

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Williams Lake & District Chamber wins 2014 Chamber of the Year**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Vancouver, May 26, 2014** – The Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce has been named B.C.’s 2014 Chamber of the Year by the BC Chamber of Commerce.

“The Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce has truly been a rock for its business community,” said BC Chamber Chair Jim Belsheim, in presenting the award at the BC Chamber AGM & Conference in Richmond on Saturday, May 24.

Belsheim described how, in the face of significant job losses caused by the Mountain Pine Beetle’s devastation of the forestry industry plus the economic downturn of 2008, the Williams Lake & District Chamber mobilized the community to look for new economic opportunities.

“Demonstrating resourcefulness and leadership, this Chamber rallied the community and identified an industry – mining – that could diversify the local economy beyond forestry,” Belsheim said. “In doing so, this Chamber set a new vision for the economic future of the region and was able to keep its membership levels strong.”

Belsheim commended the Chamber, among other things, for its fierce advocacy in support of the New Prosperity mine.

“The Williams Lake & District Chamber 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 challenges,” he said. “We sincerely applaud this Chamber for its vision, initiative, resilience and sheer hard work.”

Jason Ryll, president of the Williams Lake and District Chamber, said his Chamber is honoured to receive the award.

“We are a community built on small business and to be recognized for our work is very rewarding,” he said. “We feel it demonstrates to the business community that we are doing everything we can to be their voice of business on issues that concern them. Advocating through collaboration with our members is a priority for us, and it’s nice to be acknowledged for the results.”

Ryll added that, behind the Chamber's hard work, is a strong sense of purpose.

"We do what we do because we believe it's the right thing to do," he said. "The more we can help small businesses, the more we help our communities. The Williams Lake & District Chamber will always work to provide leadership and to fulfill our vision for the growth we'd like to see. It's not always easy, but taking a stand never is."

Given out annually at the BC Chamber AGM & Conference, the Chamber of the Year Award recognizes a local Chamber of Commerce that has made an exceptional contribution to its business community. This Award is the most prestigious distinction that the BC Chamber can present to a local Chamber.

*The BC Chamber is the largest and most broadly-based business organization in the province. Representing more than 125 Chambers of Commerce and 36,000 businesses of every size, sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is "The Voice of Business in BC."*

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