

Comox Valley Economic Development and Tourism (CVEDS) Q2 and Q3 2017 Report Summary Highlights

2017 BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival, June 9-18, 2017

Now the largest seafood event in western Canada, the Festival has moved the dial forward with increasing overnight visitation to the Comox Valley in June, plus helped solidify the brand and awareness of our region as a one of the premier seafood destinations not only on the West Coast, but in Canada. CVEDS undertook the Festival marketing, signature event development support, sponsorships, as well as online ticket sales for the 11th annual event. The festival grew significantly from 45 events in 2016 to over 70 events & tours in 2017. CVEDS secured over \$200k in leveraged dollars to support the festival through grant programs and sponsorships, which helped market the festival and region plus expand event production. Notable increases across all key performance marketing indicators included: 75% increase YOY in clicks to the Festival microsite, 78% increase in online contest entries, 12%+ increase in calls to the Visitor Centre, \$1M in earned media coverage and a 19% increase in MRDT revenues generated in June.

Summer Destination Marketing, Visitor Services and Event Development

Q2 & Q3 are the busiest periods at the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre (VIVC); at the end of August, the VIVC was tracking 14%+ in true visitors, has seen a 14%+ in gross revenue sales, welcomed over 5000 guests to the Centre in August alone, and is currently the second busiest Centre on the Island. The office also developed a Harbour Air Great Escapes Contest to drive increased awareness to regional tours and experiences, and generating over 8500 contests entries and over 4800 new e-blast contacts. In conjunction with the Comox Valley Farmers Market, Comox Valley Cycling Coalition and 26 regional agrifood & beverage producers and farms, CVEDS developed the 7th annual Comox Valley Farm Cycle Tour. The event was developed to drive increased education and consumption of locally produced foods & agrifood best practices, and to provide another reason for visitors to come to the destination during the slower fall season; over 330 riders participated. It was one of over ten events CVEDS supported via the Two Wheel Bike Festival external marketing initiative in September.

Export Navigator Program Update and Renewal

CVEDS has been renewed for an additional 6 month term (October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018) as an Export Navigator community. This partnership with the Ministry of International Trade, Small Business BC, and 5 other BC communities aids in connecting participating businesses to key market information, export programs, financial services, and business development experts. CVEDS currently is supporting 18 Comox Valley companies who have registered to participate in the program.

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Small Business Month and the annual Business Counts Workshop Series Program

As part of Small Business Month and the Business Retention and Enhancement Focus Area, CVEDS developed & launched its annual “Business Counts Workshop Series” with a range of partners including Small Business BC, Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of International Trade, Innovation Island Technology Association, Certified Organic Association of BC, Small Scale Food Processors of BC, and MNP. The majority of the 17 workshops and sessions are being held primarily in October during Small Business Month, and range in focus from Tech, Tourism, Organics, and Exporting, to small Business.

Additional Business Support Project

CVEDS is collaborating with several Island Economic Development offices to develop a Regional Technology Attraction Strategy funding application to jointly submit to the Federal Government. Additionally, CVEDS launched a Boil Water Advisories and BC Wildfires Economic Impact Survey to capture the depth and range of economic impacts as a result of those two issues. Preliminary survey results demonstrate revenue losses from affected respondents in the range of \$11,000 per day with increased costs at approximately \$8,000 per day over the 49 days of boiled water restrictions. Once final analysis is completed a report will be provided by CVEDS to the CVRD this fall.

Communications & Media Relations Program

Social media channel 2017 targets of %5 increase will be met, and in most cases exceeded; overall average trending 34%+ above 2016 year end results. E-Newsletter distribution targets will be met, complimented by an increase of 9000+ contacts added to database. Earned media value of \$1.5m is expected to be met, with the BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival alone generating over \$1m in coverage about the Festival and the overall destination from around the world, with a circulation of over 81m.

**2017 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES UPDATE - Q2:Q3 (April, May, June, July, Aug, Sept)
COMOX VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Project	5-Year Plan Reference	2017 - 2018 Actions	Output Measurements	C
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION – ACTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS				
PRIORITY PROJECTS				
Export Navigator Pilot Program	Export Development Program	Implement pilot program with Province of BC	<p>Hosted Export Navigator Program Manager, Allison Boulton on a tour of 5 program participants on August 24.</p> <p>Planned Export Navigator Roundtable & Tour of 3 program participants on Oct. 10 that includes service providers from Small Business BC, Global Affairs Canada, HSBC, and BDC.</p> <p>Planned an Export Pavilion & Presentation as part of the CV Chamber of Commerce Comox Valley Business Expo on Oct. 11.</p> <p>3 more companies entered the Export Navigator program during the 3rd quarter.</p> <p>Hosted the Shenyang Non Food Staples Group which visited 3 Export Navigator Program participants.</p> <p>Hosted 13 MIT Trade & investment Reps and 25 International Buyers which visited 6 Export Navigator Program participants as part of the International Buyers Mission & BC Seafood Expo.</p> <p>Hosted 20 from the Comox CanadAsia Business Society which included 5 Export Navigator Program participants.</p> <p>Attended Export Navigator program training Jun 22-23.</p>	IP
Downtown Interactive Development Map and supporting resources	Downtown, Waterfront and Local Area Enhancement Program	Current, proposed, and major projects are listed and maintained on the online mapping system	<p>Available real estate opportunities and developments maintained in Development Map.</p> <p>16 current downtown opportunities and 32 developments highlighted.</p> <p>Minor visual adjustments made to Map to improve user experience.</p> <p>Unique Pageviews: Q3: 487 (+637%), Q2 Unique pagviews: 66 (soft launch May 25 at AGM)</p>	IP
Early-Stage Technology Entrepreneur Support	Business Visitation & Entrepreneurship Program	Host workshops for technology based small and medium-sized businesses	<p>Hosted a Summer Tech Networking Event with the Innovation Island Technology Association that featured 41 participants.</p> <p>Collaborated with the Innovation Island Technology Association and North Island College to develop a series of business development workshops for tech during the fall and into early 2018 that are marketed as the Rethink series, as part of the Business Counts Program.</p>	IP
E-Commerce Local Company Assistance	Business Visitation & Entrepreneurship Program	Facilitate a connection for local companies to e-commerce tools through workshops or other resources	Partnered with MNP to host an E-commerce workshop during small business month (Oct 24) that will provide local businesses information and resources when considering an e-commerce platform, or migrating to a new system.	IP

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ONGOING ACTIVITIES				
Provision of business support services, resources and individualized small business planning	Business Visitation & Entrepreneurship Program	Provide referrals and resources on common challenges, issues, and barriers to growth	Information/Referrals Provided: 20 Individualized Business Plan Assistance: 10 Business Site Visits: 10 Workshops Hosted: 2	IP
		Use current market and business plan resources to guide companies through the business planning and start-up process	Businesscomoxvalley.com unique pageviews: 1852 (+237% over 2016) Events page: 173 Resources pages: 996 Start a Business Pages: 215 Contact Us/Staff Directory: 291	IP
Seminar series with partners in key small business sectors	Business Visitation & Entrepreneurship Program	Business Counts workshop series that addresses common issues and challenges such as Online Marketing, Financing, Product Development, HR, and Business Succession.	Planned 11 workshops for the fall season for the Business Counts Workshop Series; (2 will take place at end of Q3). This includes a workshop with the Comox BIA (Courtenay BIA Session to be scheduled in early 2018), 6 Tech-focused sessions in partnership with Innovation Island Technology Association, E-commerce workshop with MNP, and 2 agrifood sessions in partnership with Certified Organics Associations of BC and the Small Scale Food Processors Association. In addition, CVEDS is hosting a Business Development Webinar Series in partnership with Small Business BC during small business week. Hosted 10 sessions within the BC Seafood Expo with topics ranging from logistics and exporting, to human resources and ocean acidification.	IP

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Event Development and Enhancement	Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage Development Program	Grow existing signature events and expand one additional event	<p>New Two Wheels Bike Festival and cycling campaign celebrated cycling in the Comox Valley for the month of September. 10+ cycling events were included in the campaign with the Comox Valley Farm Cycle Tour as the main event on September 24th. The Farm Cycle Tour had 331 cyclists enjoy the event, and 26 farms and agrifood and beverage producers participate as tour stops. Two Wheels Bike Festival and Farm Cycle Tour URLs had 9,032 unique pageviews (+20% YOY).</p> <p>BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival, June 9-18 - The overall festival calendar had 75 events and tours take place over the 10 days, with over 3,000 tickets sold. Out of the ticketed events & tours, 26 sold out. BCShellfishFestival.com/BCSeafoodExpo.com received 159,164 page views (+53% YOY). Digital and Social Media campaign captured 14,294,045 impressions (+10% YOY) and 91,148 clicks (+75% YOY). MRDT accommodations had 6,675 page views.</p> <p>Comox by the Sea Seafood Celebration, the main festival event, had 2429 people attend (26% increase from 2016).</p>	C
		Engage community through grant program to solicit new events	10 applications were presented to the Sport and Event Grant Expansion Committee, 5 of which were approved for a total \$9k+.	C

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INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND PROMOTION - ACTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS				
PRIORITY PROJECTS				
Regional Technology Attraction Strategy	Resident and Entrepreneur Relocation Program/Sustainability-Related Business Opportunities Program	Support regional efforts to develop technology-oriented website with detailed community profiles on tech-related topics	CVEDS is participating with Campbell River, Port Alberni, Parksville/Qualicum, Nanaimo, and Cowichan in the development of a Regional Technology Attraction Strategy through the Vancouver Island and Coast Economic Developers Association. Funding applications are expected to be made during the fall for a 2018 project.	IP
ONGOING ACTIVITIES				
Destination Marketing	Destination Marketing Program	Market the region as outlined in annual Work Plan	2017 MRDT Revenue up 10% over 2016 (as of June 2017)	IP
Visitor Services and Fulfillment	Visitor Services Opportunity Program	Engage operators to participate in online booking programs	15 tour operators participated in the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre online and/or on-site booking systems, July - September. 2017 Comox Valley Vacation Guide was designed and distributed with 71 stakeholders engaged in the overall Visitor Services Program. Rezgo online booking system had 35 bookable products available to visitors in Q2.	IP
		Promote Visitor Centre suite of marketing services	Fall Forward Tourism Industry Mini-Conference held at the Vancouver Island Visitor to support tourism sector development and release marketing opportunities and programs for 2018 with speaker sessions and a informal trade show; over 120 busienss and tourism organizations/partners participated including DCBIA, VI Mountain Sports Centre, North Island College Tourism and Hospitality Program, Sid Williams Theatre and Mount Washington Alpine Resort. Visitor Services Marketing Program launched at Fall Forward event with goal of 200+ stakeholders participating in program. Vancouver Island Visitor Centre Q3 YTD to August: 17,541 total visitors (+7%) 9271 true visitor parties (+14%)	IP
Inbound and Outbound Trade and Investment Delegation Support	Agrifood Investment and Land Utilization Program	Identify, support and host key international inbound and outbound delegations relating to agri-food trade and investment opportunities	Hosted a delegation from the Department of Ocean and Fisheries from the Hainan Province which featured site visits and meetings with local Seafood companies. The delegation plans to return in June 2018 for the BC Seafood Festival & Expo. Additinoal delegations hosted during the 2nd Quarter are noted above in the Export Navigator Program.	IP

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION - ACTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS				
PRIORITY PROJECTS				
Shared Space Start-Up Incubator	Sustainability-Related Business Opportunities Program	Identification of shared space opportunities for early-stage entrepreneur start-ups	Arranged for a site visit during the 2nd quarter with potential users to evaluate a shared space opportunity.	IP
BC Seafood Festival Expo & Buyers Mission	Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage Development / Export Development Program	Host the 2017 BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival, Expo and BC Buyers Mission	The BC Seafood Expo was held from on June 11-12 with additional surrounding activities taking place from June 9 - 13. The Expo saw over 345 attendees, including 60 exhibiting companies, and 40 international buyers from 10 countries. In addition, there were over 240 guests & attendees to the events during the Expo including Terry O'Reilly and Ned Bell keynote sessions, Buyers & Media Reception, and the Expo Tradeshow.	C
Comox Valley Agriplex Project support	Food Security Enhancement Program	Provide resources and information support to the CV Farmers Institute in the development of the business case analysis and subsequent grant proposals for a	CVFI participated at the CVEDS AGM in May with a project station and discussion regarding the Multi-purpose Exhibition Centre.	O
Hotel Room Tax Renewal and Expansion	Destination Marketing Program	Expand hotel room tax to include Mount Washington, Comox, and Regional District accommodation properties	Municipal and Regional District Tax renewal update process undertaken in Q3, sent to Province in September to renew another 5 year mandate of 2% being charged to Courtenay accommodation properties overnight guests for use in increased Destination Marketing.	C
Community Food Analysis Lab Initiative	Food Security Enhancement Program	Partner with the BC Small Scale Food Processors in the development of a pilot Community Food Analysis Lab for local agriculture producers	The BC Small Scale Food Processors have secured space for the Lab in downtown Courtenay. Official announcement and opening event will be scheduled in Q4.	C
ONGOING ACTIVITIES				
Business and Community Economic Analysis and Surveys	Land and Development Impact Analysis Program	General economic impact analysis information for local major commercial/industrial developments and investments	A Boil Water Advisory/Wildfire Economic Impact Survey was created and issued in order to estimate the impacts of these events. The survey was issued on Aug.16, with analysis and results being prepared in Q4.	IP
Data and Resource Updates and Maintenance	Economic Profile and Information Program	Profile current and timely economic and demographic information to local business and investors	Online Statistics updated for Q3 & Q2.	IP

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COMMUNICATIONS - ACTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS				
PRIORITY PROJECTS				
Earned Media Generation & Hosting	Communications and Media Relations Program	Expand media content and resources in News Centre	Content expanded with numerous seafood industry and festival earned media coverage, plus CVEDS Boil Water, Farm Cycle and Business Counts Workshop press releases. 40 press releases and articles added to BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival News Centre, and circulated.	IP
		Proactive pitching of story ideas to key media	Circulated press releases on Farm Cycle, Business Counts Workshop Series and the Boil Water/Wildfires Economic Impact Survey. Media were also invited to participate in the Farm Cycle Tour and Fall Forward events.	IP
		Support media trips in partnership with industry	Northwest Travel and Life Magazine (October) Johnny Jet (September) 27 + domestic and international media attended the BC Shellfish and Seafood Festival and Expo via the Media Hosting Program; 12 media hosted as part of the April Ale Trail Fam Tour with TVI and DBC to visit breweries and local craft beer pubs.	IP
		Implement ongoing tracking mechanism	Research report completed on media tracking system options for review. BC Shellfish and Seafood Earned Media Evaluation showing total \$1m+ value with 81m circulation.	IP
ONGOING ACTIVITIES				
Delivery of timely, relevant & engaging industry, tourism, business content via digital & traditional media	Communications and Media Relations Program	Maintain & increase contact database via surveys, contesting, and event registration	10,000+ contacts added in Q2 & Q3 Media Contact Database updated with over 145 BC media contacts, 60 culinary/tourism contacts CVEDS undertook CSAL confirmations and contact databases were updated based on these new regulations; 1326 Festival partners, sponsors, attendees were sent the BC Shellfish & Seafood Festival Feedback survey on the various Festival events and programs to garner feedback for continued enhancements in 2018 and determine Net Promoter Score; 31.5% completed the survey. Results are currently under analysis.	IP

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		Update and report on quarterly CVEDS Strategic Plan updates & news	Provided an overview and update of CVEDS programs and services at the CV Young Professionals Lunch n Learn on Aug.3 at the White Whale Restaurant. Presentations of the CVEDS Q1 Report we presented as follows: May 10 - Town of Comox, May 15 - City of Courtenay, May 16 - Comox Valley Regional District. CVEDS 2016 AGM held May 25 at the K'omoks First Nation Band Hall, 75+ in attendance.	IP
		Provision of key business and industry stats, resources and content to regional stakeholders	Q3; # of Tourism Industry e-News: 3 # of Consumer Tourism e-Blasts: 8 # of Business e-News: 5 CVEDS twitter followers: 2210 (+1%) CVEDS Facebook likes: 1245 (+2%) VIVC twitter followers: 1937 (+3%) VIVC Facebook likes: 15196 (+4%) Q2; # of Tourism Industry e-News: 2 # of Consumer Tourism e-Blasts: 17 # of Expo e-News: 16 # of Business e-News: 3 CVEDS twitter followers: 2189; +21 (1%) CVEDS Facebook likes: 1245; +197 (+19%) VIVC twitter followers: 1937; +55 (3%) VIVC Facebook likes: 15196; +3376 (29%)	IP
		Integrate Hootsuite Management System to manage content flow through all social media platforms	CVEDS Social Media Manual compiled, intergration of Hootsuite across all platforms, plus additional social media training for all staff undetaken.	C

Notes: The "C" column stands for Completion
 In the C column; IP = Progress, C = Complete, O = Ongoing