

Chamber's core service advocates for business

ORGANIZATION WORKS with government to help resolve issues.

At the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, we point out that one of our core services is "advocacy." But what are we advocating for? Who are we advocating to? And what are the outcomes and benefits to businesses and the community?

Sometimes it can be as simple as solving a licensing or permit problem by working on a specific issue. However, it is more often at a higher strategic level and more proactive.

In the past year we have hosted, or partnered with others to host, several senior federal government cabinet ministers to create awareness around infrastructure needs for our community.

Between Nanaimo Airport, Nanaimo Port Authority and Vancouver Island University, we have identified the need for more than \$100 million in funding to help grow our economy. If we didn't get these ministers to town, they'd never understand the importance of Nanaimo's projects or have any familiarity with our community so that we can motivate their support.

As a matter of fact, we have two federal cabinet ministers speaking at our AGM luncheon tomorrow

row (April 8).

We've also hosted numerous senior provincial cabinet ministers to express our interests in having their support for projects and to give Nanaimo's business community a bit of an advantage in Victoria. In the past two weeks alone we've brought the Minister of Transportation, Minister of Advanced Education and Minister of Social Development and Innovation to chamber events and held closed-door meetings between them and ourselves, along with civic and community leaders.

Meanwhile at city hall, we are having conversations around a freeze on commercial tax increases, have started high level work on our 'Green Tape' Policy Review Committee, with its goal to cut bureaucratic red tape that creates barriers (and needless expense) for business, and finally we are breaking through on the issue of food trucks in our community.

Our members support this work through their annual membership dues, knowing they are receiving far more than reduced prices on networking luncheons and events.

Stay tuned and see what else the chamber is doing with government to make it easier for the business community to prosper and to build a better community through better business.

CHAMBER CHAT

Kim Smythe



Travel agency hosting cruise information event

A local travel agency is hosting an event to help customers travel the world.

Cruise Holidays presents Explore the World travel event at Bowen Park Activity Centre on Saturday

(April 11), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission is \$5 in advance from Cruise Holidays' Nanaimo office by calling 250-758-7893 or e-mailing cruiseexperts@telus.net. Tickets at the door are \$7.

30th Annual Nanaimo Model Boat Show

April 9th - 12th - Country Club Centre

- ★ Come see the many models on display
- ★ Bring the kids to play with our new fleet of boats (if Dad's good, we may let him play too!)
- ★ Vote for your favourite model!

No entry fee to exhibit your model, a small fee for models to be judged.

For more information Call **250-756-4338**

Entrepreneurs start up in a single weekend

The first annual Startup Weekend is coming to Nanaimo April 17-19 at SquareOne, located at 38 Victoria Cres.

If you're not familiar, Startup Weekend is a 54-hour event where developers, designers and business development folks come together to pitch an idea and launch a business – all in one weekend. It is a great opportunity to test startup ideas, meet potential co-founders, build the community in Nanaimo and launch your next startup.

What unites all attendees is a common interest in entrepreneurship: whether a serial entrepreneur or new to the startup scene, every attendee is interested in working with a like-minded, motivated and skilled team to develop a product or business in one weekend. If this sounds like you, this is the event for you.

The participants that attend have 60 seconds to make a pitch (optional). The

itches are whittled down to the top ideas, and then teams form around the ideas to come out with several developed companies or projects. Finally the weekend culminates with demonstrations in front of an audience of judges and potential investors.

The event begins with open mike pitches on Friday, when attendees bring their best ideas and inspire others to join their team. Over Saturday and Sunday, teams focus on customer development, validating their ideas, practising LEAN Startup

Methodologies and building a minimal viable product. On Sunday evening, teams demonstrate their prototypes and receive valuable feedback from a panel of experts.

This is Nanaimo's first Startup Weekend, but the event occurs all over the world throughout the year and they have been very successful.

Startup Weekends are where entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs can find out if startup ideas are viable. On average, half of Startup Weekend's attendees have technical or design backgrounds, the other half have business backgrounds.

There are dozens of reasons why you should come to a Startup Weekend: get educated, build your network, learn a new skill, actually launch a business, get face-time with thought leaders, and join a global community. For more information and to register, please visit www.thinkbigatsquareone.com/swn.

SquareOne is Nanaimo's first and only tech incubator and co-working space for the creative designers, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and other out-of-the-box thinkers. The core values of SquareOne are community, openness, and collaboration. SquareOne has 28 desks available for either full-time tenants (24/7, 365 access) or punch pass tenants (access to the space 10 times per pass). Please visit www.thinkbigatsquareone.com.

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Sasha Angus



GT Hiring Solutions

WorkBC Employment Services Centre



NANAIMO JOB FAIR

Thursday, April 9, 2015 - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Vancouver Island Conference Centre
101 Gordon Street Nanaimo

Attention
Job
Seekers

Up to 50
employers
on site!

Come and meet some of Nanaimo's best employers and introduce yourself to the FREE employment services available through WorkBC Employment Service Centres!

Job Seekers Pre-register at
nanaimojobfair2015.eventbrite.ca

More information:
Brooks Landing - 250.729.5627 or Downtown - 250.714.0085

Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.