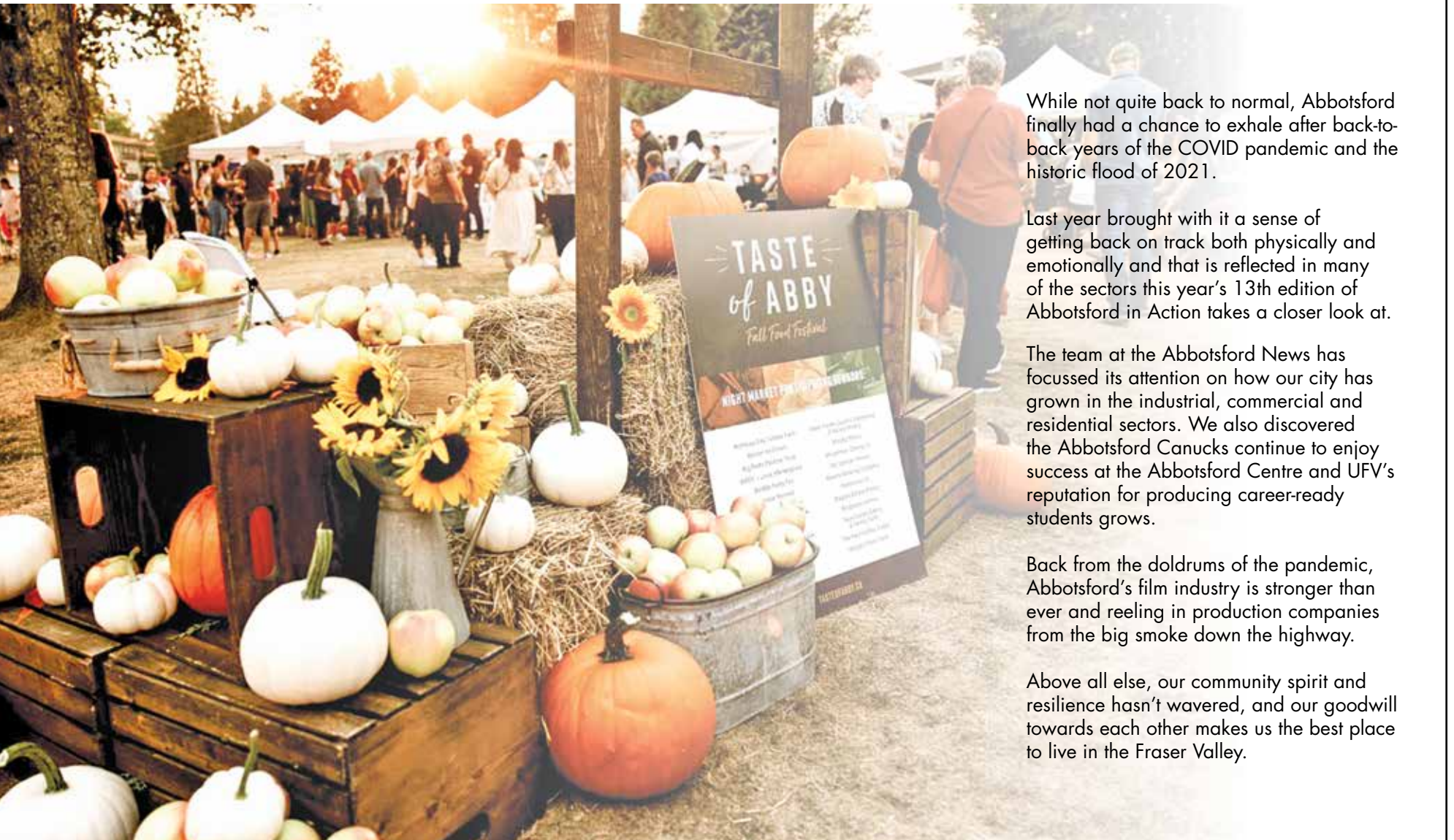


ABBOTSFORD IN ACTION

THE
NEWS
ABBOTSFORD



While not quite back to normal, Abbotsford finally had a chance to exhale after back-to-back years of the COVID pandemic and the historic flood of 2021.

Last year brought with it a sense of getting back on track both physically and emotionally and that is reflected in many of the sectors this year's 13th edition of Abbotsford in Action takes a closer look at.

The team at the Abbotsford News has focussed its attention on how our city has grown in the industrial, commercial and residential sectors. We also discovered the Abbotsford Canucks continue to enjoy success at the Abbotsford Centre and UFV's reputation for producing career-ready students grows.

Back from the doldrums of the pandemic, Abbotsford's film industry is stronger than ever and reeling in production companies from the big smoke down the highway.

Above all else, our community spirit and resilience hasn't wavered, and our goodwill towards each other makes us the best place to live in the Fraser Valley.

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Resilience continues to shine through

Although the last year has been one filled with the aftermath of the devastating flooding of Sumas Prairie and the reopening of services following continually changing public health restrictions put in place with COVID-19, the resilience of our residents and those particularly in our farming community continues to shine through.

As the newly elected mayor and council, it is a privilege for each of us to serve this dynamic and vibrant community, and we are encouraged by how our community has pulled through and continued to push forward these past few years.

As your new city council, we have been busy solidifying our priorities for the coming years through the development of our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. You can read a copy at abbotsford.ca/strategic.

Council's Strategic Plan provides the foundation for aligning all of our municipal planning decisions and is the roadmap for staff in developing business plans and budgets. The Strategic Plan enables the organization to continually monitor progress toward our overall vision of Abbotsford.



Abbotsford Mayor Ross Siemens

Within the Strategic Plan, council's priorities are set out under four Guiding Principles. These four Guiding Principles set the overall direction at the highest level for every initiative the city will be focused on for the next four years and include:

- inclusive and connected community;
- sustainable and safe city;
- vibrant and growing economy; and
- organizational excellence and integrity.

Through this work and as the City of Abbotsford continues to grow, council's goal is to keep you informed and to receive your comments, ideas and suggestions about city plans and programs.

In 2022, more than 22,000 Abbotsford residents visited our Let's Talk Abbotsford engagement portal and over 15,000 residents learned more about a project, provided feedback and engaged with the city on over 20 various projects. While that number is certainly notable, as a new council, we want to hear from more of you, and encourage all citizens to sign up and have your say.

Through this 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, we have set out our commitment to fostering an inclusive, vibrant and sustainable city, and we look forward to continuing to support everyone in Abbotsford as we work towards our overall vision of Abbotsford as the cultural and economic hub of the Fraser Valley.


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Publisher
Carly Ferguson

Editor
Ken Goudswaard


Contributors
Vikki Hopes
Ben Lypka
Jessica Peters
John Morrow


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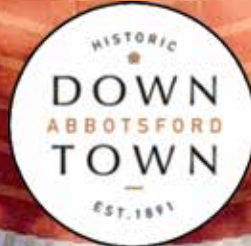
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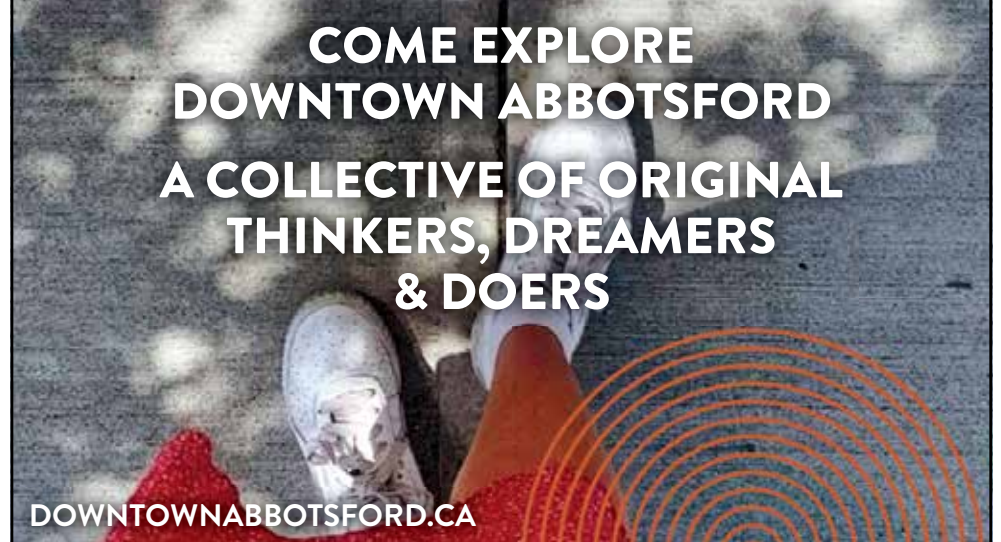
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Living wage

The living wage for the Fraser Valley increased from \$15.54/hr. in 2019 to \$16.75/hr. in 2021. The living wage is a calculation of the amount two parents need to earn to cover the basics – rent, food, transportation, health care, and child care – for themselves and two children.

* Source: Abbotsford Community Foundation's 2022 Abbotsford's Vital Signs



It's the economic hub, it's the geographic hub and it's fast developing into a cultural hub.

Ross Siemens



Xchange Business Park on Mt. Lehman Road has started its first phase of construction. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

City has 'very strong' showing in industrial/commercial sector

118,000 square metres of new industrial floor space approved last year

Abbotsford experienced a "very strong" showing in its commercial and industrial sectors in 2022, according to Mayor Ross Siemens.

He said development permits issued last year amount to about 118,000 square metres of new industrial floor space.

Abbotsford continues to be an attractive place for industry, particularly as much of the available land in Metro Vancouver is devoted to high-density residential development, forcing businesses further east.

Siemens said the community has plenty to offer – including proximity to the U.S. border, a thriving airport, and an ethnically diverse population and economy.

"It's the economic hub, it's the geographic hub and it's fast developing into a cultural hub," he said.

But Siemens said the city is facing the same challenges as other communities – a "significant shortage" of industrial land, which he refers to as "employment land" because of the jobs it generates.

"We still have some pockets of industrial (land) but some of what is needed for a modern economy is bigger parcels of land for processing, for storing, for value add," he said.

Some of the constraints are due to preserving agricultural land as part of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Siemens said the city is looking to create



Despite a shortage of industrial land in Abbotsford, a few big projects are underway. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

a regional industrial land and advocacy strategy in partnership with Mission and Chilliwack. This would see the communities working together to determine where certain industries would be best suited so that they are not lost to other areas such as Alberta or the B.C. Interior.

Despite those challenges, Abbotsford currently has several large projects underway.

The city's largest industrial development ever – Hungerford Properties' Xchange Business Park – was approved in early 2021 on Mt. Lehman Road north of Highway 1 and Highstreet Shopping Centre.

The project involves eight buildings encompassing 1.2 million square feet of space. The buildings are mostly slated for industrial use, but the city has also changed its zoning bylaws to allow for up to 40 per cent of floor space to be used for office, retail, rental and product display – as long as the goods are manufactured or warehoused on site.

The development also requires significant transportation adjustments – some of which have already been done – to help

Continued on B5

Vitalus Nutrition expansion costs \$3M

From B4

ease congestion in the area, particularly in conjunction with the 734-unit apartment-and-townhouse project underway at Mt. Lehman Road and Cardinal Avenue. That project entails eight mid-rise apartment buildings and 157 townhouse units.

The business park is expected to be a catalyst for economic development in Abbotsford and the region, with more than 3,000 full-time jobs created.

The first phase of development is well underway, and Siemens said completion is expected to take five to eight years.

Another massive project is a 99,000-square-foot expansion of the dairy processing operation at Vitalus Nutrition at the corner of Mt. Lehman and Downes roads. The project is estimated to cost \$3 million.

"That's the largest investment in dairy processing, I believe, in Canadian history, if I'm not mistaken," Siemens said.

He said agricultural innovation continues to be a main source of growth in the community, and the city is working with the Ministry of Agriculture in that regard.

Another sector contributing to the city's industrial and commercial base is the Abbotsford International Airport.

About 1,000 people are directly employed at companies based at the air-

port, which remains home to some of the city's biggest employers. Cascade Aerospace employs hundreds of workers at its maintenance facility, which is one of two Lockheed-Martin-authorized C-130 heavy maintenance centres in the world.

Other major companies include Marshall Aerospace, which has its head office at YXX; Chinook Helicopters, which offers flight training; and Conair Group, which builds and operates aircraft used to fight forest fires in British Columbia and elsewhere.

Abbotsford is also a transportation hub and home to truck drivers working for companies such as Valley Carriers, Vedder Transport and Tri-Link Systems who facilitate the movement of goods around the Lower Mainland and Western Canada.


The rapid growth of the Lower Mainland has been, and continues to be, facilitated in part by another key industrial resource: gravel. Abbotsford provides much of the aggregate used by builders around the region, and its trucking companies and truck drivers are key players in getting that product to customers.

Siemens said he is excited about Abbotsford's future.

"There are some interesting things we're working on behind the scenes, but we're just not in a position to be able to say too much (right now)," he said.



Xchange Business Park on Mt. Lehman Road has started its first phase of construction. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)



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Most passengers ever

August 2022 was the busiest month ever for YXX, with 109,654 passengers using the airport. October was another busy month with 102,057 passengers – the busiest October on record for YXX. September nearly reached the 100,000-passenger mark, with 98,881 touching down. January and February were the lowest totals, with 42,712 and 46,874 respectively.



We're always open for business here and are constantly working to bring more aerospace jobs, more land development, more airlines and more direct routes here.

Parm Sidhu



New hangars that have come into play since 2018 are a testament to the private sector willing to invest in the airport. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

Passenger volume returns to airport that continues to grow

Activity at the Abbotsford International Airport bounced back in a big way following the end of COVID-19 restrictions, and airport general manager Parm Sidhu is optimistic that 2023 will be the busiest year ever at YXX.

Passenger volume returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022, with 992,712 passengers flowing through YXX last year, according to Sidhu.

The 2022 numbers are the second-highest amount ever for the airport, only trailing 2019, when there were 1,008,176 passengers. Sidhu said August 2022 was the busiest month ever for YXX, with 109,654 passengers using the airport.

October was another busy month with 102,057 passengers – the busiest October on record for YXX.

September almost reached the 100,000-passenger mark, with 98,881 touching down.

January and February were the lowest totals, with 42,712 and 46,874 respectively. COVID-19 travel restrictions and other obstacles brought that number down, Sidhu said. He said there was also a reluctance to travel due to worries about the pandemic.

Sidhu said the restrictions greatly impacted the first quarter of 2022 and he believes, without those in place, 2022 would have surpassed 2019. He said pent-up interest in travelling also helped the big increases later in the year.

"Had those restrictions not been in place, it probably would have been our best year," he said, noting that, even with the restrictions, 2022 was only about 18,000 below 2019. "2022 will be remembered as a year of pent-up travel demand. Canadians love to travel, and our airline partners here make travel affordable and accessible."

Both 2020 (315,578) and 2021

(511,391) saw big drops in passenger volume due to the pandemic. Sidhu said he is forecasting more than one million for 2023.

The year 2022 marked the 25th year of WestJet service in Abbotsford. In recent years, Flair and Swoop have also offered flights at YXX.

"The 25th anniversary was a big milestone for WestJet and Abbotsford," Sidhu said.

Aside from being a useful tool for travellers, Sidhu said YXX has become a platform for aviation businesses and houses a number of notable companies.

Cascade Aerospace, Conair Aerial Firefighting, Alpine Aerotech, Marshall Canada, Chinook Helicopters, Shell Aerocentre and new addition Fast Air all call YXX home with a presence at the airport.

"We're a platform for business," Sidhu said. "Our partners' success is our success."

Sidhu pointed out that YXX has seen annual greenfield development on site every year since 2015.

"These are private-sector investments coming into our airport," he said. "You've seen a whole row of 75,000-square-foot-plus hangars just next to the Shell Aerocentre at the end of Townline Road. These are all new hangars that have come into play since 2018."

He said corporate and private aircrafts are using Abbotsford more and more.

"It's a good news story for the region," he said. "Either these jets are being parked at a company's headquarters or business people are wanting to have an aircraft located closer. These greenfield developments are

key investments and it helps to bring the global marketplace right to Abbotsford."

This year also saw the full return of YXX's signature event – the Abbotsford International Airshow. The event was virtual in 2020 and 2021 was a smaller event with a drive-in theme. Sidhu said it was wonderful to have the airshow back.

"We had a great weekend," he said of the 2022 event. "Events like the airshow help showcase us. The whole airfield comes together on show weekend."

He added that the annual Girls Fly Too! event is another example of using the YXX platform to enhance aviation and Abbotsford. Sidhu said he is open to having the airport hosting more events and encouraged those with ideas to contact him.

He said YXX offers a full package of benefits for travellers, businesses and citizens of Abbotsford and that he believes the airport's importance to the region will continue to increase.

"This airport is a regional asset," he said. "It's an economic enabler for the region and it's a platform for business. We're always open for business here and are constantly working to bring more aerospace jobs, more land development, more airlines and more direct routes here. We want to talk to anyone with a business opportunity tied to aviation, aerospace or the movement of passenger services."

The airport is itself owned and run by the City of Abbotsford; the city purchased it two decades ago for the low sum of just \$10. These days, it consistently turns a profit, allowing it to use those funds to improve the site for passengers and airlines.



Abbotsford International Airport general manager Parm Sidhu. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

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Reeling them in

In 2022, there were 70 productions filmed in this city, including five feature films, 44 movies of the week, 10 series, seven commercials and four other productions. The total economic impact of filming in 2022 was \$2.6 million. The city had 303 filming days, using 160 filming locations. Filming took place in 38 locations downtown, 44 on agricultural lands and 11 in parks and recreation facilities. A further 71 private locations had filming, and there were 31 parking locations used.



One of our favourite parts of being a hot spot for film productions is the connections made between visitors to Abbotsford, our community and the local businesses.

Melissa Godbout



A filming crew let residents watch the process close up in the Auguston neighbourhood of Abbotsford in January. (City of Abbotsford photo)

Filming brings \$2.6 million to city's economy in 2022

Film crews used 160 different locations to create movies, TV shows and more

Supergirl. The Good Doctor. The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina.

All of these television series have a little bit of Abbotsford in them, as do many more you'll find on the big and small screen.

In 2022, there were 70 productions filmed in this city, including five feature films, 44 movies of the week, 10 series, seven commercials and four other productions.

Just this January, the neighbourhood of Auguston was able to really get immersed in film production when a crew took over a local building. The production crew let the neighbours drop in to watch the activities close up, and even gave them behind-the-scenes tours, introductions to some of the actors and explanations to how equipment works.

Some even learned some tricks of the filming trade, which could come in handy as Abbotsford continues to be a filming hot spot.

"Stories like this one showcase our community and what makes filming in Abbotsford so special," city media rep Melissa Godbout said on Facebook about the Auguston filming. "One of our favourite

parts of being a hot spot for film productions is the connections made between visitors of Abbotsford, our community and the local businesses."

But filming brings more than that to town. The total economic impact of filming in 2022 was \$2.6 million. That's money being directed in many ways through the community, including directly to the city for fees and permits, but also services like catering, hospitality, and goods and services used by cast and crews.

The city had 303 filming days, using 160 filming locations. The public can "tour" the filming locations on an interactive map on the website, Abbywood Self-Guided Tour, and then watch their favourite films again to see the locations in action.

For example, did you know that the Taves Farm has been a backdrop for The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina? Or that the Good Doctor has filmed at Castle Fun Park?

Then there are the multitude of romantic comedies and Christmas Hallmark movies that have been filmed everywhere from Polly Fox to the Sumas Power House.

The city said that, in 2022, filming took place in 38 locations downtown, 44 on

agricultural lands and 11 in parks and recreation facilities. A further 71 private locations had filming, and there were 31 parking locations used.

There are plenty more locations that have yet to be tapped by the movie industry. In fact, Abbotsford is home to a host of unique under-filmed locations, has access to talented labor, and is both affordable and accessible to the industry.

They have recently started working with a liaison company, Angusfilm, to manage some of the city's filming activity. There is a full list of resources and documents on the city's website, created by the city's economic development team to assist production companies looking to film in Abbotsford. The Filming Resource Guide breaks down the film application process and details notable attractions and filming locations in Abbotsford, including hotels and accommodations, specialty shops, restaurants, and more.

The City of Abbotsford Filming Resource Guide is updated annually. If you are an Abbotsford business owner that would like to be featured in the guide, email econ-dev@abbotsford.ca. To see the guide, visit abbotsford.ca and search for "filming."



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Agriculture responsible for \$3.8 billion in economic activity, doubled since 2008



Farming is one of largest employment drivers in the community

Abbotsford continues to be one of the most intensely farmed areas in North America and has the highest farm sales per hectare of any other city in Canada.

Agriculture in the city is responsible for \$3.83 billion in economic activity today, up from \$1.8 billion in 2008.

This information was detailed in a 2022 report released by the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, under the academic guidance of the University of the Fraser Valley and the University of British Columbia.

The report, titled The Economic Impact of Agriculture in Abbotsford, also indicates that farm-gate receipts for Abbotsford are approximately twice the amount of the next highest agriculture-producing communities of Chilliwack and Langley.

The agriculture industry in Abbotsford generates approximately \$3.8 billion in economic activity today. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

Continued on B11

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Local dairy farmers ship one-fifth of B.C.'s milk

From B10

As one of the primary employment drivers of the region, agriculture accounts for more than 16,000 full-time jobs in the industry, equating to 23 per cent of all jobs in the city.

This compares to 11,000 full-time jobs in the industry – 20 per cent of all jobs – in 2008.

The report also found that the agriculture sector has grown twice as fast as the city's population.

The city is the largest municipality by size in B.C. And while its land base is still just a speck on the provincial map, the richness of its soil – particularly on Matsqui and Sumas prairies – enables Abbotsford farmers to produce a massive share of some of the province's biggest agricultural products.

But the industry faced an unprecedented challenge in November 2021, when an atmospheric river, combined with the Nooksack River in Washington State overflowing its banks and travelling north, resulted in devastating flooding hitting the area.

Approximately 800 farms and 22,000 acres of land were submerged on Sumas Prairie, and an estimated 600,000 animals perished.

Abbotsford farmers are continuing to rebuild in 2023. Former agriculture minister Lana Popham said in November – one year after the floods – that most dairy and poultry farmers were operating "back to normal" and the majority of annual field



Abbotsford has more than 100 dairy producers who ship one-fifth of the province's milk. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

crops were planted as usual.

The Fraser Valley region produces the majority of B.C.'s dairy products, berries, vegetables, poultry, pork, eggs, mushrooms, flowers and nursery products. At the centre of much of that activity is Abbotsford itself.

Some of Abbotsford's biggest producers are in the poultry and dairy supply management sectors. More than half of the city's farmland is used for raising livestock, including egg-laying and broiler chickens, cows, hogs and other animals.

Abbotsford has more than 100 dairy producers who ship one-fifth of the province's

milk. Around 35,000 cows – mostly dairy – were counted in Abbotsford in 2016.

The egg industry is another local agricultural mainstay, with Abbotsford producing tens of millions of eggs for consumers around the province.

The largest non-livestock agriculture sector in Abbotsford is the berry industry. A little more than one-quarter of the city's farmland is devoted to the fruits.

Of about 10,000 acres devoted to berry production, a little more than two-thirds is used to grow blueberries. Most of the rest is devoted to raspberries, although 200

acres are also used for cranberry growing.

Local farmers also grow a range of other crops in Abbotsford's bountiful soils. Those include kiwi fruit, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, potatoes, cauliflowers and even rice. And the popular wine and craft beer industry has driven demand for locally produced grapes and hops.

The agriculture sector is a key driver of technology change and innovation in the city. Each year, tens of thousands of dollars of Agriculture Enhancement Grants are handed out to forward-thinking initiatives pushing the boundaries of food production.

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TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD

Tourism saw strong recovery in 2022, with room to grow

2023 will see more international travellers, focus on events and partnerships



Occupancy rates

Abbotsford enjoyed a 74.3 per cent occupancy rate in 2022, at an average daily rate of \$146.50. Both of those numbers are higher than any year back to 2018. The busiest months for hotels were June, August and September, which filled up at 80.3, 82.4 and 82.8 per cent respectively.



We have a long-term vision it grows into a destination food festival ... Imagine people flying into the Abbotsford airport, eating at Abbotsford restaurants, staying at Abbotsford hotels.

Craig Nichols

People are travelling, attending events and looking for activities once again, says Craig Nichols, executive director of Tourism Abbotsford.

That means last year's tourism activity was strong in Abbotsford, as people were travelling regionally, interprovincially and from across Canada. And 2023 is expected to be even stronger as international travel begins in earnest once again.

Tourism in all forms was hit hard by COVID-19, immediately and in the long term. But looking at the room stays in Abbotsford for last year shows that tourism is rebounding nicely here.

"2022 was a record year, surpassing both 2019 occupancy and average daily rate levels," Nichols said.

Overall, Abbotsford enjoyed a 74.3 per cent occupancy rate in 2022, at an average daily rate of \$146.50. Both of those numbers are higher than any year back to 2018. The busiest months for hotels were June, August and September, which filled up at 80.3, 82.4 and 82.8 per cent respectively.

Looking further back, the lowest point in the pandemic for hotel stays locally was April 2020, at about 26 per cent. Some tourism-dependent businesses weren't able to survive the pandemic, and others still struggle to find workers or make a profit as the cost of food continues to rise.

But Tourism Abbotsford is poised nicely to help bolster the local economy into the future, and has just completed its five-year strategy plan after polling residents, stakeholders, its own board of directors, partners and others. They released their findings in a 44-page report in December, highlighting the city's strengths and weaknesses, and identifying where the organization should direct their focus for the most impact.

"It's a really robust strategic plan, and shows we have lots to do," Nichols said. "We have our marching orders."

One of the big goals is to continue supporting the big events that Abbotsford excels at, like the airshow, RV show and the Pacific Agricultural Show. Those draw in people who don't just attend the main events, but also stay here, dine here and shop here.

"This is what Abbotsford is good at," Nichols said, and they plan to continue that work into the future.

But what people might not know is that Tourism Abbotsford also partners with local organizations to help improve assets across the community. Nichols used the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association (FVMBA) as an example of a successful partnership with a non-profit group.

Tourism Abbotsford is in the know on



Taste of Abby is Tourism Abbotsford's premier event of the year. (Tourism Abbotsford)

provincial and national funding opportunities, along with having their own resources to support groups, such as a grant writer to help write proposals. Meanwhile, the FVMBA knew that the trails and facilities on Sumas Mountain needed some updates, such as signage.

So together, Tourism Abbotsford and the FVMBA were able to get that new way-finding signage, making a star asset of the community even better for all. The improvements will be in place this spring. While that may seem like a small improvement, Nichols said Sumas Mountain is known far and wide as one of the best places to mountain bike, having some of the best soil for miles.

When visitors enjoy an amenity in a community, they are likely to return. When that happens, they might even consider moving to that community or bringing their business there. It's one of the reasons why robust tourism activity is important to a city with such potential growth.

Tourism Abbotsford is also focusing on building up its own unique event, Taste of Abby, as its premier event each fall. Taste of Abby focuses on another asset of the community – food production.

"We have a long-term vision it grows into a destination food festival," Nichols said. They launched it in September 2022, with

a market event that drew in 500 people and several special dining events. Nichols and the team see it growing and growing over the years, as people travel from the Okanagan, Vancouver Island, and other locales to enjoy all that the area has to offer in food and beverages.

They also kicked off the Sun and Soil Series that features intimate live concerts on local farms, which has the potential to grow over the years, as well.

Of course, having an international airport in your city is a boon to tourism, and Nichols envisions future growth that draws in more big events, including national conferences.

"Imagine people flying into the Abbotsford airport, eating at Abbotsford restaurants, staying at Abbotsford hotels," he said, while still being able to offer that local experience to visitors.

Their recent study found that, on average, travel parties spend \$585 while in Abbotsford. Day visitors spend an average of \$185 while overnight visitors average \$922 per party.

"People can fly here quite inexpensively," Nichols said, and take day trips into Vancouver or other destinations while making Abbotsford their temporary home base.

To learn more about Tourism Abbotsford, visit tourismabbotsford.ca.



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ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ABBOTSFORD BUSINESS IN MOTION

abbotsford.ca/economicdevelopment econdev@abbotsford.ca 604-864-5586



NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY

Tourism Abbotsford has developed a new five-year strategic plan that builds on the wide range of tourism experiences available in Abbotsford – everything from outdoor pursuits and agri-tourism to sports, arts, culture, and heritage activities. “We will continue to celebrate everything that defines ‘Abbotsford’ and build awareness, excitement and intention to visit amongst visitors who stay longer, share their stories with their friends and return often,” says Craig Nichols, Executive Director Tourism Abbotsford. “We recognize the importance of working collaboratively with our community and all residents of Abbotsford.”

In addition to promoting the community to residents and travellers, Tourism Abbotsford works to share with residents and their elected representatives the contribution tourism makes to life in the community, and advocates for the industry’s needs and improvements to infrastructure and experiences enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

tourismabbotsford.ca/industry

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Don't want to miss events or things to do in Abbotsford? There's an app for that! Locals and visitors alike can stay up-to-date with the latest events, activities and local tourism news easily, and plan their next adventure from the palm of their hand. Not only is the app regularly updated with community events, but it's also filled with great ideas for things to do and experience, right in your own backyard! Find links to download the app for both Apple and Android devices.

tourismabbotsford.ca/plan

ABBOTSFORD GEOTOUR

The Abbotsford GeoTour was launched last summer, inviting people to touch and taste agriculture as they explored a selection of parks, businesses, and historical centres in our community. The tour saw people from all over the world participate. To date over 14,000 cache logs have been noted. This tour will continue until next summer and we look forward to attracting more locals and tourists to our fun GeoTour.

abbotsford.ca/geocaching

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

On October 26, the Economic Development Department participated in WorkBC's highly successful Job Fair held at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Centre in Abbotsford.

The Job Fair connected hundreds of job seekers with employers and employment support agencies to discover new career paths and training opportunities. The event included representatives from a wide range of local employers, post-secondary education, industry training associations and employment support agencies. Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service, BC Paramedic Service, the Industry Training Association, Ironworkers Local 97, and the University of the Fraser Valley were among the organizations taking part in the event.

abbotsford.ca/investing#workforce

COMMUNITY SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2022, Abbotsford was home to over 160 community special events bringing in people from all over the world. A few of the major events this past year included Berry Fest, Canada Day, GeoWoodstock, Agrifair, Abbotsford Airshow and Nagar Kirtan.

abbotsford.ca/events

COMMUNITY EVENT TOOLKIT

To ensure safe and successful events, the City has provided free event equipment to over 25 events through the Community Event Tool Kit program. This equipment includes 10x10 tents, tables, chairs and a variety of other event supplies.

abbotsford.ca/specialevents

CANADA DAY 2022

2022 was a very special year for our community as we gathered safely in-person for the first time since 2019 to celebrate Canada and our community.

50,000+ event attendance	15,000+ parade attendance	20,000+ fireworks spectators
---------------------------------------	--	---

VIEW 2022 HIGHLIGHTS:

[f /CityOfAbbotsford](https://www.facebook.com/CityOfAbbotsford) [@thecityofabbotsford](https://www.instagram.com/thecityofabbotsford)

FRASER VALLEY ALLIANCE

The Fraser Valley Alliance (FVA) is a collaboration between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Maple Ridge and Township of Langley working together to attract foreign direct investment to the region. The FVA has recently launched its new website, featuring information on the Fraser Valley's economy, demographics, workforce and transportation networks.

Investment sector attraction priorities for the FVA include agri-technology, advanced manufacturing, information and communications technology, aerospace and clean technologies.

investfraservalley.ca

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The recently created Corporate Partners Program allows opportunities for the business community to engage in enhancing City programs in Abbotsford, while reducing costs. In 2022, corporate sponsorship brought in \$35,500 in paid sponsorships, and \$21,000 in services provided. Sponsors for Canada Day benefited with record breaking attendance of 50,000 people, 18,000 web page views and increased social media recognition. By tracking digital marketing statistics, we can provide benefits to future sponsors, and enrich programs and activities for the residents of Abbotsford.

abbotsford.ca/economicdevelopment

FOCUS ON SAFETY

There has been a noticeable increase in attendees at community special events, and a massive job turnover that was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant a lot of new staff and/or lack of staff for event suppliers to support special events and incidents at public events appear to be on the rise. Now, more than ever, the City is focused on safety at community special events and continues to work together with event organizers on appropriate venue selection and to review and revise safety and emergency management plans to ensure continued success of safe and fun events in Abbotsford.

abbotsford.ca/specialevents



Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival

Tourism Abbotsford hosted the inaugural **Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival** showcasing the wide variety of farm-to-table and agri-tourism experiences that Abbotsford offers. Events included a Night Market at Jubilee Park, the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association Art & Wine Walk, Abby Food and Farm Awards in partnership with the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, the premiere screening of Rails, Jails & Trolleys in partnership with the University of the Fraser Valley, an Indigenous Picnic in partnership with Sema:th First Nations, special restaurant menu items and picnic packs, and a video series on food sustainability and food security.

This year, Taste of Abby will run September 15-24, 2023.





2022 FILMING STATS IN ABBOTSFORD

70 FILM PRODUCTIONS IN ABBOTSFORD

05 FEATURE FILMS

44 MOVIES OF THE WEEK

04 10 SERIES

INDEPENDENT FILMS

7 COMMERCIALS

148 FILM INQUIRIES

\$2.61M ECONOMIC IMPACT

BUSIEST FILMING MONTH: **Q3** JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022

160 FILMING LOCATIONS

330 FILMING DAYS

TOP FILMING DESTINATIONS: MT LEHMAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ABBOTSFORD



APPLICATIONS OPEN MARCH 1ST

Make a difference. Let us help.

Did you know Abbotsford is hosting the BC 55+ games this year? Seniors are an integral part of our community, making up 18.3% of Abbotsford residents. We invite you to create opportunities for connection and unique experiences for Abbotsford seniors through the **Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG)** program. If you have an idea for a project supporting seniors visit abbotsford.ca/grants to learn more.

Tips to get started!

- 1 APPLY:** Applications open on **MARCH 1**. Submit your application by **APRIL 15**.
- 2 COMMITTEE REVIEW:** Applications will be reviewed in **MAY**.
- 3 ORIENTATION & FUNDING:** Work with the NSG coordinator to set up a time to meet and collect funding.
- 4 EVENTS & REPORTING: JUNE 1 - NOVEMBER 1** Organizers host events and take photos/videos. Organizers are asked to send stories, photos and videos to the NSG coordinator for the NSG website.
- 5 CELEBRATE & WRAP UP!**



2022 EVENT STATS IN ABBOTSFORD

74 OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

175 EVENT DAYS | **432,890** IN ATTENDANCE

29 EVENT TOOL KITS UTILIZED APPROXIMATE IN-KIND VALUE OVER \$12,000

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: **\$14,364,880**



JOIN THE SMALL GRANTS RESIDENTS COMMITTEE

abbotsford.ca/grants



Are you passionate about building connections within your community?

Do you enjoy being part of a team? If so, we are looking for residents of Abbotsford to become members of our **Neighbourhood Small Grants Residents Committee**.

Applications close on **April 1, 2023**. Learn more at abbotsford.ca/grants

Meet your new council

2022-2026 ABBOTSFORD CITY COUNCIL

Abbotsford City Council was sworn in on November 5, 2022 and will serve the community of Abbotsford until the next municipal election in October 2026. Our Mission: We strive to continually improve the quality of life within our community by delivering key services for current and future generations.



Ross Siemens MAYOR

Ross was elected Mayor of the City of Abbotsford after serving on Abbotsford City Council as a Councillor from 2014 – 2022. Ross was born and raised in Abbotsford and previously served on the District of Abbotsford Council from 1986 to 1990. While serving on the District Council, he helped initiate the Business Improvement Area legislation that established the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association. Ross is an outdoor enthusiast and an avid runner.



Les Barkman COUNCILLOR

Les started work with the District of Matsqui in the Parks and Recreation Department and served the District of Matsqui/City of Abbotsford for 44 consecutive years. Les was elected to Council in 2008. As a city councillor, Les' goal is to be a significant voice representing all residents in Abbotsford.



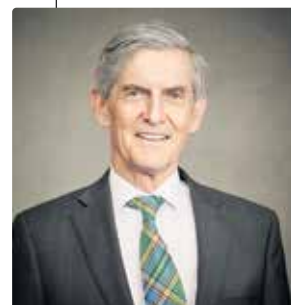
Kelly Chahal COUNCILLOR

Kelly has been a community advocate for the past 30 years. Kelly has her Masters in Criminal Justice, for 23 years has worked for the Ministry of Justice as a Probation Officer and is currently enrolled in a Doctorate of Social Sciences Program. She is passionate about social justice issues and her career has encompassed race relations, criminal justice, training and education as well as being an Independent Chairperson in Federal Institutions for 10 years.



Patricia Driessen COUNCILLOR

Patricia has lived and invested in Abbotsford her entire life. She received a Marketing & Sales Certificate and Public Relations Certificate from the University of the Fraser Valley and an Event & Conventions Management Diploma from Thompson Rivers University. In 2011, she launched her company, Perfect Sense Events. Patricia likes to squeeze in a spin class or hike in between attending community events.



Simon Gibson COUNCILLOR

Simon returns to Council after serving two terms as an area Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). He previously served on Abbotsford Council for three decades. Simon taught at the University of the Fraser Valley and Trinity Western University (TWU) in business, communications and leadership. He runs regularly and also enjoys gourmet cooking, travel, reading, long distance running, cycling, and automobile literature.



Dave Loewen COUNCILLOR

Dave was born and raised in Abbotsford and has served on Council since 2005. Dave is a retired teacher/administrator, having taught two years in Australia, three in Manitoba, and 32 at MEI, in Abbotsford. Trained as a Social Science teacher, his career began as a German teacher and ended as an English teacher. Dave has a keen interest in family history and genealogy and he enjoys travelling and the outdoors (snowshoeing and canoeing), as well as swimming and cycling.



Patricia Ross COUNCILLOR

Patricia has served as a City Councillor since 1994 and fully embraces sustainability principles in her work, considering the environmental, social and economic impacts in all decision making. She is a Fellow of Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) International, a research and training program dedicated to fostering worldwide sustainability. She is currently chair of GroYourBiz Fraser Valley, an occasional guest speaker and lecturer, and enjoys traveling to experience different cultures.



Dave Sidhu COUNCILLOR

Dave was born and raised in Abbotsford and has been focused on community outreach from an early age. Through his family's business, he has been involved with various fundraising efforts over the years and is the General Manager for The Patrika, North America's first Punjabi-English newspaper. Dave enjoys spending time with loved ones, being outdoors and around animals, and taking family trips.



Mark Warkentin COUNCILLOR

Mark is a lawyer, with a special interest in public service, effective board governance, and collegial decision-making. Mark is a founding partner of Linley Welwood LLP, a full-service law firm. His past service to the community includes 6 years on the Abbotsford Police Board and 2 years as President of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce. He is a fourth generation resident who enjoys trail running, vintage cars, travel, and motorcycling.



Steady as she goes

Applications were received for 900 new residential units – up from 460 in 2020 and 656 in 2021. Building permits were issued for 621 of those units last year. There are approximately 1,500 new multi-family residential units currently in stream – awaiting permit approval – for 2023.



A lot of these will be market-dependent with interest rates, but we're not anticipating much of a slowdown ... people are keeping their foot on that gas pedal.

Ross Siemens



Construction is well underway for the first phase of the Rail District in historic downtown Abbotsford. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

'Unprecedented interest' in housing development

'Fairly significant uptake,' says Mayor Ross Siemens

Abbotsford is experiencing an "unprecedented interest" in housing development, says Mayor Ross Siemens.

He said 2023 is off to a good start, carrying over from last year's success.

In 2022, 1,186 building permits were issued. This is near the five-year average of 1,224 at a time when the city is still recovering from the pandemic years.

Applications were received for 900 new residential units – up from 460 in 2020 and 656 in 2021. Building permits were issued for 621 of those units last year, Siemens said.

There are approximately 1,500 new multi-family residential units currently in stream – awaiting permit approval – for 2023.

Siemens said many of these are related to large development projects – such as Vicarro Ranch and the former Cooper Farm – and to new development in Auguston and west Abbotsford.

"A lot of these will be market-dependent with interest rates, but we're not anticipating much of a slowdown," Siemens said.

"We're seeing some fairly significant uptake, and people are keeping their foot on that gas pedal."

He said building permits processed in 2022 amount to \$500 million in residential, industrial and commercial development, compared to \$426 million in 2021. This is the third highest value in the city's history, and tops the five-year average of \$482 million, Siemens added.

Among some of the largest housing projects currently underway in Abbotsford is the

Highstreet Village apartment-and-townhouse project at Mt. Lehman Road and Cardinal Avenue, north of Highstreet Shopping Centre.

The project entails eight condo buildings and 157 townhouse units, amounting to more than 700 housing units in total.

The townhouses consist of a mix of two-, three- and four-bedroom units ranging in size from 1,317 to 1,819 square feet. Seven of the units include private rooftop amenity areas.

There will also be a two-storey amenity building of almost 3,000 square feet.

The apartment buildings are composed of one-, two- and three-bedroom units ranging from 500 to 974 square feet, and include a two-level underground parkade.

The development's two parcels of land, totalling 12.5 acres, were sold to developers Alf and Bruno Wall – who are brothers – for \$26 million in 2018.

Another massive project that received the thumbs-up from council in 2022 is the former 63-acre Cooper Farm property at 2857 McMillan Rd.

The plan calls for almost 18 acres of land being dedicated to the city as parkland, while the rest will be designated for almost 400 units of housing, including single-family homes (some with secondary suites), duplex homes and townhomes.

Also in the plans for 2023 is Abbotsford's tallest building – a 31-storey mixed-use building on Garden Street across from Canadian Tire. The application proposes 262 living units with 859 square feet of commercial space and a 473-square-foot daycare.

Siemens said council should receive a staff report on the project in the "near future."

Moving east into the downtown core, the Rail District, which broke ground in 2021, is another massive development.

The "master planned" community by developer Infinity Properties is located on the 19-acre site of the former Clayburn Brick Plant property east of McCallum Road and north of George Ferguson Way and Pine Street.

The multi-year plan entails building five new neighbourhoods, with the first phase consisting of 91 two- and three-bedroom townhouse units.

The next three phases consist of one townhouse site and three of apartments. In all, the project includes 650 residential units, as well as 80,000 square feet of retail and office space.

Other long-term projects in the works include the 1,400-unit Vicarro Ranch development on Sumas Mountain and the 500-unit UDistrict project near University of the Fraser Valley.

Siemens said the city is also looking at more low-income and supportive housing, as well as innovative approaches to housing, such as including a bachelor suite as part of a three-bedroom apartment.

The suite could be rented out to help a family with mortgage costs and then, as their family grows, used for their own purposes.

Siemens said the city wants to see more creative solutions that "give people options that they never would have thought would be available in Abbotsford."

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50,000 alumni

Since its launch 49 years ago, UFV has sent nearly 50,000 alumni out into the world. UFV will celebrate 50 years of growing and changing with the Fraser Valley in 2024 and has experienced major development since its humble beginnings in storefronts and church basements in 1974.



UFV also continues to be innovative in ensuring that students graduate with career-ready skills.



University of the Fraser Valley's Abbotsford campus. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

UFV an integral contributor to economy and community

From humble beginnings, university set to celebrate 50th anniversary in 2024

Wherever you go in Abbotsford, you will experience the impact of the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV).

UFV alumni are working in health care, education, business, trades, social services, the non-profit sector and many other areas. They are entrepreneurs, leaders and engaged citizens.

Since its launch 49 years ago, UFV has sent nearly 50,000 alumni out into the world, equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. UFV will celebrate 50 years of growing and changing with the Fraser Valley in 2024 and has experienced major development since its humble beginnings in storefronts and church basements in 1974.

The university also helps drive the local economy. With more than 1,000 employees, many of whom live in the region, UFV creates an economic spinoff effect.

Wages paid to UFV employees are re-injected into the local economy, creating a "multiplier effect" of 1.7 times their initial economic impact. In other words, every dollar spent by UFV in payroll has an impact of \$1.70.

And having a university in the community increases Abbotsford's attractiveness as a good community in which to raise a family.

UFV research centres – including the Food

and Agriculture Institute, the South Asian Studies Institute, the Community Health and Social Innovation Hub, the Peace and Reconciliation Centre, the Centre for Education on Research and Aging, and the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – are involved in making community connections and are launching research projects and partnerships.

UFV also continues to be innovative in ensuring that students graduate with career-ready skills. In addition to the co-operative education and job search options offered by the Centre for Experiential and Career Education, UFV's College of Arts is actively seeking partnerships for work-integrated learning opportunities for students.

It is also launching the School of Creative Arts Community Lab, an entrepreneurial program that includes skills in digital media production, collaborative team building, and project management, where students will be employed by local businesses for contracts.

UFV students also take part in CityStudio partnerships with the City of Abbotsford, in which students are challenged with real-life projects as part of their course curriculum.

The university continues to play a role in encouraging thought and debate about timely issues. UFV Theatre presented Ghosting

Sumas Lake, a "devised theatre" play written by students from their own experiences of the 2021 Fraser Valley flood.

UFV's Peace and Reconciliation Centre is collaborating with a group of Stó:lō agencies to offer an educational program that will help participants enhance their capacity for alliances and reconciliation building.

The university's Flood Stories project collected introspective and impactful stories, images, art and insights from people affected by the devastating Sumas Prairie flood of 2021 and related environmental disasters.

UFV's South Asian Studies Institute celebrated the launch of the South Asian Canadian Legacy project, featuring six resources aimed at reducing racism through education.

And the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is involved with the Abbotsford Innovation Network, which will be holding its inaugural event – Abby Innovates: Connecting Minds, Sparking Ideas – on Feb. 28.

This event is an opportunity to connect with people interested in innovation, hear from local experts, and learn about the latest innovation in the Fraser Valley and beyond.

Dr. Jon Thomas, director of the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, will speak at the event.

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Benefits of walk-in tubs

As we age and begin to lose our mobility and sense of balance, bathing can not only become difficult but also a cause of additional stress and anxiety. Fear of falling and a fear of not being able to get out of the tub are two of the most common occurrences with many of our seniors today. Walk-in tubs have become extremely popular in the last decade and estimates show that people who go ahead and install a walk-in tub in their homes today, will be able to live independently for an additional five years.

Walk-in tubs are exactly what the name implies, tubs that have large doors that open, and you simply walk in and sit down on a 17-inch-high seat. You close and lock the door and the tub fills rapidly while you are sitting comfortably and safely inside. All the taps and controls are easily accessible at your fingertips. Once you are done your bath, turn the dial and the tub quickly drains and you simply open the door and walk out of the tub. The various models all have numerous grab bars and non-slip surfaces making getting in and out worry free. Walk-in tubs are designed for an aging

population who desire to remain independent for many years to come.

Manufacturers have optional tub designs accommodating every shape and size of person and bathroom. There is a tub size that will fit in the space where your existing tub or shower is. Walk-in tubs can be as basic as a soaker tub to as deluxe as your own personal spa. Offering numerous options such as heated back, multi-speed warm air jets, water jets, ozone, light therapy, aromatherapy, and more.

The benefits of a walk-in tub are numerous. Many people crave being able to confidently have a bath again and find relief by just soaking in a warm tub. Owners say they believe they sleep better after a soothing bath. The warm air or water jets give a deep massage and help to stimulate circulation, thus carrying additional healing oxygen throughout the body to the hands and feet. This has shown positive results increasing mobility and helping to relieve the pain and symptoms of such conditions as arthritis, chronic back pain, fibromyalgia, diabetic and



peripheral neuropathy, as well as various other acute and chronic conditions.

The Canadian Government website states that 1 in 4 seniors fall every year, and 25% of these falls are serious, leaving the victims permanently disabled and bedridden. A large percentage of these falls take place in

the bathroom. Aside from all the pain and suffering it also ends up costing the Canadian medical system two billion dollars annually. Therefore, the British Columbia and Federal Governments are helping many people who decide to purchase a walk-in tub now. The help comes in the forms of a tax credit, a Provincial

“ Perhaps, one of the best decisions I’ve made is when I decided to go ahead and put a walk-in tub in my house. I no longer have a fear of falling and this will help me live in my home for many more years to come.”

Jean S.

Sales Tax waiver, and in certain qualifying cases a \$7,500.00 Government Grant.

As we all age and the years fly by, many seniors are faced with the reality that taking proactive steps today and deciding to retrofit their homes with a walk-in tub is one of the best investments they can make to help them age in place, comfortably and independently in the home they love.

■ Sponsored content provided by Walk-in Tubs Fraser Valley.

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Total population: 153,524
Between 2016 and 2021, Abbotsford welcomed 12,000 new residents and grew by 8.6%.

Top 5 non-official languages spoken:
Punjabi
Chinese
German
Spanish
Tagalog

Median age: 39.2 years
Abbotsford residents remain younger than our provincial and national counterparts, whose median age is 42.8 and 41.6 respectively.

Physicians-to-population ratio:
In Fraser East, there are 156.8 physicians to 100,000 population, significantly less than the provincial average of 253.7 phy-

sicians per 100,000 population and the national rate of 242.3. B.C. does not have adequate family physicians to support the province's population, with an estimated one in five British Columbians without a doctor.

Median after-tax income of one-parent families
Abbotsford: \$65,000
British Columbia: \$65,000

Median employment income Men:
Abbotsford: \$43,200

British Columbia: \$43,600
Women:
Abbotsford: \$24,800
British Columbia: \$28,400

Labour force participation, 2021 average
Percentage of total population 15 years and older participating in the labour force
Abbotsford: 67.1%
British Columbia: 65.3%

Voter turnout: 2020 provincial election
49.5% Abbotsford
54.5% British Columbia

Voter turnout: 2021 federal election
59.4% Abbotsford
61.4% British Columbia
62.6% Canada

* Source: Abbotsford Community Foundation's 2022 Abbotsford's Vital Signs

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2022, 2021, 2020
2019, 2017, 2016



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2023 LEADERSHIP TEAM



RAVI DUHRA, PARTNER
BCOMM, LL.B, JD
Commercial Department Head



LOUISE GIESBRECHT, CONTROLLER
CPA, CGA



KAM GREWAL, ASSOCIATE
BSC, LL.B, TEP, CEA
Wills & Estates Team Lead



RACHEL HAZELTON, PARALEGAL
Commercial Team Lead



JESSIE LEGAREE, PARTNER
BA, MA, JD
Head of Litigation



DOUGLAS LESTER, PARTNER
K.C., BAA, LL.B, CPHR



HEATHER OMEBUS, PARALEGAL
Corporate Department Head



STEPHANIE ROSSO, PARALEGAL
Litigation Team Lead



SARAH SWANT, PARALEGAL
Real Estate Development Head



GRAHAM TRAYNOR
CPHR
Human Resources Manager



SHERI YAKASHIRO, PARTNER
BA, JD
Wills & Estates Department Head

Downtown Abbotsford opens up after challenging pandemic period



Abbotsford's historic downtown core is active again following challenges related to the pandemic. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

Events were back in a big way for downtown core in 2022

The softening of restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant life back to Abbotsford's historic downtown core, with the return of several of the area's popular events.

The summer saw the full return of Berry Fest – the annual event that celebrates all things berry. Berry Fest did not occur in 2020 and a smaller celebration called Very Berry Week took place in 2021.

The 2022 event, the 39th annual, ran on July 16 and featured many of the traditional favourites returning. These included live music entertainers, the Great Berry Fest Bake Off, a pie-eating contest, a car show-and-shine, carnival games, food trucks, a full-site licence to enjoy local craft beer, a vendor market, berry sales from Neufeld Farms, street

entertainment, balloon twisting, face-painting and several rides.

Another event that returned to downtown was the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market, which ran in Jubilee Park from May to October. The park also hosted the return of Jam in Jubilee, a live concert series, on July 7, 14, 21 and 28.

Local artists were also featured at the Fall Art and Wine Walk on Sept. 15. Those who missed out in September can take in a similar event this May.


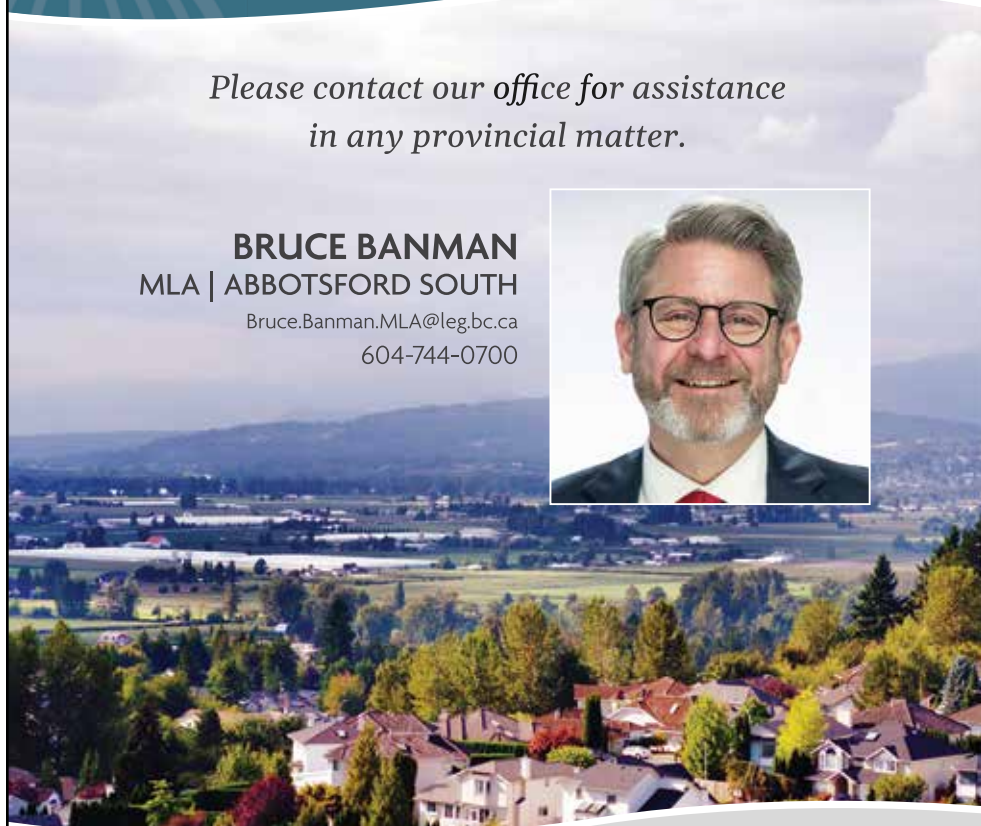
Downtown also returned to being a gathering point for seasonal celebrations. The area hosted a trick-or-treat event on Oct. 29, with a photo booth and several participating businesses handing out candy.

Continued on B23

Proud to Serve Abbotsford as Your MLA

Please contact our office for assistance in any provincial matter.

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Several new businesses set up in the downtown

From B22

The Winter Jubilee also lit up downtown for the holidays on Dec. 3. The event featured a tree lighting, Santa Claus photos, ice carving, a clothing drive, live music, cookie decorating, a beverage lounge, face-painting and more. The holiday season also featured the annual storefront window decorating contest, with several stores creating festive storefronts.

Construction continues to occur in the downtown area, and on May 30 two new apartment buildings proposed for the area were initial approval by Abbotsford council.

One is for a six-storey, 73-unit building at 2731 Montrose Ave. The other is for a six-storey, 90-unit building at 2673, 2683 and 2691 Trinity St.

The Montrose project, located at the corner of Montrose and Pine, is the third of six phases of The Rail District development on the previous Clayburn Brick Plant lands. Phase 1 is currently under construction at 2714, 2724 and 2774 Montrose Ave.

The building will consist of five studio units, 25 one-bedroom suites, 23 one-bedroom suites with den, 19 two-bedroom units, and one two-bed-

room unit with den. It is also required to provide ground-floor commercial use.

The required 126 residential parking spaces will be located in a two-level underground parkade accessed from Montrose. Another 26 parking spots for commercial use will be provided in a parking lot off Pine Street.

The Trinity Street project will include two studio units, 48 one-bedroom suites and 40 two-bedroom units. The required 122 parking spaces will be provided in an underground parkade.

Last year also saw the arrival of several new businesses, including Grey Tide Tattoo, La Reina, SinAmen Bun Co., Verde Beauty Lounge, Studioture, Private Barbershop, Forage and Faire, The Habit Project, Let's Talk Flooring and More, and Remedy Tattoo.

The new businesses join an area that is known for its selection of eateries, including wine, tea and coffee shops; 1950s-style diners; bakeries and delis; and cultural cuisine such as Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese.

The aforementioned new establishments join a pedestrian-friendly area that currently has more than 300 options for dining, shopping, service and entertainment.



Several murals are featured throughout Abbotsford's historic downtown core. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

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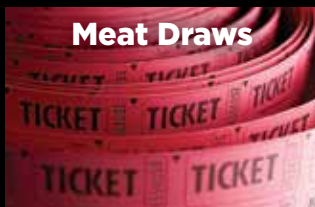
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* Source: Abbotsford Community Foundation's 2022 Abbotsford's Vital Signs

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Ledgeview Golf and Country Club set to return to full capacity



The new clubhouse at the Ledgeview Golf and Country Club has quickly become a top local attraction. (Ben Lypka/Abbotsford News)

This year is set to be a significant one for Abbotsford's Ledgeview Golf and Country Club.

It's expected that by late spring all the new turf installed has had the needed time to mature and the course will return to full capacity.

That growth is the final step related to the construction on the course of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

The actual construction officially concluded on July 19, 2022. As a result, the course will now regain much of its original length and many of its greens.

During the construction period, which began in 2021, Ledgeview was forced to shorten to a 4,276-yard par-64 layout with six temporary greens. With Trans Mountain off the property, previously closed tee boxes and greens will reopen, allowing Ledgeview to lengthen the layout to a 5,452-yard par-67 with only three temporary greens.

The pipeline project sliced across five fairways and the driving range before running through the 12th green and directly down the entire length of the 15th hole.

Nearly 1,000 yards of the pipeline path need to be redesigned and resodded, in-

cluding two brand new green complexes. Trans Mountain and the City of Abbotsford signed a community benefit agreement in 2016 for an investment of \$1.3 million from Trans Mountain towards the revitalization of the city-owned Ledgeview Golf Course.

The new clubhouse, which officially opened on Sept. 29, 2021, was the result of that CBA.

Ground was officially broken on the site in October 2019, the same year the project was finalized by city council with a total budget of \$6.8 million, \$2.1 million of which came from insurance proceeds of the 2016 fire that destroyed the original clubhouse.

Earlier in 2021, it was announced that Ledgeview had partnered with the Joseph Richard Group, which now operates the new food and beverage space inside the clubhouse.

The new dining area is known as Tavern on the Green, and JRG also offers a full-service event space in the facility called Hillside Events.

In February 2022 it was also announced that a ghost kitchen concept known as Meal Ticket Brands was using Ledgeview's kitchen as the centre of a deliver zone in Abbotsford.

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Abbotsford Canucks' growth, school-field usage top issues

AHL has been an early success in Abbotsford, field availability causes headaches



Centennial Pool

Abbotsford's Centennial Pool reopened on June 18 after receiving almost \$1.1 million in improvements. The pool was closed throughout 2020 due to the pandemic, and preparations began in March 2021 for its reopening. But city staff discovered that the conditions of the facility had deteriorated and would require upgrades.

Robert Bateman Timberwolves senior varsity football team completed a perfect season and captured the school's first-ever football provincial championship inside BC Place on Dec. 3.

It was a return to action for sports in Abbotsford in 2022, with professional, university and high school athletes returning to competition after a few pandemic pauses in January.

When the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1, the Abbotsford Centre found itself under new management as the initial contract began between Aquilini Investment Group and the City of Abbotsford.

The five-year deal sees the city pay AIG an annual management fee of \$750,000, which includes all operating costs, but the city is responsible for capital maintenance and repair. The contract further includes "revenue-sharing opportunities" for the city based on the number and type of event tickets sold.

AIG is responsible for all activities at the arena, including sports events, trade shows, and cultural and entertainment events.

The revenue sharing states that, if an average of 5,000 tickets are sold per regular-season home game, the city will share in the profits. That profit formula has not been shared by either party.

The team averaged 4,292 people at the AC for the 2021-22 American Hockey League, which ended April 26. Capacity restrictions of 50 per cent were in place for all of January and were not lifted until Feb. 16. A vaccine pass was also mandatory in order to attend games until April 8.

Both of those restrictions no longer exist and attendance has increased significantly at the AC since. The team is averaging over 5,000 fans for 2022-23 and broke the franchise record for attendance with 6,519 fans at the team's home opener on Oct. 28. They also drew 6,407 on Dec. 3. The team managed its first sell-out on Jan. 21, 2023 with 7,081 fans packing the AC.

On the ice, the Canucks made a strong push in the month of April, winning nine of 11 games to finish in the AHL's Pacific Division. The franchise's first foray into the playoffs was short, as the team was eliminated in two games by the Bakersfield Condors.

Abbotsford's first-ever head coach Trent Cull received a promotion and was named a new assistant coach with the Vancouver Canucks on July 1. It opened up the position for new head coach Jeremy Colliton, who was named as the second coach in franchise history, also on July 1.

The team had a strong start to the 2022-23 season and has been in the top four of their division for the majority of the season.

The AIG bond with Abbotsford was also strengthened when it was announced that the Vancouver Canucks would be playing an NHL exhibition game at the AC. Vancouver



The Abbotsford Canucks continue to draw people to the Abbotsford Centre. (John Morrow/Abbotsford News)

hosted the Edmonton Oilers on Oct. 5 and it marked the second straight year that Abbotsford hosted an NHL exhibition game.

School field availability also became a hot topic in 2022, and it all started when Abbotsford city council voted to end its joint-use agreement with the school district in relation to the artificial turf field at W.J. Mouat Secondary.

The field had been closed since September 2021 after it was deemed unsafe. The city had initially invested \$2 million from development cost charges to construct the field, and entered into a 10-year JUA in 2007, with a five-year extension.

It was later revealed that the city offered to split the potential cost 50/50 of a new field with the school district, but they were only able to offer \$500,000 and thus were unable to commit to a true 50/50 split. As a result, an agreement to jointly fund the new field at Mouat could not be met.

As a result of that dissolution, the school district announced starting on Aug. 1 that community recreation activities would no longer be approved for booking on the artificial turf sports field at Abbotsford Senior Secondary.

The board stated at a public meeting on June 14 that doing so would extend the remaining life of the field and avoid the situation that occurred at Mouat.

This decision left Abbotsford's Valley Attack field lacrosse without a home, and they were forced to find space on short notice. They partnered with a program in Mission and found space at the MRC Fields in Abbotsford.

The sports-field issue was discussed during the Abbotsford municipal elections, but little has been discussed since. It's un-

clear what the plan is moving forward, but the city and school board have been unable to come to an agreement.

In more positive sports news, Abbotsford's Centennial Pool reopened on June 18 after receiving almost \$1.1 million in improvements.

The pool was closed throughout 2020 due to the pandemic, and preparations began in March 2021 for its reopening. But city staff discovered that the conditions of the facility had deteriorated and would require upgrades before it could be operational.

The project's estimated budget was \$1.086 million, with the money coming from the Community Works Fund, available to local governments in B.C. through a direct allocation of gas tax. It is based on a per-capita formula.

The work is expected to extend the life of the pool by another five to seven years. The pool is the summer swim home of the Abbotsford Whalers aquatic club.

The year was also a memorable one for the Robert Bateman Timberwolves senior varsity football team. The club completed a perfect season and captured the school's first-ever football provincial championship inside BC Place on Dec. 3.

In university sports, the pandemic created scheduling issues for both the University of the Fraser Valley Cascades and the Columbia Bible College Bearcats sports teams. By the fall, teams from both schools were back to normal schedules and continuing their quests for championships.

Junior and youth sports faced similar obstacles earlier in 2022, but by the fall things had more or less returned to pre-pandemic status.



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