



April 20, 2020

City's support for local business community pivots during COVID-19

Like so many local businesses, Campbell River's economic development office has quickly changed how we connect to provide increased support for local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Unprecedented. That's the reality of the extraordinary COVID-19 situation – and we've pivoted our immediate focus to help empower and inspire our local business community," says economic development officer Rose Klukas. *"Communities have faced hardships, including things like mills closures and natural disasters, and with COVID-19 affecting everyone, all around the world we're continuing our series of virtual meet-ups to help businesses be better informed to deal with change."*

Over the last four weeks, City economic development has worked in partnership with Campbell River Area Angel Group (CRAAG) to provide opportunities to help businesses learn more about topics ranging from adjusting cash flow management, working remotely, health strategies to flatten the curve, e-commerce and free business tools to help during the pandemic. All webinars are recorded and available on the events page of TECHatchery.ca.

"In crisis, people can feel very alone. These weekly meet-ups maintain community connection and keep us learning from each other," Klukas adds.

What's coming up?

- 8 a.m. April 22: Vancouver Island Regional Library will join the meet up to talk about free business resources available to anyone with a library card.
- 6 p.m. April 23: CR Area Session 10: Conversation with Minister Claire Trevena -- BC Government's COVID-19 Supports for Business

"This global health crisis is causing real a hardship for people and for our business community. Every level of government is aware of the significant impact COVID-19 has on people's health and on the economy. Federal and provincial governments are working hard to provide financial relief programs, and every day new announcements are made," says Mayor Andy Adams. *"Local governments, as mandated by BC's Community Charter, are working hard to provide support through business retention and expansion programs."*

"Navigating the many resources available during this storm can also be stressful. We're pleased Minister Trevena is available to answer questions from Campbell River business owners as part of this series. It's all part of helping connect you with what will work for your situation," Klukas adds, pointing to TECHatchery.ca for links to all resources, webinar topics and blog posts.

City economic development is currently finalizing details of a business recovery program set to start the week of May 15. Working with Spring Activator, this will include a collection of virtual tools, access to mentorship, support for unique issues and connection with business development experts.

The City is collaborating with other community organizations like Destination Campbell River, CRAAG, Campbell River Chamber of Commerce, Strathcona Community Futures and regional economic development organizations to share these resources and expertise.

"The world has been affected greatly by COVID-19 and Campbell River is no exception. Doing business looks different now and into the future. It's heartening to see many Campbell River businesses have already made changes to operate in this new business climate. We're committed to supporting businesses by helping them pivot," says city manager Deborah Sargent.

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Contact: Rose Klukas, Economic Development Officer

250-895-0667