

May 8, 2013

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### **Delivering democracy: Students and businesses get to know City of Campbell River during Local Government Awareness Week**

The City of Campbell River will host two information sessions May 22 to help students and business representatives gain a better understanding of City services and operational challenges.

As part of Local Government Awareness Week, students from Carihi and Timberline schools will get a hands-on chance to weigh the balance between an ever-increasing demand for City services and a limited budget.

The same day, the Chamber of Commerce will host a lunch session at the Coast Discovery Inn with Jerry Berry, a renowned local government expert, who spent much of his career working in municipalities on Vancouver Island. Berry's government work was recognized for strategic planning, environmental protection, community engagement and innovative use of technology. Berry will donate his time to deliver an energetic presentation about the history and role of local government – as well as a look at the challenges faced by City Councils. The presentation will include time for questions.

The student session also promises to be informative, entertaining, interactive and fun. In a session inspired by the Sim City video game, where people play at building and maintaining a community, students will tackle the City budget in Council Chambers at City Hall. City staff representing different departments will sum up services provided to the community – and try to drum up funding support. Students will vote with City Hall bucks, and the results of their budget will be compared against Council's budget for City services.

*"It's important to know what's happening in your City. Being involved and learning about local government also teaches leadership skills that you can apply to other areas of your life,"* says Michael Stevantoni, a Grade 11 member of Campbell River's Youth Action Committee.

*"It's important for youth to learn about how local government works because youth are the future of local government, and we will be better equipped to create the change we want to see,"* says Mariah Carpenter, a Grade 11 member of Campbell River's Youth Action Committee.

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Contact: Peter Wipper, City Clerk

250-286-5707

**Photo: *Voting for services with City bucks will be part of the student event at City Hall during Local Government Awareness Week.***