



Victoria Welcomes Startups, Investors and Ex Pats to Victoria

Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2016

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Capitalizing on a successful trade mission to San Francisco last September, this week Mayor Lisa Helps and prominent local representatives will welcome Victoria's next companies, investors and ex patriots home to the Capital City. All hands are on deck, as the City of Victoria, the University of Victoria, VIATEC, Tourism Victoria, Downtown Victoria Business Association, Urban Development Institute and Capital Investment Network are collaborating on this mission February 17 – 19, 2016 to support existing and new entrepreneurs, and inspire innovation in local markets.

"What started out as a 'reverse mission' from our trip to San Francisco has grown to investors and meeting planners visiting from six cities in both Canada and the US," noted Mayor Lisa Helps. "This is thrilling. There's a big interest in Victoria as a place to invest, to visit and to live."

"I want to welcome our partners from San Francisco to Victoria, BC's second largest tech hub," said Amrik Virk, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services. "With our three T's – talent, taxes and time zone – our reputation as a desirable place to live has created world-wide appeal. Victoria is also renowned as an educated, creative and talented community. Through our #BCTECH Strategy, we are taking steps to encourage growth of the sector so that companies can develop, attract investors and fuel our economy."

Attendees will first meet at Fort Tectoria on Wednesday night to hear why Victoria is the place to live, work, play and invest. Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, Amrik Virk, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services, United States Consul General Lynne Platt and Tim Catlin, Vice-President of Engineering at Change.org, will deliver remarks followed by dozens of startups pitching Victoria. "Accelerated walkability" is the focus on Thursday morning, as visitors hit the streets checking out co-working spaces, and new and renewed developments. Friday morning, the Royal BC Museum will be a backdrop for a discussion with Seattle-based investor and author, John Maher, about angel investments and start-ups. The day will be capped off with a one-day exposition of over 70 Greater Victoria tech firms and research agencies at the Crystal Garden.

"It's an exciting time for our city as our tech sector continues to grow which is attracting attention from investors, partners, job seekers and new customers alike," added Dan Gunn, CEO, VIATEC. "We are delighted that so many influential people have decided to take the time to visit and learn more about what is driving a new era in Victoria's economy and community."

"San Francisco is a very important source market for Tourism Victoria and we're happy to be working with our partners to bring these key contacts to Greater Victoria to truly showcase the region," says Paul Nursey, President & CEO of Tourism Victoria. "We are just a quick two hour plane trip away and it is vital that we continue to work together as a destination to build and develop these relationships."

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

Media are welcome to attend the “Welcome to Victoria” event
When: Wednesday February 17, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Where: Fort Tectoria, 777 Fort Street

Victoria is a dynamic and thriving city, offering a high quality of life that a smaller city can provide. Creating Prosperity Through Economic Development is a key objective of the City of Victoria’s strategic plan for focus and investment over the next four years. Based on community input, the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity has developed the *Making Victoria: Unleashing Potential - Economic Action Plan*. The plan was approved by City Council in October 2015.

The plan identifies six primary “engines” to drive Victoria’s businesses, generate jobs, raise household incomes, and increase well-being over the next four years. In addition, a Business Hub has been established at City Hall to streamline and demystify business and development processes; make it easier to do business in Victoria; advise on how to reduce unnecessary red tape; connect entrepreneurs with the resources they need; and accelerate the development of a vibrant downtown.

Quick stats:

- Greater Victoria's largest industry is high-tech, with an economic impact exceeding \$4 billion annually. Many local firms rely on global connections to grow their business and create jobs. These companies directly employ 15,000 Tectorians.
- Tourism is Greater Victoria's second largest industry with \$1.9 billion in economic impact and over 22,000 jobs.

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