



# 2011 Year in Review



## ***What is the Partnership?***

At the Nelson and Area Economic Development Partnership our job is to contribute to building a strong local economy. The Partnership was formed so that local and community economic development opportunities could be pursued jointly, efficiently and effectively. We do this by:

- ◆ building relationships
- ◆ setting the stage for bigger things to happen
- ◆ encouraging communication between sectors and key partners
- ◆ facilitating an environment that allows for a well-rounded, resilient and sustainable business sector.

We believe that economic development is:

- ◆ a vital aspect of a resilient business community
- ◆ one vital component of a successful business environment
- ◆ hard to quantify, hard to measure, but very much needed.

## ***Who are we?***

### **Partners:**

The City of Nelson

Regional District of  
Central Kootenay  
Areas E and F

Community Futures  
Central Kootenay

Nelson and District  
Chamber of Commerce

### **Advisory Committee**

Peggy Aitken

Chuck Bennett

Graham Edwards

Stephanie Fischer

Roger Higgins

Randy Horswill

Paula Kiss

Deb Kozak

Greg Lawrence

Gary McCandlish

Rick Nixon

Randy Richmond

Ron Ross

Bob Wright

### **Coordinating Committee**

Chuck Bennett

Deb Kozak

Colin McClure

Tom Thomson

Paul Wiest

Bob Wright

## 2011 Accomplishments

### *Focus on: Sector Consultations*

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The Partnership regularly conducts sector consultations with key businesses.

Our goal is to meet with each targeted sector every two years. This helps us to maintain current programs while keeping an eye out for opportunities to extend our influence and leverage resources.

Sector consults completed in 2011 included meeting with Zellstoff Celgar, the Chamber of Mines of Eastern British Columbia, the Kootenay Columbia Film Region and Shambhala Music Festival.

A sector consultation with organizers of the Shambhala Music Festival was an opportunity to learn more about the economic spin offs of this very popular event. Organizers estimate that 10,000 guests stay in the area for one or two days following the event, spending on average \$118 per day each.



*Shambhala Music Festival*

*“Sector consultations serve to keep us informed, to understand challenges faced by business sectors, and to help deliver economic development in a way that is current and relevant.”*

Bob Wright, Chair of the Partnership

### *Focus on: Regional Cooperation*

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In 2011, the Partnership worked with the Columbia Basin Trust to coordinate three meetings on behalf of the region. These meetings were an opportunity to explore regional economic development initiatives and build on potential regional business opportunities.

The mayors of Nelson, Castlegar, Trail and Rossland are all active participants in the West Kootenay Economic Development Dialogue, as are representatives from Community Futures, Chambers of Commerce, Selkirk College and Columbia Basin Trust. Those in attendance discussed a wide variety of issues of shared interest, including: regional marketing and advocacy; clean tech sector development; and transportation.

Administrative support for this initiative is being provided by the Partnership. Meetings will continue to be held on a quarterly basis in 2012.

### *Focus on: Governance*

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We are continually refining our organizational structure, policies and budget to ensure our operations are current and effective. In 2011, we also focused on increasing inter-agency collaboration, in order to share knowledge with initiatives taking place community-wide.

## *Focus on: Communications*

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We are very excited about the launch of our “Business after Business” e-newsletter in 2011! Our goal with this newsletter is to bring our mandate down to the ground level, and answer the questions:

- ◆ How do our programs and services impact local business owners?
- ◆ How does our economic development approach benefit local business owners?

We aim to provide easy access to current events, programs and information that are relevant to local businesses in a format that is quick to read. We’ve shared vital information and links on a wide variety of programs, events and workshops aimed at business owners.



## *Focus on: Business Investment and Attraction*

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As the first point of contact for business and investment, the Partnership assisted with 142 investment inquiries and opportunities through the Invest Kootenay database. We also distributed more than 300 economic development relocation packages in person, by mail, or by email in 2011.

We also worked with local partners to support the Shop Nelson and Area marketing campaign, outbound marketing to tourists and investment marketing.

## *Focus on: Business Retention and Expansion*

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During the summer of 2010 we took the pulse of the local business climate by interviewing over 200 Nelson and area business owners. A wide variety of types of businesses participated in the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey, including manufacturing, tech sector, homebased businesses, storefront and professional services. The BRE results highlighted several priority areas where the Partnership can act as support to local business.

The message we heard loud and clear through the BRE was that business owners are interested in opportunities for training and networking. The speed of business has increased and owners are finding they have to constantly adapt in order to remain competitive.

Taking the cue from these BRE results, the Partnership maintained and increased its focus on coordinating training activities in 2011. We worked with a broad range of community partners to sponsor the following training sessions, keynotes and events:

- Gus Whalen keynote event
- Business succession planning
- \$25 Small business month training
- Jeff Mowatt keynote event
- Invest Kootenay presentation
- Telecomm workshop
- Business export workshop



*Councillor Deb Kozak, Gus Whalen and Tom Thomson, Manager of the Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce.*



## **2012 Priorities**

Our 2012 “to do” list includes:

- ◆ Continuing to offer valuable training and workshop opportunities for area businesses.
- ◆ Connecting with key employers through 1:1 meetings.
- ◆ Improving directional signage.
- ◆ Facilitating a discussion with City Hall on ways to improve the business-friendliness of municipal processes.
- ◆ Continuing with Business Exchange - our peer mentorship program for businesses.
- ◆ Helping to subsidize the cost of quality, local training programs such as World Host customer service training for Nelson and area employers.
- ◆ Working with CFDC and Selkirk College to develop education and training, renewable energy pilot projects and neighbourhood development projects, in order to help the community become a leader in sustainable development.
- ◆ Increasing collaboration with social and non profit sector, and recognizing the important role these sectors play in the economy.
- ◆ Coordinating inter-agency meetings to share information on issues relevant to business.
- ◆ Continuing relationship with Selkirk Regional Innovation Chair and remaining informed in strategic research areas.
- ◆ Increasing participation of Area E and F Regional Directors.
- ◆ Continuing to work with Destination Marketing Organization, Invest Kootenay and other partners to increase business investment and attraction.



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