

Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce

Annual Report to the Membership

Jan. 2009

It seems when a new year starts, there is a lot of hope and expectations for future. This new year is no exception given the continuous bad news last year. 2008 was definitely a challenge globally as the world is trying to recover from a severe shock to our financial system which is creating declining housing values and sales, declining commodity prices, substantial layoffs in the manufacturing sectors to name a few. Port Alberni is certainly not immune to the fallout from these shocks, however, our community has seen so much downsizing/rightsizing/changes etc, over the past 25 years, we seem to be more able to deal with this than other communities. Community leaders are working to adjust to the changes as they occur and keep optimistic about our future, rather than dwell on the negative past.

Having just experienced a highly successful U17 World Hockey Challenge which showcased our community to the world, it's important that we continue to accentuate the positive aspects of our community despite the challenges we face. In true Port Alberni tradition we will continue to put on our "Game Face" and not let challenges consume us. In the months ahead there are many great activities which will draw people to Port Alberni and keep our spirits alive. The Alberni Invitational Wrestling Tournament, B.C. All Native Basketball Tournament, Thunder in the Valley, 2 Cruise ship visits, many sport activities all year, Fall Fair and Salmon Festival are just a few of the many positive things we can expect to see this coming year. All of these need volunteers, which we do so well and will help us to keep our spirits alive.

Your Chamber continues to work diligently for the benefit of the community. Alberni Valley Tourism has a vibrant marketing program in place to draw people to our Valley, which is complemented by our highly successful "Ambassadors" program. These volunteers meet and greet visitors at Cathedral Grove, and at Harbour Quay. We will continue to expand this program. Our new building project continues to be worked on, despite challenges over funding. Hopefully we will benefit from some of the Infrastructure Funding coming from the Federal Government. While our visitor statistics at our Visitor Centre were down 8% this year, we fared better than our Island and Provincial neighbours.

In order for **YOUR** Chamber to work effectively we need **YOUR** support. By being a Chamber member, you will be eligible for an excellent benefit package, participate in being a **VOICE** of business and through our monthly luncheons and other events, you will have an opportunity to network with other business people in the Valley. Individually we have challenges, but collectively we are **STRONG!!** Please support the Chamber so we can support you.

On behalf of your Chamber Board of Directors, thank you for your past support and we look forward to serving your needs in the year ahead.

Dewayne Parfitt
President