

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **BC Chamber of the Year Awards Announced**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Vancouver, May 27, 2013** - Business leaders and Chamber of Commerce executives from communities across BC gathered in Nanaimo May 23 to 25 for the BC Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting & Conference to set the policy agenda for the coming year.

As part of the conference, the BC Chamber of Commerce recognized local Chambers of Commerce that have made exceptional contributions to their business community with the Chamber of the Year Award, the most prestigious distinction presented to a member Chamber.

The BC Chamber warmly congratulates this year's Chamber of the Year Award winner and honourable mention.

#### **Chamber of the Year 2013**

The BC Chamber of Commerce is very proud to give the 2013 Chamber of the Year Award to the Prince Rupert & District Chamber of Commerce (<http://princerupertchamber.ca>) for the outstanding leadership role it has played in supporting the Prince Rupert business community through economic challenges, including a downturn in the fishing industry and a devastating mill closure in 2001. This Chamber has worked tirelessly to boost morale and drive re-invention in the Prince Rupert business community. This Chamber has helped drive the development of a local cruiseship industry and helped boost regional tourism through a successful 2012 campaign inviting regional neighbours to "Stay, Eat and Play" in the community. It has raised up new business leaders through the Rising Star Program, a very successful mentorship program that pairs local college students with Chamber member mentors; many program "graduates" have secured jobs as a result of participating in the program or been inspired to launch their own business in the community! And this Chamber has grown its membership and clout in the community by keeping its fingers on the pulse of local issues and hosting highly-relevant speakers and events.

#### **Chamber of the Year 2013 - Honourable Mention**

The BC Chamber of Commerce is very proud to give the 2013 Chamber of the Year Award - Honourable Mention to the Tofino - Long Beach Chamber of Commerce ([www.tofinochamber.org](http://www.tofinochamber.org)) for its innovation and business leadership. Two years ago, this Chamber came up with a dynamite plan to grow its relevance to the Tofino business community and raise membership: it would bring top-tier speakers to town, by leveraging its network of connections and by seeking in-kind support from its membership to keep costs low and events accessible to the membership. Last year, this Chamber raised \$70,000 in in-kind donations, such as event space and catering, and was able to host high-profile speakers including politicians Elizabeth May, Carole James and Naomi Yamamoto. This Chamber has also won local council support - and funds - to look at creating a local economic

development commission; breathed new life into a longstanding community dream to bring a “Higher Learning Centre” to Tofino; and secured matching funds to continue a popular Ambassador program, which enhances tourists’ experiences by providing local residents with knowledge about the community’s history, ecology, events and more.

**Quotes from John Winter, president and CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce:**

“The Prince Rupert & District Chamber of Commerce has been an outstanding leader in its community, boosting morale and helping the local business community pull together and reinvent itself in the face of significant economic shifts and challenges. We sincerely applaud this Chamber’s strong leadership, tireless efforts and true northern grit.”

“The Tofino – Long Beach Chamber of Commerce is an inspiring example of a small Chamber punching above its weight and helping to tangibly lead its community forward. We congratulate this Chamber for its innovation, strategic thinking and sheer hard work.”

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