
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Small Business and Revenue
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

VIDEO TECHNOLOGY LINKS SMALL BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES

VICTORIA – Easy access to business training and development programs are two of the benefits British Columbia’s small businesses can expect following today’s official launch of new video conferencing services in all regions of British Columbia, Small Business and Revenue Minister Rick Thorpe and Agriculture and Lands Minister Pat Bell announced today.

“This videoconferencing project demonstrates what can be accomplished when government and the small business community work together in partnership,” said Thorpe. “Small businesses across British Columbia, especially in areas outside the Lower Mainland, will now be able to access important seminars and workshops from their local communities, saving them time and money.”

“With this added resource located at FrontCounter BC locations, the Province will be able to better serve its clients,” said Bell. “We will be able to meet in a virtual sense with our colleagues across the province, thereby allowing for more efficient decision-making, which will in turn benefit B.C. businesses and reduce government’s carbon footprint.”

The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands together contributed \$305,000 to Small Business BC, to implement the video conferencing network service. Nine of the sites are housed in FrontCounter BC locations under the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and five are in the federal government’s Community Futures offices, with the Small Business BC office in Vancouver serving as the host site.

“We applaud the provincial government for investing in this new service,” said Patrick Marshall, Small Business BC’s chief governance officer. “Providing easy local access to training and development opportunities in Vancouver will help businesses in rural and resource dependent communities grow more effectively.”

The 15 new Small Business BC video conferencing sites also connect users to a larger network of video conferencing sites across British Columbia and Canada, through the Community Futures offices funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

“Quesnel’s business community is delighted to have access to this new video conferencing tool,” said Coralee Oakes, executive director of the Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce and Councillor for the city of Quesnel. “Video conferencing will allow our local businesses greater access to important business workshops and seminars right in our community and it will benefit the environment through reduced travel.”

Small Business BC is a not-for-profit organization that provides business information and services to help B.C. entrepreneurs start and grow their small businesses. Small Business BC is funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue.

FrontCounter BC is a single-window service for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies. FrontCounter BC offices provide natural resource clients all the information and authorizations they need to start or expand a business.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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