



# **Mayor's Report**

*March, 2016*



"Still Standing!" That is Lake Cowichan, a thriving community in the heyday of the forest industry until it fell on some hard times after its major sawmills closed down. While it has been a struggle, due to the lack of industry, the Town has survived and now is seeing an increase of people wanting to move to our community.

"Still Standing" is the award winning CBC Show about small Canadian towns finding ways of re-inventing themselves. The producers of this show have recognized everything that the people of our community are doing to prepare for Sunfest as it moves to its new Laketown Ranch venue. This spring, the "Still Standing" programme will be documenting the excitement "Sunfest" will bring to our town. It will feature Lake Cowichan as one of 13 small towns to be featured during their 2016 season. When CBC producers were looking for possible locations, they contacted Community Futures Cowichan and had a conversation with Cathy Robertson before deciding to research our community and its great history. Thank you to Cathy for suggesting for Town for a story worth telling! This popular national show will not only provide our community immense exposure but it will also provide a lot of entertainment for everyone. The star of the show, Jonny Harris, explores small towns that are "on the ropes" and will perform a stand-up show for the locals.

Recognition for outstanding community service was the highlight of the Chamber of Commerce AGM. Everyone in attendance was very supportive of those being honoured this year. Betty Weberg Sanddar and Cindy Vast were awarded Citizen of the Year for their many years of volunteering for the Food Bank. Krystal and Dustin Mayo, Lola Sinclair and Glenda Osborne Burg were recipients of the Nicole Stock Award. Newly created Chamber awards were the Business of the Year, awarded to Copper Lane Boutique owned and operated by Corrie Helliwell, as well as the New Employee of the Year awarded to Patti Skramstead who was recognized for her friendly and great service at Rexall Pharmacy. Congratulations to these very deserving winners who make our community a richer place to live in.

A large crowd was in attendance at the Cow Cafe for the Chamber of Commerce monthly business dinner. The event provided an opportunity to hear guest speaker Brent Evans of the German Auto Import Network "GAIN" speak about the new Island Motor Sport Resort. Brent's presentation enlightened the audience with unbelievable details surrounding the inception of this world class venue and we certainly recognize this as an economic benefit as many of its members and their families will potentially visit our community. This facility will be a beautiful showcase for the entire Cowichan Valley and will generate worldwide recognition. Thanks to both the Cow Cafe for hosting this educational event and the Chamber of Commerce for bringing us this very interesting speaker.

February 27, 2016 saw the official installation of our community's newly formed Kinettes Club of Lake Cowichan. This group of lady volunteers will be a great complement to our active Kinsmen Club as well as other service clubs and volunteers in our community. Congratulations Kinettes and thank you in advance for the wonderful things you will be accomplishing.

The Sports Arena's curling rink was this year's home to the Community Health and Wellness Fair. It was a success with 39 exhibitors displaying their products. Melanie Livingstone deserves a big round of applause for her outstanding work in organizing this event.

With the need for improving our water quality due to the mandate imposed by Island Health, we are increasing the water parcel tax this year by \$40. Any money taxed for water can only be spent for water improvements and nothing else. Although we have no control over our turbidity readings, we do have some control over how we can remediate the problem. We have chosen to work towards reducing the inevitable cost associated with the long term solution. I mentioned last month that a secondary water treatment system is very expensive and we are doing everything we can to secure financial assistance to help pay for this new system that has been mandated to be completed in 2017. The parcel tax and user fees will not be enough to cover the very expensive cost we will be facing. It is difficult to continually increase taxes and it is certainly not something council enjoys doing. If we succeed in securing grant monies, it will help alleviate the cost to us. We are working to ensure the new water system is achieved at a cost that is manageable to our taxpayers. Reducing borrowing costs is reducing what you will pay now and in the future. Thank you for being understanding and patient.

**Ross Forrest, Mayor**