



Mayor's Report

January, 2016



Happy New Year!

The year is new but our goals and objectives remain the same. Council bases its decision-making with the sole intent of enhancing our community, helping it become a much safer and more desirable place to live in. The ultimate intent "is to create a vibrant, healthy, sustainable community that exists in harmony with the natural environment, enjoys a balanced economy, supports all generations and provides the opportunities to satisfy diverse social needs". We are cognizant that not all of our decisions will please everyone and that is understandable. However we do try our level best to ensure our decisions are based on what we feel will have the most positive impact on our Town as a whole.

I am optimistic and extremely excited about the improvements and upgrades we will be undertaking in 2016. We began the downtown revitalization in earnest when the re-pavement of Cowichan Lake and South Shore Road were completed together with the Cowichan Lake / North Shore intersection round-a-bout. That project provided the catalyst for continued improvements and now we expect that Laketown Ranch will be providing an additional stimulus for growth and prosperity. After the last of our major lumber mills closed we have been frustrated just waiting for another industry to begin rebuilding our economy. Well almost twenty years have passed without any major industry seeing fit to locate near our community. Statistics reveal, however, tourism has increased year after year and now Laketown Ranch will be providing us that much needed avenue to speed up the progression towards more economic growth. Promotions like the one provided by Sunfest can help market our community and our diverse landscape and natural assets far beyond anything we could imagine. There is no doubt that social events like Sunfest are going to have an enormous impact on our community. We are seeing signs of a positive resurgence now as real estate activities and new building permits appear to be on an upswing in our area. This is a good indicator for this early in the year. It is said that you only get one chance to make a first impression and it is imperative that the first impression we provide the many new residents and tourists coming to our community is a positive one and an experience they will long remember. Making those who come to our community feel welcome is a good way to start. Let's embrace our new opportunity because if our residential and business communities are successful, our entire community will prosper as well.

" We can embrace as a possible opportunity for growth or reject with the possibility of missing a great opportunity." We need to promote our community to its fullest. Early 2016 bookings for Lakeview Campsite and the Cowichan Lake Education Centre are very promising.

I am encouraged to hear from some of our newer residents who are looking for ways they can help serve their community as volunteers. It is such a pleasure when I receive emails from those who speak of how they are invested in Lake Cowichan and how they love their new community and want to make it the best place to live. In the past we have had trouble finding members to serve on certain committees and now we are being approached by those asking if there are any openings available. This is another positive indicator for the town's future. Many of our newer citizens have such diverse knowledge, resources, and different experiences and them coming forward and wanting to share their fresh ideas with us is most appreciated.

Lake Cowichan Forest Co-op and Pacheedaht First Nation are hosting the Annual General Meeting of The BC Community Forest Association May 26-28, 2016. More than 100 delegates from all over BC are expected to attend this event. The three day AGM event will be centred in community facilities in Lake Cowichan and will provide a big boost to local business. Lake Cowichan Forest Co-op has contributed a lot to our community and this will be the time to show our appreciation by supporting this big endeavor. Let's demonstrate what a welcoming community we are and assist our guests to the best of our capabilities in making them feel at home.

Thirty-five people attended the recent meeting regarding plans for a Senior's Care Facility. Enthusiasm was high as discussions for attracting such a facility into our midst began. After most of the hands in the room were raised on wanting to participate on a committee for this initiative it was decided to form a smaller interim Steering Committee (five members and facilitator) for an initial structuring meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to craft a Committee structure and the terms under which the committee is to operate and to enable it in the identification of talent/ skill needs and effective volunteer tasking. Thank you to everyone who has shown their support to get this project started. The dialogue at the large meeting certainly recognizes the want and the need for a care facility and the absolute importance of support from the entire community to bring this initiative to fruition.

I would like to recognize and welcome Buzzcuts Multimedia who are using locations in a Lake Cowichan for shooting a horror-thriller movie called Dashcam. This movie is shooting on Vancouver Island during January 2016 and is scheduled for release in the fourth quarter of 2016. Hoping your movie is a success and thank you for including Lake Cowichan in your film.

Ross Forrest, Mayor