



“Capital Mission” to Become Annual Economic Development Event

Date: Thursday, March 31, 2016

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — In February, the economic development “reverse mission” saw Mayor Lisa Helps and local representatives welcome Washington, California and Canadian-based companies, investors and ex patriots to the Capital City. Based on its success, the City of Victoria and community partners plan to make the “Capital Mission” an annual event. The next mission is scheduled to take place in spring 2017.

“This first annual capital mission was overwhelmingly successful. We wanted to attract investors and showcase Victoria as an innovative, creative and livable tech hub and tourist destination. We did this, and more,” said Mayor Helps. “The follow-up meetings and business generated speaks for itself. Our hosted guests will be back, and they’ll recommend Victoria to their networks.”

Twenty-five guests from Los Angeles, Palo Alto, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto participated in the mission to Victoria. In an exit survey, 100% of attendees said they would refer this mission to others in their networks. During their visit to Victoria, a total of 295 contacts were made, 156 “face-to-face” business meetings were held, and 88 qualified business leads were generated. Since the mission’s “Discover Tectoria” event, 93 follow-up discussions have taken place.

“The City of Victoria has a vibrant and growing tech sector, and through the connections made with partners in neighbouring jurisdictions, we are providing access to new markets and job creation opportunities, which is exactly what the province is driving through the #BCTECH Strategy,” said Amrik Virk, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens’ Services.

The province’s #BCTECH Strategy is a key component of the BC’s Jobs Plan to support the growth of B.C.’s vibrant technology sector and strengthen British Columbia’s diverse knowledge-based economy. The 10-year strategy includes a \$100-million BC Tech Fund and initiatives to increase talent development and market access for tech companies that will drive innovation and productivity across the province. For more information:

www.bctechstrategy.ca

Survey respondents noted in their comments that Victoria has talent, has a great civic environment to support startup culture, and that an event like this makes generating new business in Victoria much more attractive and easier.

“Having never been to Victoria before, I did not know what to expect. What I found was a jewel in Canada’s start-up crown,” said Leonard Lanzi, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Venture Association. “Together with an enthusiastic city, a venture and angel capital network, a first class university, and lots of creative and innovative people, there is a recipe for a vibrant startup ecosystem! We in Los Angeles are happy to have a partner in creating the cross border innovation economy.”

Capitalizing on a successful trade mission to San Francisco last year, February's "reverse mission" to Victoria involved the City, University of Victoria, VIATEC, Tourism Victoria, Downtown Victoria Business Association, Urban Development Institute and Capital Investment Network collaborating to support existing and new entrepreneurs, and inspire innovation in local markets.

"VIATEC was honoured to host our visiting guests at Fort Tectoria during the Capital Investment Network's pitch event. The timing of the mission coincided with Discover Tectoria which is our largest expo of local innovation and entrepreneurship, and I think immersing our guests in a room with 100 local tech companies and over 3500 other guests really revealed how dynamic our local economy is," said Dan Gunn, CEO of VIATEC. "We look forward to building on our 25 year history of developing international relationships with investors and partners on behalf of our members and the entire local innovation sector, and seeing the plans for future Capital Missions is a key part of that strategy."

Over the three-day mission, attendees met at Fort Tectoria 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, delivered remarks followed by dozens of start-ups pitching Victoria.

"Accelerated walkability" was a focus as visitors hit the streets checking out co-working spaces, and new and renewed developments. The Royal BC Museum served as a backdrop for a discussion with Seattle-based investor and author, John Maher, about angel investments and start-ups, and the mission capped off with a one-day exposition of over 70 Greater Victoria tech firms and research agencies at the Crystal Garden.

"San Francisco is a key source market of both leisure business and meetings and conference opportunities for Victoria. We are working to build more inbound business in the future," said Paul Nursey, President and CEO of Tourism Victoria. "We applaud the City of Victoria and Mayor Helps for her leadership in driving deeper connections in San Francisco and the Bay area. Tourism Victoria will remain a committed partner for future endeavors because we see the return on investment."

Background

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 three years. Based on community input, the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity developed the *Making Victoria: Unleashing Potential - Economic Action Plan*. 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.

For More Information:

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