

EDG Steering Committee Welcomes Tom Bennett

Along with the invaluable experience he gained as an economist for the provincial and federal governments, Tom Bennett brings a fresh perspective to the Nanaimo Economic Development Group (EDG) Steering Committee.

Tom and his wife grew up in Nanaimo and graduated from Nanaimo District Secondary School. He graduated with a BA in Economics from Simon Fraser University and his wife became a teacher. Further education took them to Ottawa where Tom joined the Bank of Canada as an economist. After five years, they returned to BC where Tom joined the provincial government in Victoria. During his career with the province, he held positions as Director in the Ministries of Education and Attorney General.

After 40 years away from home, Tom moved back to Nanaimo. He quickly noticed the many changes occurring in the area. With the downtown being revitalized, businesses growing, and unemployment at an all time low, he wanted to be involved in the city's changes and growth. Tom chose to join the Nanaimo Economic Development Group as a way to re-establish his connections in the community, and to make a positive contribution.

EDG, whose members include representatives from local organizations, businesses, citizens, and government, shares a community vision which is supported by four main goals: committed leadership, excellent foundations, quality infrastructure and positive image. These goals are all part of Nanaimo's Economic Development Strategy, which guides the collective efforts of the Economic Development Group to build a stronger economy.

As an active EDG member and helping with such activities as the 2007 Leading EDG Awards, Tom decided it was time to join the Steering Committee. When asked why, he answered, "I witnessed dedicated and hardworking members making a difference for Nanaimo and I saw the steering committee as an opportunity to become more actively involved."

He certainly has been making a difference. Tom is on the planning committee for the upcoming Challenge of Change Forum, to be held June 4 at the Coast Bastion Inn. This workshop is an opportunity for the public to learn about Nanaimo's economic sectors and how they are changing. The audience will also hear from keynote speakers about the changes that have been occurring in aboriginal economic development and the forestry sector. For more information regarding the Challenge of Change, or to reserve a seat, contact Katie Ferland at 755-4465 or katie.ferland@nanaimo.ca. There is no cost to attend.

Tom encourages everyone who would like to make a difference in Nanaimo, and be part of the city's exciting growth, to join the Economic Development Group.