

May 8 EDG Bulletin Article - Challenge of Change

The third annual Challenge of Change forum presented by the Nanaimo Economic Development Group is scheduled for June 4, 2008. This information session geared towards residents and newcomers was first organized three years ago to profile Nanaimo's economic drivers and give the public an opportunity to meet with the city's key stakeholders. The goal of the session is for attendees to better understand the changes occurring in our economy, and the challenges and opportunities these changes will entail.

Last year, the event attracted just under one hundred people who were keen to learn about changes in the Tourism, Arts & Culture, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Knowledge-Based sectors. Mike Hooper, President and CEO of the Nanaimo Airport Commission, spoke about the airport's expansion plans, and how the transportation needs in the mid-island region are changing. Another highlight was the presentation by Debbie Trueman, General Manager of the Nanaimo Museum, on the future home of the museum in the brand new Port of Nanaimo Centre and how it would boost the presence of arts and culture in Nanaimo.

This year, the sectors profiled will be Tourism, Retail, Knowledge-based, Education and Aboriginal Economic Development. Professionals from each sector will give informal presentations and answer any questions relating to their area of expertise. Dave Mannix, Economic Development Officer from the Snuneymuxw First Nation will be the keynote speaker for the evening, telling the audience about the upcoming Sandstone Project and Northwest Properties partnership with SFN, and what that means for aboriginal economic development in Nanaimo.

Vancouver Island University, until very recently known as Malaspina University-College, will have a representative on hand to speak about changes in the education sector, including the increased presence of international students in our community. Cathryn Sanchez, Operations Manager for Newcastle Island Provincial Marine Park, will discuss aboriginal economic development opportunities relating to the co-management agreement signed between the Province, City of Nanaimo, and Snuneymuxw First Nation. As well, local agencies will be on hand for those seeking new employment or training opportunities in the various sectors.

The public is invited to this free information session. It will be particularly useful to newcomers to Nanaimo, residents who want to find out about our changing city, and those who want to understand more about our local economy.

The third annual Challenge of Change will be held on Wednesday, June 4, 2008, from 7-9 pm at the Coast Bastion Inn. To reserve your seat, contact Katie Ferland, Economic Development Coordinator today at 755-4465 or katie.ferland@nanaimo.