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**Campbell River wins 2018 provincial Open for Business award**

Campbell River came out on top as winning communities were announced at the Small Business BC Awards gala on Feb. 23 in Vancouver.

More than 30 B.C. communities were nominated, and Campbell River was recognized in the large communities category, for cities with populations greater than 25,000.

*“The City was up against strong competition, with the City of Prince George and the City of Penticton also being recognized as finalists in the large communities category for their progressive initiatives,”* says Mayor Andy Adams.

*“As nominees, we had to present a business case outlining the innovative ways Campbell River supports small business,”* says economic development officer Rose Klukas. *“Our case clearly set us apart and demonstrated that Campbell River’s initiatives are at the head of the pack.”*

The case studies were used by the Small Business Roundtable to select this year’s winners. The City’s business case focused on its Modern Entrepreneur initiative and, Campbell River’s municipal broadband network, CRadvantage. The Modern Entrepreneur initiative supports business retention and growth through events such as professional development workshops, networking opportunities, and roundtables encourage mentorship, learning, and collaboration. CR advantage provides the infrastructure required for high tech businesses.

*“Local economies are sustained by successful, innovative small businesses,”* says Deborah Sargent. *“In 2017, the City launched CRadvantage, the first municipal broadband network on Vancouver Island, to enable access to high-speed, affordable internet for our downtown businesses and residents. Initiatives like the Modern Entrepreneur and CRadvantage make Campbell River the natural choice for entrepreneurs and companies seeking a progressive community.”*

Small businesses are significant economic drivers. In British Columbia, small business accounts for 98 per cent of all businesses in the province. These businesses generate 45 per cent of the province’s gross domestic product, export 36 per cent of the total value of goods and employ more than one million people.

Mayor Adams adds, *“Congratulations to all the other nominees on their excellent contributions for the success of their small business communities.”*

The Open for Business Awards celebrate communities that have created a business-friendly culture that encourages small business growth.

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Contact:      Rose Klukas, Economic Development Officer      250-286-5738