other delegates see its importance and it passes at the policy session so governments can review and consider the policy.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce, have a safe and enjoyable summer.

PS. Don't hesitate to stop by the Tourism Discovery Center and check out our gift shop, grab a coffee or ice cream and visit everything the building has to offer.

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 and Friends,

As summer arrives with its warmth and energy, it's a great time to pause and reflect on everything we've done together so far this year, and to share a few exciting things on the horizon.

We started the season on a high note with our 3rd Annual Ladies Night, which was once again a fantastic evening. A big thank you to Seamaiden Boutique & Dress Hire and CARABootique for helping bring the event to life with a beautiful fashion show. Your support helped create a memorable night that's quickly become a community highlight.

More recently, we hosted an All Candidates Meet and Greet—a valuable opportunity for residents to engage directly with those running for office. Thank you to everyone who came out, and congratulations to Todd Doherty on his re-election. We look forward to continuing a strong partnership as we work together on regional priorities.

As I write this, we are planning for our 8th annual "Swing into Success" Golf Tournament happening on June 7th at the Golf & Tennis Club, and we can't wait to see many of you out on the green. It's always a fun day of connection and community, made possible by our incredible sponsors—thank you for your continued support.

We also have some exciting news on the advocacy front. Our Board Director, Joao Gaspar, has submitted a resolution titled "Addressing Immigration and Regulatory Barriers to Attract Allied Health Professionals to Rural and Underserved Communities." It will be debated at the BC Chamber of Commerce Policy Session at the AGM & Conference on June 3–5. This work is a key step toward addressing healthcare access in rural areas, and we're proud of Joao's leadership in bringing it forward.

At the Williams Lake Visitor Centre, we're happy to welcome four enthusiastic summer students to the team, giving the Visitor Centre the ability to open 7 days per week. Each one is already busy with projects and organizing familiarization tours to help highlight everything our region has to offer. With the tourism season now underway, we're seeing more visitors and travelers coming through the doors each day. It's a great time to stop by, say hello, grab a coffee or ice cream, and explore the Tourism Discovery Centre.

We were also fortunate to be able to tour the Lac La Hache ranch recently acquired by the Stswecem'c-Xgat'tem First Nation. It was an inspiring visit, and



we're excited about the direction this opportunity brings—not only for the Nation but for the broader region as well. There is great potential for economic growth, cultural connection, and collaboration, and we look forward to supporting and celebrating this important step forward.

And while it may seem far off, we're already preparing for one of the biggest events of the year: the 28th Annual

Business Excellence Awards, happening on October 18. Nominations are now open—you'll find the form in this newsletter. It's a great way to spotlight the businesses and individuals who help our community thrive.

Thanks, as always, for your continued support and involvement. We're lucky to live and work in a place with such a strong sense of connection, and we're excited for what's ahead.

Wishing you a happy and successful summer,
 Tamara Garreau, Executive Director
 Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce



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Kim's Korner

Events, Energy, and Ice Cream: Kicking Off the Tourism Season

As the weather warms and the days grow longer, the Williams Lake Visitor Centre has been buzzing with energy and hosting exciting events, welcoming guests from near and far, and getting ready for another exciting tourism season.

This spring has seen a flurry of memorable events. On May 8th, we were honoured to host a book signing with Elaine Alec, author of "Coming of Age". Community members had the unique opportunity to meet Elaine, hear her story, and engage in meaningful conversations about identity, resilience, and Indigenous perspectives. The event was a touching and powerful moment for many.

In March we hosted the 3rd Annual Ladies Night Event with a Fashion Show that lit up the Centre with fun, fashion, and fantastic energy. It was a night of laughter, connection, and local style, a great success that left everyone smiling.

In early May we were proud to support the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin for the BC Museum Conference hosted at the Tourism Discovery Centre (TDC). This event brought together museum professionals and heritage advocates from across the province, promoting collaboration and a shared passion for history.

From May 9 to 11, we welcomed the Williams

Lake Cycling Club to the TDC for their Ladies Ride Your Ride Women's Bike Festival. The weekend kicked off with an evening social and continued with three days of riding, connection, and celebration of women's cycling in the beautiful Cariboo.

The excitement continued on May 24 and 25 with the Williams Lake Car Club's Show and Shine, where classic cars and custom builds took the spotlight. Visitors of all ages came out to admire the polished vehicles, connect with other enthusiasts, and enjoy a weekend full of automotive nostalgia. The Tourism Discovery Centre made for a perfect picture backdrop.

As we head into the busy summer season, we're now open seven days a week and have four enthusiastic summer students ready to welcome visitors. We're excited to greet guests from around the world and share everything our beautiful region has to offer. To get ready, we've refreshed our gift shop with new, locally inspired finds and stocked the ice cream shop with everyone's favorite flavors, perfect for a sunny-day treat.

The Williams Lake Visitor Centre is more than just a stop, it's a gathering place, a celebration of community, and a warm welcome to all who pass through. We're proud of all we've hosted so far this year and can't wait to see what the rest of the season brings.

Kim Abel
Visitor Centre Manager



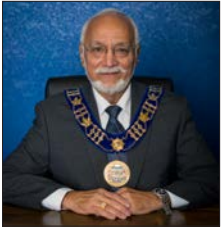
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Mayor's Message

As we head into another beautiful summer in Williams Lake, I am pleased to provide an update from the Mayor's desk. There have been many exciting events since my last message. The Williams Lake Urgent & Primary Care Centre grand opening was held at the end of February. This is a much-needed addition to our

regional health care services, and I know it is well-used and appreciated. We were very excited for the Sugarcane documentary's Oscar nomination, and I know many of us were fortunate to attend Williams Lake First Nation's viewing party on March 2nd. I would like to congratulate and thank WLFN, the filmmakers, and everyone involved in sharing this important truth with the world.

I was pleased to be asked to provide a welcome to the 56th annual Nifty Fifty Ladies "under the Big Top" bonspiel in mid-March. This bonspiel is a wonderful tradition, and is an exciting and special event for our community, and for everyone who attended from all over the province. There were 36 teams (144 curlers) competing, and some of the women were in their 80's - this is truly inspirational!

As well, the annual Guns & Hoses hockey game to support KidSport was another huge success, and I would like to thank Williams Lake KidSport for supporting youth in our community.

The Crosina Realty grand opening on March 27th was a wonderful celebration of a longstanding business in our community showcasing a beautiful new location! Congratulations to all.

I was also pleased to attend the WLFN Youth Entrepreneur Camp as a judge. I was truly impressed by the youth, and all of the hard work put in by the volunteers to support local Indigenous entrepreneurs.

I attended the Council of Forest Industries Convention in Prince George at the beginning of April. This is the largest gathering of the forest sector in Western Canada, and I was pleased for an opportunity to gather with industry, Indigenous, government, community and labour leaders to hear from compelling speakers and discuss key issues and opportunities facing B.C.'s forest industry.

The City's Official Community Plan update project launched on April 24, which

is a blueprint that will guide our city's growth and development over the next 25 years. We have held a number of public engagement sessions, including a survey, with a goal to ensure that Williams Lake remains a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community for generations to come.

Once again, we paused to remember those killed or injured on the job during the Day of Mourning ceremony organized by the United Steelworkers Association on April 28.

The City of Williams Lake hosted its first annual Volunteer Appreciation barbecue on April 30, and it was a wonderful opportunity to recognize the volunteers in our community who do so much to make Williams Lake a wonderful place to live.

The Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee brunch was a wonderful opportunity to honour the 2025 inductees. I was also honoured to attend the BC Historical Federation Annual Conference Awards Banquet in Williams Lake on May 3, which recognized individuals and organizations across the entire province who are dedicated to public history.

Our community continues to grow and thrive, as evidenced by the ground breaking ceremonies held for Knucwentwecw Society and Denisiqi Services Society, as well as the Kidcare Daycare open house in May. The Community Fitness Park also had its official opening, kicking off this healthy addition to Kiwanis Park. I would like to thank all of the organizations that are investing in our city and our region.

Along with several Council members, I attended the NCLGA Convention in Prince Rupert in May, which was an excellent opportunity to promote the interests of Williams Lake. We presented two resolutions, which both passed and will be considered at UBCM in September for further lobbying.

The entire community was once again impressed by the amazing vehicles displayed during the Lakers Car Club Show and Shine. This is an event many look forward to each year, and this year was excellent once again.

With the 97th annual Williams Lake Stampede coming up fast, I know we are all excited to take in all of the wonderful events from June 27 through June 30. I am looking forward to seeing Williams Lake show off our amazing hospitality and Stampede spirit! Many thanks to all the volunteers who make this happen every year.

Surinderpal Rathor
Mayor, City of Williams Lake

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Williams Lake First Nation Chief's Message



Williams Lake
FIRST NATION

**Weytk-kp
Xwexweytep.**

As we move through this season of growth and celebration, I want to take a moment to focus on our youth. In March we were proud to host the Bears' Lair Entrepreneurial Camp – a powerful week of learning, mentorship, and hands-on experience. The camp gave our young people the opportunity to explore business, innovation, and their own potential. Events like this help build the confidence and skills our youth need to succeed, and they remind us that the future is in good hands. One of the most meaningful milestones for our

youth is graduating high school. Graduation season is a time of transition and celebration. We lift up all our graduates and their families – they are the next generation of leaders, knowledge holders, and change-makers, and we are honored to walk alongside them as they begin this next chapter.

Looking ahead, we invite you to join us at our Father's Day Pow Wow, June 13-15, at the Chief William Arbor. All are welcome to attend and celebrate the hard work and dedication of the many who will be participating.

Kukwstép-kucw,
Chief Willie Sellars



L to R:
Diane Boerg, Shannon Pigeon,
Dawn Tait, Kaitlyn Green

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Thoughts from Victoria

Happy stampede season and welcome to visitors to this region.

It has been an interesting session in Victoria. Without question there have been a number of bills, including Bill 7, 14 and 15 that have triggered questions and frustration very much.

This frustration does appear to be across the board not just with residence business owners, first nations and many individuals are extremely frustrated with these bills.

I have had an opportunity to debate these bills and will continue to take my place and share thoughts of Cariboo -Chilcotin residents.

There have been a number of fantastic events in the legislature in the last couple of weeks to name a few the beef industry was well represented there just a short time ago. Also, the Propane industry



has been represented well there.

Emergency management is on a lot of people's minds right now. I can encourage you to go to a number of different websites, but the reality is even with the recent rains that we have had, which by the way, I absolutely love we need to be prepared. All of us should be prepared in the event of an emergency, it makes a lot of great sense to be ready to go. Let's hope we don't have to use our emergency plans this summer, but let's be ready just the same. I hope everybody has a fabulous summer. I hope everybody enjoys our beautiful backcountry, rodeos festivals and certainly are incredible farmers markets as the summer goes on.

Lorne Doerkson - MLA, Cariboo – Chilcotin
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Lorne Doerkson
MLA for Cariboo-Chilcotin

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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

Todd Doherty, Member of Parliament, Cariboo-Prince George

Dear friends and neighbours,

Well, the federal election is over and Parliament is back for its 45th sitting. Obviously, it's not the result our team was hoping for, but our party did make some huge strides in the right direction.

First and foremost, I'd like to thank you for placing your trust in me to represent you, the people of Cariboo—Prince George, in Parliament once again. It's an honour and a privilege that I will never take for granted.

Our party gained 25 new seats in the House of Commons and received our highest share of the vote since 1988, when Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney won a majority government. We built a strong new coalition of small 'c' conservatives, working class Canadians, and young people who want hope for their future restored. And we formed one of the strongest Oppositions in the history of Parliament.

For myself, with over 60% of the vote in Cariboo—Prince George, this represents the highest vote share of any candidate since the riding was created. I have nothing but gratitude to you all for the support you've given me.

As we get back to work in Ottawa, some things have changed, while others remain the same. Personally, I was honoured to accept a new role as the Conservative Party's Shadow Minister for Addictions under Pierre Poilievre's leadership.

In this new role, I will hold the Liberal government to account for their failed drug policies that have decimated communities across Canada, both large and small. I will confront and shine a light on the horrific opioid crisis that has claimed the lives of over 51,000 Canadians since 2016, while along the way proposing real solutions like treatment and recovery, which the Liberals have never prioritized.

Of course, many things are the same. Same Liberal government, many of the same Trudeau-era ministers in charge of crucial portfolios, and the same lack of regard for fiscal responsibility

— namely, half a trillion dollars of spending with no budget.

As Conservatives, our leader has been clear: we want the government to succeed so that Canada succeeds. If the new Prime Minister puts forward reasonable measures to improve affordability, rebuild our natural resources sector, create opportunities for young people to buy homes, etc, then we will support him. But if he breaks faith with the Canadian public as his predecessor did, then we fight him tooth and nail.

Time will tell how the Carney Liberals perform. Just know that I will always be there, fighting for your interests in Ottawa.

Thank you and wishing you the best. See you all at the Stampede!

Todd Doherty
MP, Cariboo — Prince George



Todd Doherty

Member of Parliament (Cariboo-Prince George)

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Telephone 250-564-7771

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT **The Sanctuary Yoga Dome**

Celebrating New Wellness Opportunities: Welcome to The Sanctuary Yoga Dome

Dear Members and Community Friends,

We are excited to announce a wonderful new addition to the Cariboo Chilcotin region that celebrates health, harmony, and renewal. Welcome to The Sanctuary Yoga Dome—a tranquil retreat nestled just 22 kilometers outside of Williams Lake, BC. This tranquil sanctuary is designed to inspire healing, relaxation, and personal growth amidst a peaceful natural setting. Built as a minimal waste facility, The Sanctuary Yoga Dome encourages visitors to disconnect from their busy routines and immerse themselves in the calming sounds and beauty of nature, all in a safe and sustainable environment. Whether it's a bright, sunny day or an awe-inspiring rainstorm, the dome provides comfort in any weather. With limited cell service available, it offers an ideal opportunity to unwind, disconnect, and reconnect with yourself and the surrounding environment. Whether you're seeking a peaceful escape or a space to deepen your self-study and wellness practices, The Sanctuary Yoga Dome is your new sanctuary for renewal and well-being.

Your Wellness, Your Path

Discover the transformative power of self-care at The Sanctuary Yoga Dome, where every visit is thoughtfully designed to nurture your rest and well-being. Whether you're joining a calming yoga class, engaging in an inspiring workshop, or renting the space for a special occasion, you'll be welcomed into a safe, sacred environment that encourages exploration, grounding, and tranquility.

Research shows that immersing yourself

in nature can greatly reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while boosting overall mental health. The Sanctuary Yoga Dome is intentionally nestled amidst the beauty of nature and crafted with mindfulness in mind, providing the perfect setting for relaxation, reflection, and self-discovery.

We invite you to explore this peaceful sanctuary—connect with your self, deepen your self-practice, and nurture your mind, body, and spirit. Whether you're seeking personal growth or hosting group gatherings, The Sanctuary Yoga Dome is here to support your journey toward holistic wellness.

Discover The Sanctuary Yoga Dome

Tucked away in the tranquil beauty of the Cariboo Chilcotin, The Sanctuary Yoga Dome offers a serene environment where you can connect with yourself and others through yoga, workshops, and various other healing ceremonies and events. Whether you're seeking a quiet moment of reflection or an engaging workshop for your health and wellness, this space welcomes you.

What makes the Sanctuary Yoga Dome special?

- **Unique Geodesic Design:** The dome's interconnected triangles symbolize harmony, balance, and unity — ideals at the heart of wellness.
- **Positive Energy Flow:**

Many holistic practitioners believe that the geometric harmony of geodesic structures can promote good energy, supporting healing and mental clarity.

- **Versatile and Comfortable:** Built by Phoenix Domes, a Canadian company, the dome is designed for all seasons — equipped with heating for cozy





winter sessions and fans to stay cool in summer.

Exciting Events Coming Up in Summer 2025

Mark your calendars for these upcoming offerings at The Sanctuary Yoga Dome:

- **EVERY Monday from May 26-June 30:**
Beginner Yoga- 5:45pm-6:45pm
- **EVERY Saturday from June 7-August 30:**
Yoga Fusion: 8:30am-10am
- **Saturday, May 31:** Millennial Muse Retreat –
10:30am to 3:30pm
- **Sunday, June 1:** She Rises: Women's Retreat
for Joy & Revival – 10:30am to 3:00pm
- **Sunday, June 29:** Meditation, Yoga & Sound
Bath – 9:00am to 12:00pm
- **Sunday, July 13:** Manifestation Workshop
with Meditation, Yoga and Reiki – 9:00am to
12:00pm

Stay tuned for more events throughout the year!

Ready to learn more?

Interested in hosting your own wellness gathering? The space is available for rent! Host your own retreats, workshops, or gatherings in this private sanctuary built to foster renewal and reflection. Reach out to us for rental opportunities and tailored experiences.

Contact us today about upcoming events, rental opportunities, or to plan your own wellness experience in this beautiful space.

We look forward to welcoming you into The Sanctuary Yoga Dome — a place where healing begins and connection to self & nature thrives.

https://www.instagram.com/the_sanctuary_yoga_dome/

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT MeadowView Reins

Where Horses Heal, Families Reconnect, and Adventure Meets the Outdoors

Nestled on 150 scenic acres along BC's Gold Rush Trail, *MeadowView Reins* invites you to experience something truly different—an authentic ranch setting where personal growth, outdoor adventure, and family fun come together. Based in Big Lake, this family-run ranch offers a variety of experiences that help guests unplug from daily distractions and rediscover what matters most.

At the heart of MeadowView Reins is our **Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL)** program. Grounded in research and hands-on experience, EAL uses structured horse interactions to teach life skills such as emotional regulation, confidence, communication, and leadership. Horses are incredibly intuitive animals—they respond to human body language, heart rate, and energy, offering honest, non-verbal feedback that promotes self-awareness and personal growth. Our programs are designed for kids, teens, adults, and families navigating everything from everyday stress to deeper emotional challenges. With my background in exercise science—including a capstone research project that explored the connection between movement, emotion, and behavioral change—I'm able to bridge academic theory with the healing potential of horses. As a mother who has seen firsthand how EAL helped my own child, I'm passionate about creating a space where others can discover the same transformation.

For families looking to make the most of summer, MeadowView Reins offers **Kids' Day Camps** that blend the joy of ranch life with meaningful lessons. Mornings include farm chores, horse

care, horse riding, leadership games, and storytelling. Afternoons bring the chance to cool

off with **paddleboarding on Big Lake**, where water safety, balance, and adventure combine under the guidance of Paddle Canada Advanced Flatwater Paddle Boarding Coaches. Additionally, I'm proud to share that I represented Canada internationally in the sport of paddling, earning **three bronze medals at the 2014 World Dragon Boat Championships** in Italy. I also completed the challenging Maui-to-Molokai channel crossing in a one-person outrigger canoe—so when I say we offer top-quality paddleboard lessons and rentals, I mean it.

MeadowView Reins also offers **guided trail rides** through the beautiful Cariboo Chilcotin landscape. From forested paths to open pastures, our horses provide a steady companion as you slow down, take in the views, and breathe fresh country air. Guests can also book **half-day or full-day excursions**, which can include a deluxe add-on: a **private lake-view picnic area** complete with a cozy fire pit, ingredients to **roast your own dinner**, and a peaceful deck

perfect for stargazing.

Looking for something more personal? Our **"Date Night with Horses"** experience invites couples to connect in a unique way—through horse-led exercises that promote trust, communication, and laughter. Whether you're celebrating a special milestone or just need a break from the everyday, it's an unforgettable evening designed to bring you closer.

We also host **birthday parties** for children, offering fun and interactive horse experiences, outdoor games, and space to celebrate in a



wholesome, ranch-style setting. Add to the appeal with glitter tattoos and a visit with Courage and Gemma, our pet sheep - who have big hearts for kids.

At MeadowView Reins, we believe that horses can teach what schools and screens can't—and that nature offers one of the best settings for healing, growth, and joy. Whether you're booking a camp, signing up for a trail ride, or just looking for a place where your child can thrive, we invite you to discover what's waiting for you at the ranch.

Learn more and book your experience at www.meadowviewreins.ca.



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See page 22-23 to nominate your favourite for the BEX Awards!



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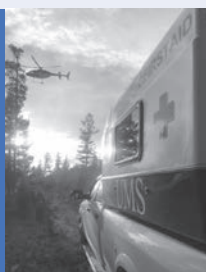
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Orange Shirt Society

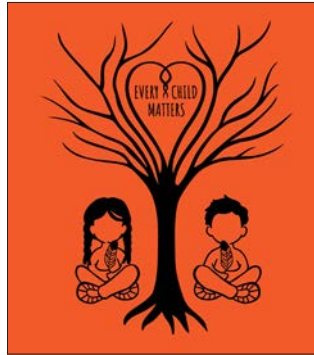
The Orange Shirt Society, founded in 2015 in Williams Lake, British Columbia, is a nonprofit organization born from the personal story of our founder and CEO, Phyllis Webstad. Phyllis, a Residential School survivor, had her brand-new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school, sparking a national movement for Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation.

Our mission is to raise awareness of the intergenerational impacts of Indian Residential Schools on individuals, families, and communities. Through education, commemoration, and community engagement, we carry forward the message that “Every Child Matters.”

We deliver impactful programs that bring this mission to life. The Orange Jersey Project uses sport to teach youth about the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools, while the Survivors Speaker Series amplifies the voices of those directly affected. Looking ahead, we are preparing for a historic moment: the 2026 Graduating Class event, which will honour the first generation of students who have grown up with Orange Shirt Day and Indian Residential School education embedded in their learning from kindergarten through graduation. This milestone is a celebration and a call to continue the conversation and ensure that the truth is never forgotten.

Phyllis Webstad often says, “What started as an idea has become a reality.” Her courage and leadership inspire us to build a future where Indigenous voices are heard, respected, and honoured.

We invite you to walk with us on this journey, share our message, support our programs, and start conversations in your community. Whether you’re



an educator, a parent, a student, or an ally, your voice matters. Together, we can ensure that every child is seen, heard, and valued and help foster healing across Canada.

Huy Chewx a (Thank you)

Shannon Henderson
 Seli'xwelut- (hear my name) Shannon Henderson
 Chief Operating Officer of Orange Shirt Society
 coo@orangeshirtday.org
 604-614-8746
 250-267-9709



Indian Residential School history is not only Indigenous history, it is Canadian history, so thank you for learning, caring, and supporting.

➤ COMMUNITY ORANGE SHIRT DAY EVENTS

➤ EVERY CHILD MATTERS CROSSWALKS

➤ SURVIVOR VOICES SPEAKER SERIES

➤ ORANGE JERSEY PROJECT

➤ QUILTS FOR SURVIVORS

Every Child Matters™



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✉ info@orangeshirtday.org

☎ [250-302-0440](tel:250-302-0440)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT **Rapid Response Training**

Meet Brielle Gagnon & *Rapid Response Training*.

Brielle Gagnon is the passionate founder of *Rapid Response Training*, a mobile first aid education service dedicated to making life-saving training accessible and affordable for everyone in the community. With years of experience in emergency response and safety instruction, Brielle brings both knowledge and heart to every course she delivers.

What sets *Rapid Response Training* apart is its commitment to convenience and inclusivity. By offering mobile training, Brielle ensures that businesses, organizations, and individuals—no matter their location—can access high-quality, certified first aid instruction without the barriers of travel or high costs.

Whether it's preparing forest fire crews, local businesses, or families, Brielle's goal remains the same: to empower people with the skills they need to respond confidently in emergencies. Her courses are practical, engaging, and tailored to real-world situations, reflecting her hands-on background in emergency care.

Through *Rapid Response Training*, Brielle continues to serve the community with professionalism, empathy, and a deep belief that first aid training should be within reach for everyone.

Stay connected with Brielle and *Rapid Response Training* to book a course or learn more:

- Website: www.rapidresponsetraining.ca
- Phone: 250-267-6435
- Social Media: Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @RapidResponseTraining

Empower yourself and your team—because knowing what to do can save a life.



Pictured is Brielle Gagnon and Kayla Bush on their recent Training Adventure to Tsay Keh Dene (16-hour drive to a remote camp)



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All Candidates Meet & Greet

On Wednesday, April 16, 2025, the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce hosted a successful All Candidates Meet & Greet event at the Tourism Discovery Centre in anticipation of the federal election. From 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, community members had the valuable opportunity to engage directly with the candidates running in our federal riding.

We were pleased to welcome all seven candidates contesting in our riding, each of whom attended the event and participated fully in the evening's activities. This strong turnout demonstrated the shared commitment among the candidates to connect with voters and foster democratic engagement at the local level.



Angie Bonazzo, New Democratic Party



Clinton Emslie, Liberal Party



Todd Doherty, Conservative Party

This informal, mingling-style gathering was designed to encourage meaningful conversations between candidates and constituents. Attendees had the chance to ask questions, collect campaign materials, and gain a deeper understanding of each candidate's platform in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

Each candidate was given a moment to address the crowd, offering a brief overview of their priorities and vision for our region and the country. These speeches were well-received by the audience, setting the tone for thoughtful discussion throughout the evening.

The Chamber would like to extend sincere thanks to the candidates for their participation, and to the community members who attended and engaged in the democratic process. We also acknowledge the volunteers and staff who made this event possible.



Events like this show the strength of our democracy and the importance of local engagement. Stay tuned for more events and updates from the Chamber, and thank you for helping us build a more informed and connected community.

A New Season Begins

As the new tourism season begins, we are pleased to unveil an ambitious project that places Indigenous culture at the heart of the visitor experience.

We have collaborated very closely with local First Nation partners in the last few months to incorporate Indigenous values, teachings, and traditions into our tourism practice. Their knowledge has informed everything from the onboarding materials for staff to the development of a visitor guide that provides respectful cultural advice and invites thoughtful interaction with the land.

A recent highlight was visiting the Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation to tour their stunning new facility, envisioned as a space for retreats and cultural tourism. We're excited to support and



learn from their efforts as they move forward.

This season, our summer team will welcome visitors with training grounded in Indigenous perspectives. We're also beginning a signage project that will highlight Indigenous languages and place names, and we'll be incorporating more land-based tours with our summer students to deepen their connection to the culture, history, and stories of this

territory.

We invite our chamber members and partners to share with us the celebration of this step toward reconciliation and responsible tourism.

Tanya Hutchinson,
Special Projects Coordinator



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Chamber's Monthly General Meetings

Each month, the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce hosts a General Meeting that brings together local business owners, professionals, and community leaders. These meetings are more than just a routine gathering—they're an opportunity for members to stay informed, connected, and engaged with what's happening in the region.

Held on the last Thursday of each month (with the exception of August and December, when no meetings are scheduled), the General Meetings take place at Chances Signal Point in the Pioneer Room from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM. In June, the meeting is moved to the third Thursday to accommodate Stampede Weekend, ensuring members can still attend without scheduling conflicts. The cost to attend is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members, which includes lunch.

Each meeting features two guest presenters who provide valuable insights on topics relevant to the business community—from economic trends and local development to policy updates and community initiatives. In addition, Chamber staff and board members share updates on current Chamber activities, events, and advocacy work.

Attending General Meetings offers real value:

- **Stay Informed:** Get up-to-date information on local and regional business issues.
- **Expand Your Network:** Connect with other members and forge new partnerships.
- **Have a Voice:** Learn how you can contribute to Chamber priorities and advocacy.
- **Be Inspired:** Gain practical ideas and resources from guest presenters.



Attending General Meetings is one of the best ways to stay connected and involved. Mark your calendar and make the most of your membership:

July 31, 2025
 September 25, 2025
 October 30, 2025 (AGM)
 November 27, 2025

We look forward to seeing you there!



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Ladies Night Delivers Glamour, Fun, and Community Connection

On Friday, March 28th, the Tourism Discovery Centre was transformed into a lively and stylish venue for the 3rd Annual Chamber's Ladies Night event — a fun-filled evening that brought together nearly 90 women for a night of fashion, laughter, and connection.



Guests were treated to a vibrant and fun atmosphere complete with a delicious spread of appetizers provided by Signal Point Restaurant and Save On Foods, bar service provided by Nicole Bellamy, and a silent auction featuring a range of exciting items. The evening's highlight was a fashion show presented by Seamaiden Boutique & Dress Hire and CARABootique, showcasing seasonal styles from chic evening wear to stunning swimwear.



A special shout-out goes to the incredible fashion show models, who brought not only confidence and grace but also sass and energy that had the entire room cheering. Their bravery in modeling both swimwear and elegant dresses created an empowering and electric atmosphere that truly stole the show.

A huge thank you to Linda McCague for capturing the spirit of the evening through her photography

— your images beautifully reflected the joy and connection shared by all.

We are deeply grateful to our event sponsors: Vista Radio, Johnston Meier Insurance, and Linda McCague. Your support helped make this evening a true success.

Special thanks as well to our generous silent auction donors: All-Ways Travel, the Williams Lake Visitor Centre, Three Sisters Spa & Salon, Linda McCague Photography, South Broadway Liquor, Seamaiden Boutique, CARA Bootique, and WorkHog Contracting Ltd. Your contributions added an extra layer of excitement and generosity to the event.

Ladies Night was a fabulous fashion-forward event — it was a celebration of local businesses, female entrepreneurship, and the strength of our community.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the night so memorable. We can't wait to see you again next year!



Photos: Linda McCague Photography

Meet Our Summer Team and Their Big Plans for the Season

The Williams Lake Chamber of Commerce is excited to welcome four enthusiastic summer students to the Visitor Centre team! With fresh ideas and great energy, they're helping bring creativity and momentum to several projects that support tourism, sustainability, and community engagement.



refreshed brochures and planning familiarization (Fam) tours. These tours are a key part of how our visitor centre staff can give truly helpful, informed recommendations. When a counsellor has visited a resort, walked the trails, or

This year, the team is diving into a wide range of hands-on experiences. First up: parade season! They're helping design and build a float for the Williams Lake Stampede Parade. Expect something colorful, fun, and distinctly local as they bring community pride to life on wheels.

toured a local attraction, they can speak from firsthand experience, not just read off a brochure. That kind of personal insight builds trust with visitors and makes their time in the Cariboo more memorable. Our summer students are creating the itineraries for these experiences to ensure staff can better connect visitors with everything our region has to offer.

Behind the scenes, the students are also working on updates to our tourism materials, including

One of the more exciting additions is an interactive digital kiosk. Once launched, this tool will offer



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locals and tourists easy access to maps, events, and local highlights and information about our area right at their fingertips.

In keeping with our commitment to sustainability, the students are also contributing to our participation in the Biosphere certification platform. This work supports long-term goals around responsible tourism and environmental stewardship.

You'll also find our summer team out and about in the community. On select Fridays, they'll be hosting a table at the Williams Lake Farmers Market, offering information, conversation, and a friendly face from the Visitor Centre.

And of course, no summer is complete without something sweet—so they'll be serving up ice cream and milkshakes, and even helping develop special coffee offerings for locals and visitors looking to cool down or caffeinate during their travels.

We're proud to support youth employment through these summer positions, and we're

excited to see the positive impact these students will have on our organization and the wider community.

Keep an eye out for their work all summer long—and be sure to say hello to Ava, Gerald, Claire and Marcel when you see them around town or in the Visitor Centre!

**The Visitor Centre is now open
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July & August
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Saturday & Sunday and Holidays -
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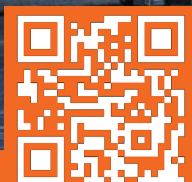
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AWARD CATEGORIES FOR NOMINATION

<p style="text-align: center;">Greatest Improvement</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any business is eligible Must have shown an extraordinary improvement in growth through personnel, or customer service or any other aspect of operations (e.g. Beautification, quality of product, environmental improvement, offers accessibility for mobility or agility) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Not-for-Profit</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any association or group is eligible Be registered as a legitimate society or charitable organization Demonstrate outstanding contributions to the community Show benefits of service and how they set their organization apart
<p style="text-align: center;">Newsmaker of the Year</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any business, group or individual is eligible News must have attracted positive & extraordinary local and/or provincial media attention Examples of Newsmaker: Sports, Entertainment, Arts, Literacy, Innovation, Politics, Environmental 	<p style="text-align: center;">Service Excellence Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any business or individual is eligible Service must be consistently good and create a positive experience Must have exceptional knowledge of their products and/or services Service must exceed expectations
<p style="text-align: center;">Tourism & Hospitality Excellence Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any hospitality-tourism business, service group or organization is eligible (e.g. food & beverage, hotels, campgrounds, event/banquet halls, casinos, recreation, travel agency, wellness etc.) Actively encourages the growth of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region Increases the visibility of Williams Lake & Area Provides and promotes outstanding visitor experiences 	<p style="text-align: center;">Production & Manufacturing Excellence Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any business or individual is eligible A person/business that makes/produces goods for sale Must have exceptional knowledge of their products and/or services Must craft, fabricate, construct, process, invent, assemble or manufacture their product
<p style="text-align: center;">Retail Excellence Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any business or individual eligible Shows excellence in knowledge of their products (e.g. Car dealerships, Grocery stores, Real Estate, Clothing store etc.) High customer satisfaction & retention rates Does not manufacture what they sell 	<p style="text-align: center;">Hugo Stahl Memorial Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any individual is eligible Over the years has continuously dedicated time and resources to improving Williams Lake and area Displays leadership, positive attitude, and encouragement towards volunteering in the Williams Lake & area
<p style="text-align: center;">Ken Wilson Chamber Business of the Year Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only Chamber Member Businesses, or individuals nominated in any category are eligible and determined by Judge's vote Has continuously dedicated time and resources to the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce Displays leadership, positive attitude, and encouragement towards volunteering in the Williams Lake & area 	<p style="text-align: center;">Business of the Year Award</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All businesses nominated in any category are eligible and determined by Judge's vote A person/business that has contributed to the strength of the local economy. Demonstrates revenue and/or job growth Exemplary Customer Service Offers innovative products & services Volunteers or contributes to the community Encourages Professional Development of staff.

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