

## **Campbell River supports local small businesses and entrepreneurs**

Campbell River has a proud history of natural resource industries and a tourism sector that is blossoming. The city's gorgeous natural scenery gives residents the comforts of a large city with the welcoming feel of a small town, making Campbell River an ideal location to live and do business.

In recent years, the business landscape in Campbell River has changed, as people increasingly take the path of entrepreneurship to gain more control over the way they work. Over the last three years, Campbell River has seen a 50% increase in small businesses, prompting the municipality to gather feedback from existing and new entrepreneurs on ways to best help them grow and succeed in business. In 2017, the Modern Entrepreneurship Series was created to connect the City with local businesses, encourage mentorship and facilitate networking opportunities among local entrepreneurs and small business owners.

SuavAir Aerial Managing benefitted from the supports that the series provided to local entrepreneurs. As a first-time business owner, Colin Filliter, founder of SuavAir, attended the series' workshops, networking events and one-on-one mentorship sessions to help him better understand how to grow his business. As a result, he is now well-equipped to expand his business outside of Vancouver Island.

To encourage businesses to remain in the downtown area, the series also supported the broadband network initiative CRadvantage, which makes the Campbell River the first municipality on Vancouver Island to own and offer affordable fibre internet to businesses.

Thanks to this initiative, companies feel that their local government is listening to their needs and is working to help them succeed. TREMAIN Media, for example, is planning to set up its headquarters in downtown to take advantage of the city's fibre network.

Since its inception, the Modern Entrepreneur Series has revitalized the whole city and given entrepreneurs and small business owners a feeling of renewed energy, hope and trust in their local government. Truly, Campbell River is open for business.

In the future, the series plans to create roundtables that will help facilitate conversations on more specific challenges. The City will also continue to partner with businesses to provide the best services to its entrepreneur community and is also considering developing a youth engagement program that will connect high school students with local business owners.

The City of Campbell River is one of four winners of the Small Business BC, 2017 Open for Business Awards. The Open for Business Awards celebrate communities that are taking essential steps to creating a business-friendly environment, inspiring other communities to make it easier for small businesses to do business in their communities.