



SOUNDING BOARD



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2023 Gala celebrates local business leaders

RECOGNITION | Celebrating community leaders

The 2023 Governors' Gala and Rix Awards brought together business leaders from across the region to celebrate outstanding contributions to the community. The Rix Awards is a unique program of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade created to pay tribute to the late Dr. Don Rix, a pillar of the community and the Chair of The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade in 2008-09.

Every year, the recipients of the Rix Awards are carefully selected by a special committee based on their dedication to charitable giving and leadership in the community. This year, the Gala featured special performances by the White Spot Pipe Band and Canadian musician and founding member of the Barenaked Ladies, Steven Page.

"The 2023 Rix Awards recipients are living proof of the power of

community and determination. It is a privilege to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments and unwavering commitment to excellence of our honourees who inspire and drive positive change within our community," said Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

The prestigious Rix Award for Engaged Community Citizenship was presented to Wendy Lisogar-Cocchia, C.M., O.B.C., LL.D. (HON.) and Sergio Cocchia, O.B.C., LL.D. (HON.), in recognition of their inexhaustible drive to broker positive relationships and advance economic and social good. The Cocchias have been called "a B.C. power couple" by the Vancouver Sun. The Vancouver-based entrepreneurs and philanthropists are fueled by their desire to make their community a better place to live, work and raise a family.

The Board of Trade presented its 2023 Rix Award for Engaged Corporate Citizenship to White Spot in honour of its support for local businesses and longstanding commitment to charitable giving in the community. White Spot has retained the essence of its legendary brand for more than nine decades, while continually re-inventing itself and staying relevant to changing times. The support of generations of dedicated employees and business partners, strong core values, openness to innovation and the courage to try new ventures have helped White Spot live up to its credo: "Make a Difference".

"Our 2023 honourees are outstanding and inspirational examples of what it means to be a volunteer, advocate, philanthropist, community leader, visionary, and so much more. This recognition is so well deserved and important for our community to



acknowledge. We are fortunate to be recognizing some incredible community and business leaders," said Juggy Sihota-Chahil, Gala Chair and Senior Vice Chair of the Board at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

In addition to the presentation of the 2023 Rix Awards, the immediate past

Chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, Kirsten Sutton, ICD., was inducted into the prestigious Council of Governors by Board Chair, Radha Curpen, Vice Chair, Vancouver Managing Partner and National Leader ESG Strategy & Solutions, Bennett Jones, LLP. SB

Building more homes for British Columbians

POLICY | Addressing the housing crisis

BC Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon recently addressed the future of housing in the province at an event hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. The crowd was made up of business leaders from across the region, looking to hear more about how the provincial government aims to address the varied and complex challenges underpinning the housing shortage.

The address came just weeks after the provincial government released their housing action plan, Homes for People. The action plan outlined zoning changes to alleviate the pressure on existing housing stock and plans to increase the supply of

middle-income small-scale, multi unit housing, and affordable rental units.

At the event, Minister Kahlon announced a \$9 million grant to Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster, aimed at making B.C. a leader in digital permitting and reducing permitting wait times. "I've heard time and time again about housing projects that take three, four, in some cases seven years to be approved. That is simply unacceptable. We must take decisive action to speed up local and provincial permitting to reduce costs, create more certainty, and deliver more homes, faster," he explained. Lengthy permitting processes and

varied processes between municipalities are frequently cited as a key challenge to increasing housing supply.

When asked about building enough supply to house a growing population and concerns about provincial involvement in municipal zoning processes, Minister Kahlon pointed to positive feedback on their action plan from municipal leaders. "I've been talking to mayors throughout the province around the changes we're making, particularly on the small-scale multi-use but also the ideas that we have around transit, and there's been overwhelming support. There are some mayors that have concerns

regarding the changes and we're going to work through those details with them."

In the panel discussion that followed, Andrew Ramlo, Vice President of Advisory Services at Rennie Group, pointed out that the housing itself is just one piece of the equation, saying, "Given growth in the region, the housing conversation is fundamentally important but the infrastructure that gets built around that as well, roads for people to get around to jobs and community centres is absolutely fundamental." Brenda Knights, Chief Executive Officer of the Vancouver Native Housing Society, further illustrated the point by articulating how a lack of

transportation infrastructure has historically disadvantaged Indigenous individuals by underserving the communities where they live.

A recurring theme from Minister Kahlon and the panellists throughout the event was the need for cooperation between the provincial and municipal levels of government, as well as the partners which develop housing throughout the province. The housing shortage and affordability challenges that were once confined to major urban centres now impact communities across B.C., and urgent, collaborative action is required to meet population growth across the province. SB

Tackling labour challenges in B.C.

LABOUR | New series unpacks labour shortage mitigation strategies

According to data from the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the Business Data Lab at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, labour issues have been among the most significant obstacles for businesses in Metro Vancouver over the last year.

B.C. has over 150,000 job vacancies, and it is projected that 700,000 people will retire in the next decade. Businesses in the Metro Vancouver region are struggling to attract, recruit, and retain talent. The latest series of episodes of GV-POD, Greater Vancouver's business podcast, unpacked labour challenges in the region with prominent figures in the community who are actively working to address those challenges.

Life Sciences

The first episode of the series featured Gordon McCauley, President and CEO of adMare Bio Innovations. Recognizing the constraints on growth caused by labour shortages, adMare launched adMare Academy and teamed up with the Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences to establish a pipeline of talent for the sector.



Despite labour challenges, McCauley sees a bright future for the sector. "We're in the middle of a generational moment without question, this is an opportunity for this ecosystem in Vancouver, and frankly, it's an opportunity for Canada to finally build the kind of life sciences industry that will be commensurate with the research enterprise that we have," he noted.

Post-Secondary

As education and the workforce

continue to evolve, institutions like BCIT will play an increasingly valuable role ensuring B.C. businesses have access to the skilled workforce they need. Skills training and education are evolving to meet the rapidly changing demands of the labour market. Kenton Low, Dean of the BCIT School of Business + Media, has experienced that evolution firsthand in both teaching roles and his work in the private sector.

Stackable credentials, life-long learning and customizable

curriculums are all a part of the Flexible Learning options BCIT offers students in an effort to make education accessible for everyone. "Our flexible programs and courses are designed to help you earn in a valuable BCIT credential, whether it's a microcredential or all the way up to a master's degree, while managing the commitment you have with your career, and your life," Low explained.

Government

The provincial government plays a critical role in developing the talent pipeline required for organizations to stay globally competitive. The Honourable Selina Robinson, B.C. Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, shared her perspective on how tackling labour challenges in B.C. requires a holistic approach. "Our Child Care Plan is part of our economic plan, which is part of making sure that the labour force has the confidence that their children are cared for so that they can continue to be productive in the economy. So that's again part of the holistic thinking that we're bringing," Minister Robinson explained.

The minister went on to relay

how the provincial government is looking to expand the role of microcredentials, speed up foreign credential recognition and ensure an adequate supply of housing for the workforce required to meet the labour needs of businesses in the province.

Tourism

Indigenous tourism is a significant employer and contributor to the economy in both B.C. and Canada. Indigenous tourism faces unique labour challenges as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic as many who worked in the sector were forced to find alternative sources of employment. Keith Henry, CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, explained that Indigenous tourism gives B.C. a competitive advantage by offering experiences unique to the region. Beyond Indigenous tourism, Henry also shared key insights for companies looking to increase their Indigenous workforce and attract more Indigenous people to their organization. **SB**

The full series, "B.C. Labour Challenges" is available on all major podcast streaming services, as well as boardoftrade.com/podcast.

Upcoming Programs and Events in May

EVENTS | Networking and industry insights

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade has an exciting line-up of programs and events scheduled for the coming month. Featuring career growth opportunities and access to industry leaders discussing the future of our region, these events will also offer the opportunity to connect with fellow members of the business community from a variety of sectors.

Get-on-Board: A Night of Non-Profit Engagement – Tuesday, May 9

Join us for this upcoming event that offers emerging professionals the chance to network with local

non-profits and charities. Discover exciting long-term volunteer or board-level positions with organizations that align with your passions and values. Don't miss out on this opportunity to give back to the community, gain valuable experience, and expand your professional network. Register now and take the first step towards making a difference while growing your career.

Unlocking B.C.'s Critical Minerals Potential – Tuesday, May 16

The 'Unlocking B.C.'s Critical Minerals Potential' event will feature a keynote address on how mining is becoming increasingly vital

to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Michael Goehring, President and CEO of the Mining Association of British Columbia will take centre stage to share his insights into the critical minerals opportunities that British Columbia has to offer. Discover what steps both industry and government must take to unlock B.C.'s critical minerals potential and pave the way towards a sustainable future.

Transportation Forum 2023, presented by Deloitte – Wednesday, May 17

This event will bring together industry experts and government



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Transportation Forum 2023
May 17, 2023

officials to discuss the future of moving people around Greater Vancouver and beyond. Along with the keynote speaker for the event, the Honourable Rob Fleming, B.C. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, a panel of experts will discuss what are the scalable, innovative, and clean solutions

that industry and government can collaborate on to ensure Metro Vancouver citizens can move sustainably and efficiently between work, home, and play. **SB**

Tickets to all of our upcoming events are available at boardoftrade.com/events.