



What We Do

*The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce is a part of the
Community*

The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce is **the voice of business** in our community currently representing nearly 45% of active Businesses based on the number of Business Licenses issued in the Valley.

As such, the chamber works with all levels of government to represent the business community's interests. We do this through various Committees' including our very active 'CIVIC AFFAIRS' Committee who analyze and respond to any number of Government Initiatives. Our Committee, made up of Community/Chamber Members reviews policy, bylaws and other **recommendations providing feedback and opinion on the end result.**

The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce maintains fee for service agreements with the City of Port Alberni and Destination BC to operate the area's Visitor Centre at the junction of the Pacific Rim and Port Alberni highways. This information centre was **built by the Chamber for the community.** Trained Travel Counsellors provide visitor information with the goal of promoting our services and attractions and keeping travelers in the community for longer stays. BC Parks and Pacific Rim National Park passes are available at the Visitor Centre, as well as member's promotional material, maps and attraction information. In 2015 the Chamber added additional services including Camping Passes for the Broken Group of Islands and we also sell Wood Permits for Island Timberlands. Last year (2014) the Chamber of Commerce initiated a '**Mobile Visitor Centre**' via purchase of an 'older' Heritage Vehicle from McLean Mill. The 'MVC' has been decaled up with 9 pictures of 'things to do' in the Valley ranging from fishing to mountain biking to windsurfing and more. The MVC also includes a silhouette of the Steam Train and of course it features the Frances Barkley among other activities. ***We acknowledge the support of Alberni District Coop for the fuel used.***

The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre coordinate an **Ambassadors Program.** Community volunteers perform a "meet and greet" function in Cathedral Grove, aboard the Frances Barkley, on the Steam Train, in the MVC, and of course right at the Visitor Centre. Wearing high-profile, yellow chamber jackets and/or Golf Shirts (provided by Tim Horton's), the Ambassadors approach visitors at the various venues seven days per week, from June into September, answering questions and directing them to our Visitor Centre for more information about our community. They also attend special events typically with the MVC including such venues as the Multiplex, Sproat Lake, Canal Beach, Harbour Quay, Sunset Market, Thunder in the Valley and much more.



What We Do

We are also affiliated with the BC Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce both of which give us **access to senior governments** and allows us to develop and lobby for new, improved policies. The larger Chamber affiliations also provide our membership with **valuable discounts** on business services, such as small business group health benefits and credit card system discounts. ***Please see our Member Resource Page for more information on the many available benefits to our Members.***

Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the Alberni Valley, the chamber works with community organizations to promote and coordinate special events, to attract major sporting events and meetings to our city and to co-sponsor all-candidates meetings for all three levels of government elections. In conjunction with these desires the Chamber of Commerce has recently developed Way-Finding Signs posted on our building itself and at Harbour Quay. Both of these signs are supported annually through the advertising dollars contributed by many of our local businesses. We thank them!

Our Board of Directors meets on a monthly basis to create policy and **deal with local issues**. Often we invite delegations to better inform the directors on issues. Our Business Committee lobbies for community issues such as revitalization & establishing an industrial truck route. They also spearhead the "Shop Alberni" campaign.

The Chamber of Commerce hosts up to **Nine Monthly Dinner Meetings** each of which are held at different local establishments. Our Dinner Meetings include upwards of three Guest Speakers and of course include Chamber updates along the way. Since mid-2013 we have held our Dinner Meetings at: Solda's Restaurant, Boston Pizza, On Board the Frances Barkley, The Hospitality Inn, The Starboard Grill, The Alberni Golf Club, The Westwind Pub, Smitty's Restaurant, Aaron Vissia Financial (Boomerangs), Little Bavaria & The Best Western Plus Barclay Hotel.

Our **Guest Speaker** agenda over the last 18 months has included: Kim Burden CEO Parksville Chamber of Commerce, Bernie Pascal – Former Hall of Fame Sports Broadcaster, Kevin Willison – Coach – Alberni Valley Bulldogs, Brian Pasquill – BC Hydro Expert –grants/initiatives etc., Darrell Goertzen – Venture Connect, Fred Chinn – Catalyst Paper, Shanna Wilson – Fortis BC, Guy Steeves – Constant Contact, Naomi Horbatch– WorldHost, John Bowman – President North Island College, Gord Johns – Executive Director Tofino Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Tim McNeil – Rail Transport Expert, Tom Maclean – Collette Vacations, Constable Jen Allan – Port Alberni RCMP, John Winter – President BC Chamber of Commerce, Lefty Williams – Professional Basketball – Harlam Globetrotters, Jamie Morton – Alberni Valley Museum, Dr. James Lunney MP – Nanaimo/Alberni, Marilyn Denton – Foreign Affairs Canada, Tashia Potter/Kama Callicum Social Media Experts/Award Winners, George Hanson - VIEA, Carrie Powell-Davidson – Liberal Party of Canada, Sheena Falconer – West Coast Aquatics, Shirley Culpin –

What We Do

Vancouver Island Beyond Victoria, Scott Fraser – MLA – Alberni Pacific Rim, Josh Bickerton – Butchart Gardens, David Roberts – Victoria’s Butterfly Gardens and a few others!

Other Notable Accomplishments:

- The Chamber of Commerce initiated the **Sunset Market** now held annually at Victoria Quay. Today the event is run as a partnership between the Chamber and Hupacasath First Nation. This is a very successful Street Market Event which will soon become a feature not only of the Alberni Valley but of the entire Island
- Two **Way-Finding Signs** one at Harbour Quay the other at the Visitor Centre
- The **Mobile Visitor Centre** now operational through the year for various special events
- **Improved Ambassador Program** including a full colour 55 page manual provided by the Chamber for each of our 50 + volunteers.
- Introduction of **Blue Fish Gallery** into the Visitor Centre as a means of providing better gift selections for those visiting our site.
- Heritage Equipment and other **features at the Visitor Centre**
- Successful implementation of a unique and well received **SHOP LOCAL program** that started December 2013. Through this program we have given out \$10,000.00 to local Shoppers in a Paid Forward format.
- Development of a new **Adventure/Experience Map** featuring 120 + cartoon style pictures demonstrating upwards of 87 local businesses plus at least that many local features. The map, while not a ‘street index’ format will show people through pictures (and they’re worth a thousand words...) just what there is to do in the Alberni Valley from eating, shopping, playing, staying and eventually moving here.
- A Tear-Off Street Index Map developed in 2015 to answer to that need for travellers. The map is two sided and on the reverse side includes all of Sproat Lake as well as information on things to do in the valley over an A-Z format (plus a few!).
- Very Successful **Community Excellence Awards Ceremony** held in April of 2014 and April 2015. Our Awards provide for a Black Tie event that features the best of the best as nominated via the community itself. The event in 2015 has been suggested as the best ever local event.
- We have created a **Bi-Weekly Newsletter** that receives a 40+ % Open rate which is considered well above average in terms of typical e-blasts. Our newsletter contains information about Chamber events, initiatives, successes, Government Grants, Tax information etc., etc.
- New in 2014 was the implementation of **Monthly BUSINESS B4 OR BUSINESS AFTER BUSINESS Networking events**. We have held very successful events at: A Step Above (QF), Jowsey’s Furniture, Boutiques Belles Amies, The PLACE, Steampunk Café, Slammers Gym, Pot Luck Ceramics, St. Jean’s Cannery, Sproat Lake Landing, The Chamber of Commerce, Ladybird Engraving, Jenny’s Fine Foods, and others.



What We Do

