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June 13 - July 3, 2022 | Issue 1702-04 | \$4.00

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Summertime job market matters in B.C.

Is the summer economy still a factor for the next generation of workers, or has the prospect of wading into the working life experiences delivered by entry-level employment become passé?

Front-line interaction with customers in service industries ranging from grocery checkout duty to restaurant table bussing and retail sales offers instant immersion in public relations and people-skills development.

Neither can be downloaded through social media or taught in online education courses.

The challenge, however, is that the public is not always a friendly beast, and developing people skills takes time, patience and emotional intelligence.

If that sounds like a lot of work, it is.

But there are no shortcuts to graduating from People Skills 101.

The failure rate is high.

That is unfortunate for a wide range of career aspirations, because good people skills are becoming increasingly valuable in the 21st century job market and increasingly fundamental to career success.

The good news today for people entering the workforce is that there is a lot of work available. That Canadian job market buoyancy is underscored in the latest **ManpowerGroup** Employment Outlook Survey. The poll of more than 1,000 employers across Canada found that 47 per cent plan to add staff in 2022's third quarter.

Sectors with the strongest employment outlook include manufacturing, technology, media and communications, finance and real estate.

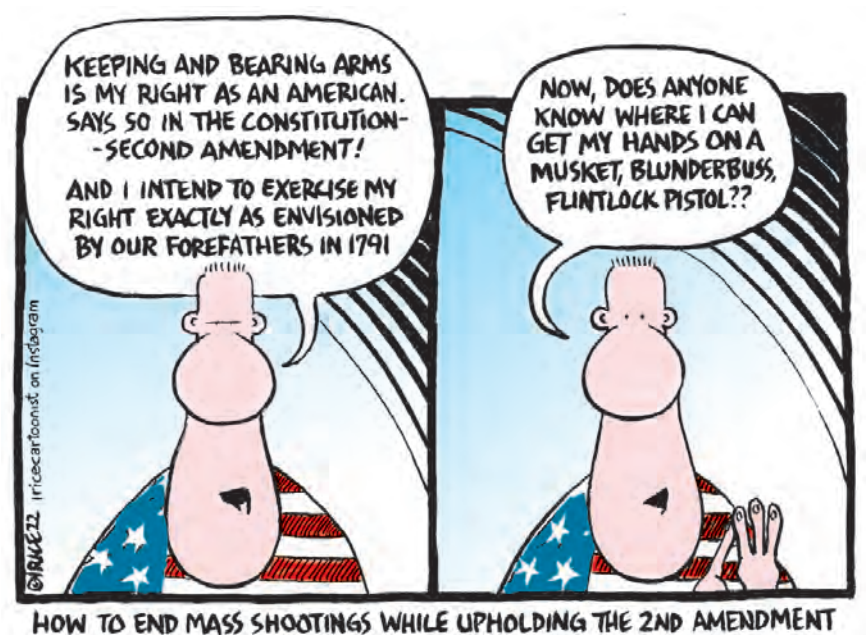
That bodes well for summer job options, which open the ground-floor door to the opportunities and challenges presented in a wide range of business sectors.

They help entry-level workers determine what they like to do and what they do not like to do.

They are the practical lessons in an overall education system that should be focused on directing students along the career paths that give them the best odds for success and by extension give the economy the best odds for success.

They also illustrate the importance of summer economy and summer job market traditions.

INSIDE JOKE



APOLOGY TO STEPHEN PINEAU

On January 20, 2015, we published an article that referred to Stephen Pineau, the former CEO of Viscount Systems Inc. The article inaccurately connected him to unproven allegations of financial misconduct. *Business in Vancouver* regrets its error and apologizes to Mr. Pineau for any distress our publication has caused.

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WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE [FINANCIAL] SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

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Business in Vancouver is published by BIV Media Limited Partnership at 303 West 5th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1J6. Telephone 604-688-2398; fax 604-688-1963. New subscriptions: visit biv.com/subscribe. Copyright 2022. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the publisher.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40069240. REGISTRATION NO. 8876. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Department: 303 West 5th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1J6. Email: subscribe@biv.com.



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Canadian think-tank rings infrastructure alarm bells

TRANSPORTATION | Canada West Foundation documents deteriorating state of trade supply chains

BY CHUCK CHIANG
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A Canadian think-tank is sounding the alarm on Canada's trade infrastructure, saying the precipitous fall of the Canadian system in global rankings in recent years should be garnering much more public attention than it has so far.

In a **Canada West Foundation** report titled *From Shovel Ready to Shovel Worthy*, authors **John Law** and **Carlo Dade** highlighted that, in the **World Economic Forum's** (WEF) annual infrastructure rankings measuring each country's confidence in their own networks, Canada dropped from 10th place in 2009 (between the United States and the United Arab Emirates) to a staggering 26th by 2019 (between Poland and Hungary).

Canadians' confidence in transport infrastructure fared even worse. It ranked 32nd in the world behind countries such as Azerbaijan, Finland and India.

And that lack of confidence is not restricted to within Canada.



Canada is falling behind key trade competitors in transportation infrastructure investment in B.C. and elsewhere across the country | ROB KRUYT

The World Bank Logistics Performance Index, which measures how foreign partners view a country's trade infrastructure, Canada was the only country within the Five Eyes that saw its score drop close to 0.5 basis points – about a 12 per cent decrease – between 2010 and 2018.

When combined with the fact that Canada generates about

two-thirds of its GDP through trade, the falling trade infrastructure number becomes a huge red flag, Dade said, even if the Canadian public appears to have little interest in improving the situation.

"It's a question that our customers and potential investors ask all the time: 'Why are people not paying attention?'"

It's a question that our customers and potential investors ask all the time: 'Why are people not paying attention?' The answer has to do with the fact that Canadians are divorced from the reality of how the country makes its money

CARLO DADE
DIRECTOR, TRADE AND INVESTMENT
CENTRE, CANADA WEST FOUNDATION

said Dade, who is also the director of Canada West's Trade and Investment Centre. "The answer has to do with the fact that Canadians are divorced from the reality of how the country makes its money."

The public apathy, in turn, leads to apathy from political leaders in Ottawa and elsewhere, Dade said. In contrast,

he noted that both U.S. President **Joe Biden** and Transportation Secretary **Pete Buttigieg** have been at the forefront of pushing the United States to improve its trade infrastructure, and that the United States slid only four places (from ninth to 13th) in a decade in the WEF infrastructure rankings.

"You want an indication that this is a priority [in the U.S.]? Every week, you get something from the highest levels of government," Dade said. "The Americans dropped a few places, and you can't get Biden or Buttigieg to shut up about it."

"To be fair to the federal government, they have finally – after eight years – started some fairly significant progress with the National Infrastructure Assessment [announced in 2020]."

"However, as a foreign customer or an investor, I see the announcements, but I don't see the commitment or the articulation of these initiatives as a national priority."

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B.C. sinks to the bottom of global port efficiency index

SHIPPING | World Bank Group's port performance report ranks North America's West Coast lowest

BY TIMOTHY RENSHAW
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In the world cup of port efficiency, the West Coast of North America is hovering around relegation status.

The bad news for the Port of Vancouver is that it is three rungs from the bottom of the container cargo efficiency rankings for 370 of the world's largest containerized cargo ports; the good news is that it is ahead of the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which ranked 369 and 370, respectively.

A silver lining, perhaps, but marginally satisfying in an otherwise poor industry showing for B.C.'s ports.

Prince Rupert landed at 344, ahead of Tacoma (345), but behind Seattle (336).

The Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) rankings are part of the second annual measurement of global port efficiency released by the **World Bank** in co-operation with **S&P Global Market Intelligence**.

The World Bank rankings are based on a number of metrics, but port hours per ship call is

the main measurement at work here. Average call and vessel size and comparative port workloads are also factored into the CPPI rankings.

Prior to compilation of the 2020 CPPI, the report's authors note that the "quality, consistency, and availability of data; the definitions employed; and the capacity and willingness of the organizations to collect and transmit data to a collating body have all precluded the development of" a comparable measurement to assess port performance.

But the report notes that new technologies, increased digitization and the willingness of port and marine shipping interests to improve system-wide performance now provide accurate and reliable port performance measurements.

For North America's West Coast, the poor CPPI performance results are disappointing but not surprising.

Transpacific container ports have been struggling to recover from a sudden and unexpected pandemic-driven spike in consumer goods demand that began in 2020's second half and has

only recently begun to ease along with pandemic restrictions.

As documented previously in *BIV*, earlier this year, **Shifl**, a New York-based freight-forwarding company, reported that the average transit times for container ships on the transpacific trade loop had jumped 96 per cent in December 2021 compared with May 2021.

Transit data measures the time it takes for a container to leave its port of origin until it is unloaded at its destination terminal.

That time hit around 54 days for a container to get from the ports of Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong or Tianjin and to be unloaded in Los Angeles-Long Beach in California. That is 238 per cent higher than the average pre-pandemic transit time of 16 days.

Transit time delays to the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert hit anywhere between nine and 12 days during the same period in 2021. Added to the normal container transit time of between 16 and 23 days to B.C.'s two main ports from the same Chinese ports, a container took between 28 and 35 days to get to

its destination via B.C.'s West Coast.

However, updated **Shifl** data released on May 9 showed significant improvement in transpacific transit times to the U.S. West Coast. They dropped to 24 days in April from the 54 recorded in December 2021. **Shifl** attributed the reduction in transit times to lower freight demand and COVID-19 lockdowns in China and noted that while the improvement is significant, transpacific transit times are still below pre-pandemic levels. It added that some West Coast cargo congestion has shifted to North America's East Coast.

But transit times to Vancouver and Prince Rupert have continued to show heavy cargo congestion. In March, they reached 53 days to Vancouver and 45 days to Prince Rupert, but eased slightly to 44 and 31 days, respectively, in April.

B.C.'s Asia-Pacific Gateway performance has suffered in part from challenges unique to the province.

While Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's zero-tolerance COVID-19 strategy that

has disrupted cargo movement through such major Asian ports as Shanghai and Shenzhen have affected ports all over the world, a massively destructive wildfire season followed by catastrophic flooding in 2021 hammered transportation infrastructure in B.C.

Especially hard hit were rail lines connecting the province's ports with the rest of the country's cargo movement network.

That set B.C.'s ports and the rest of the country's Asia Pacific Gateway back for weeks. Digging out from under the resulting backlog has been a major factor in undermining port and terminal cargo movement performance.

Still, West Coast cargo movement rankings are poor compared with major competitors elsewhere in the world.

Vancouver's ranking in the previous World Bank port efficiency report, which was based on 2019 data, was 237; Prince Rupert's was 330.

Atop the 2021 CPPI rankings were Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Port and Oman's Port of Salalah. ■

Little labour relief

HUMAN RESOURCES | Retail, hospitality, tourism in

BY TYLER ORTON
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School's out for summer, and B.C. employers are desperate for young workers to fill open jobs at restaurants, shops and tourist attractions.

But a flood of applications offering relief looks unlikely to materialize to meet pent-up demand for quintessential summer jobs, according to experts in the food, hospitality and retail sectors.

"We do expect we will get somewhat of an uptick but not enough to actually put a dent in the plus-30,000 people that we're short," said **Ian Tostenson**, president and CEO of the **BC Restaurant & Foodservices Association (BCRFA)**.

"Governments can talk about those skills development [programs], but what we're up against here, frankly, is a lack of people."

Employers that once counted on young people to take on work

during busy summers find themselves pitted against each other in a white-hot job market. At the same time, consumers' savings accounts have grown while staying home during much of the pandemic, creating even more demand for travel and hospitality.

Tostenson said some customers are now rankled when they walk into a restaurant filled with empty tables only to be told it will be a 15-minute wait to be seated.

"Well, that's because there's no servers," he said.

His industry group is embarking on a campaign to recruit more young people into the industry via outreach to their parents as well as through social media.

One enduring problem is that COVID-19 restrictions during the first two years of the pandemic meant that many left the industry permanently and have little interest in returning, Tostenson said. That attrition is now being exacerbated as the



Retail recruiter Jackie Ross says stores have been forced to reduce hours and offer paid time off to workers amid ongoing labour shortages | CHUNG CHOW

return of concerts and pro-sports games are drawing more people to downtown Vancouver to drink and dine at local establishments before and after events.

"Last summer, we didn't have the demand that we have [now]," Tostenson said.

Food service sales reached \$6.8 billion across the country in March 2022 – the first time in the pandemic those sales have exceeded pre-pandemic levels, according to **Statistics Canada** data.

Meanwhile, the BCRFA is calling on Ottawa and the B.C. government to implement an initiative similar to the Atlantic Immigration Program, which streamlines the entry of skilled foreign workers into those provinces to meet labour demand.

"If we had domestic workers, that would be great. But we don't, so we have to move to skilled workers immigration," Tostenson said.

Busy summer season forecast for outdoor recreation

OUTDOORS | First summer in two years that Americans can fish, camp and spend money in B.C.

BY NELSON BENNETT
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This summer, for the first time in two years, Americans and other international visitors will be welcomed back to B.C. to camp, fish, kayak, cycle, hike and generally enjoy the great outdoors.

Americans traditionally accounted for a significant amount of the business for B.C. sport fishing guides, charters and lodges, so pandemic-related border closures and travel restrictions in 2020 and 2021 took a big bite out of their business.

On the other hand, the industry saw a surge in domestic customers, with many British Columbians trying salmon fishing for the first time.

"Now this year, where it's even maybe a little further step towards normal, the expectation is that it is going to be very, very busy," said **Owen Bird**, executive director for the **Sport Fishing Institute of BC**.

"A lot of U.S. customers returning may have booked a trip in 2020 and weren't able to take it, and finally they can come back."

The sport-fishing sector generates about \$1.1 billion annually in economic activity, Bird said.



Lee Miller, Pacific Angler's guide operations manager, aboard one of his company's four sport-fishing boats. Sport-fishing business operators are hoping for a bounce-back year in 2022 | CHUNG CHOW

There are roughly 300 businesses related to sport fishing – guides, charters, lodges and tackle shops.

While some B.C. salmon stocks have suffered alarming declines, those targeted by sport fishermen – notably chinook and coho – appear to be healthier than expected in some areas.

"The last couple of years, there's been some very strong returns of salmon in different areas," Bird said.

In 2020, provincial

campgrounds were restricted to B.C. residents only. This year, for the first time since 2019, they will again be open to American visitors.

Due to travel restrictions, many British Columbians who might have otherwise travelled outside B.C. or Canada in the summer were forced to stay close to home, and many went camping in 2020 and 2021.

"I don't expect this year to be as big as we saw in the last couple of years," said **Jamie Cox**, president

\$1.1b	Estimated annual economic activity generated by B.C.'s sport-fishing sector
11,000	Number of provincial campsites in B.C.
22,500	Number of private campsites in B.C.

of the **BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association**. "There was literally an explosion in outdoor recreation in the last two years."

In B.C., booking a campsite in the more popular provincial parks has long been a challenge. Since 2017, BC Parks has added 1,700 campsites to provincial park campgrounds, including 90 serviced sites in E.C. Manning Park, bringing the total of provincial campsites to around 11,000, and this year it launched a redesigned reservation system (camping.bcparks.ca) intended to make booking easier.

Even so, campers who don't reserve months in advance can still find themselves out of luck, especially on long weekends in the more popular campgrounds.

Fortunately, there are more

than 400 private campgrounds in B.C. representing about 22,500 campsites. Private campgrounds can be a profitable business, especially those catering to the recreational vehicle (RV) crowd, some of whom may stay in RV parks and campgrounds year-round, not just in summer.

Kampgrounds of America (KOA), the world's largest owner of private campgrounds, owns two in B.C., and **Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities**, a Canadian company, owns 38 resorts and campgrounds across Canada, including four in B.C.

Cox manages Parkbridge's Gallagher Lake Resort near Oliver.

"I operate a resort that takes a gross revenue of \$1 million to \$1.2 million [annually]," Cox said. "That's just one of ours."

The Gallagher Lake resort has tenting, full-service sites for RVs and cabins.

"We started with four cabins here eight years ago, and now I'm at 14, with an ultimate build-out at 18," Cox said. "The more I build the more they're filled. This resort has grown in double-digit values and occupied nights eight years in a row. The last year was massive growth."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

expected this summer

B.C. not banking on young people to fill summer jobs

Tourism and retail are also facing a dearth of workers as the summer approaches.

Claire Fan, an economist at **RBC Economics**, said higher household incomes, fewer pandemic restrictions and larger-than-normal savings are fuelling massive demand for tourism.

“Households accumulated a massive \$300 billion savings stockpile during the pandemic as health concerns and pandemic lockdowns restricted spending on leisure and hospitality services,” she said in a June 8 analysis.

“Put in context, that’s three times what Canadians spent annually on tourism prior to the pandemic. And those savings have been disproportionately concentrated among higher-income households that typically spend more on discretionary purchases, including travel.”

Fan said the question is now whether the tourism industry can meet demand as sectors across

313,800 The number of workers B.C.’s tourism industry employed as of April 2022

55% Percentage increase in that number since April 2020

13.2% Percentage increase in tourism employment nationally between April 2021 and April 2022

the country face a labour crunch. Such demand is setting the stage for higher wages within the industry, she added.

B.C.’s tourism industry employed 313,800 workers as of April 2022, according to

Statistics Canada data released last month.

That’s up 55 per cent since April 2020, when pandemic-induced restrictions saw the industry shed 98,500 jobs in just one month to leave only 179,000 tourism workers still employed in B.C.

Nationally, tourism employment jumped 13.2 per cent between April 2021 and April 2022 to land at 1,921,600 workers.

“While this is a very positive sign that workers are returning to tourism occupations, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic persist as the tourism labour force remains 217,500 workers short of the sizable pre-pandemic total,” **Tourism HR Canada** said in a May 2022 analysis, referring to the 2.1 million workers employed in the sector in April 2019.

While this might point to signs of imminent recovery, the federally funded non-profit organization said labour shortages have been a “pressing challenge” for

the industry since the start of the year.

“Overall, there are one million job vacancies in Canada right now,” said **Jackie Ross**, principal of Vancouver-based **JRoss Recruiters Inc.**, citing Statistics Canada data released last month.

“The majority of those jobs are in accommodation and the food sector industry, and they’re competing for talent from each other.” Her firm specializes in recruitment within the retail and hospitality sectors.

Ross recalled that there were similar labour shortages in Western Canada from 2005–08, but the country has otherwise never experienced the present conditions.

And like the restaurant industry, Ross said retail faced a mass exodus of talent because of the pandemic, leading to an “erosion of trust” among long-time workers.

“A lot of students who worked

part time will work full time now, so that will be helpful as temporary relief.”

Ross added that she still expects labour shortages to remain acute this summer and beyond.

In a followup email, Ross said it’s also time for the industry to boost hiring among older workers.

“They are often locked out of opportunities in our sector because of age discrimination and hiring biases,” she said.

For now, retailers face reduced hours of operations and additional costs associated with overtime pay for the few workers they have, as well as offering more flexible hours and paid time off to attract new employees.

“Which doesn’t really help considering there’s already a shortage of employees working the hours that are necessary,” she told **BIV** in a phone call.

“The social contract of work is being rewritten.” ■

Festival organizers brace for entertainment bonanza

CULTURE | Attendance at many events expected to be lower than it was in pre-pandemic times

BY GLEN KORSTROM
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After two years of B.C. summer attractions being either cancelled or scaled back because of the COVID-19 pandemic, event planners are excited to return to some semblance of normalcy.

COVID-19 restrictions that limited event sizes, required people to wear masks and attendees to show proof of being vaccinated have all been lifted.

“We’re hopeful to have a 100 per cent return of the audience, but I’m practically thinking for my own planning that the audience will probably be about 75 per cent of 2019, as we build back,” **Vancouver Folk Music Festival** artistic director **Debbi Salmonsen** told **BIV**.

Pre-pandemic, about 40,000 people attended her three-day event.

Salmonsens kept her festival alive during the past two years by shifting to a format in which she recorded bands playing at venues around the city and then showed those videos at the **Rio Theatre**.

This year, the folk festival is scheduled to have three small stages and a main stage at Jericho

Beach Park July 15 through 17. That is down by one stage compared with 2019. The range of ticket prices is similar to 2019, Salmonsens added.

About 40 acts are set to entertain, which is down from 55 performers in 2019, she said.

Taj Mahal and the **New Pornographers** are some of the headline acts.

The largest summer spectacles in B.C. are also returning this year.

The **Honda Celebration of Light** is back for three shows July 23–30.

Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to attend the **Vancouver Pride Week Festival** that is set to culminate on July 31, with a parade that will wind along Robson and Denman streets before ending at Sunset Beach.

The smaller **Powell Street Festival**, which celebrates Japanese culture, will happen at the same times as Pride, with activities at Oppenheimer Park on July 30 and 31.

The **Fair at the Pacific National Exhibition** (PNE) is another major B.C. event, given that in 2019 it attracted 730,000 people during a 15-day run.

A spate of ticketed concerts featuring bands such as the



Bard on the Beach executive director **Claire Sakaki's Shakespeare festival** launched shows earlier this month | CHUNG CHOW

Barenaked Ladies, **Chicago** and the **Steve Miller Band** are expected to attract many to the fair’s East Vancouver site.

This year’s PNE will have daily attendance capacity limits, and date-specific tickets will be needed for entry.

In advance of the PNE, which is scheduled to run Aug. 20 through Sept. 5, the **Vancouver Craft Beer Week** (VCBW) festival will use the PNE site July 9 and 10.

The VCBW bills itself as the Lower Mainland’s largest craft-beer event.

Breweries and cideries from around the world are expected to participate and pour more than 150 craft beers and ciders during the event.

The **William Shakespeare Bard on the Beach** festival launched *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performances at Vanier Park on June 8. It plans to stage an Othello-inspired play, *Harlem Duet*, June 15 through July 17. *Romeo and Juliet* performances are set start Aug. 3.

“We are budgeting for slightly fewer people to attend than in

2019,” executive director **Clare Sakaki** told **BIV**.

“We are assuming that there will still be great interest, but we are also taking into account that there might be some uncertainty around attending live events.”

Pre-pandemic, more than 100,000 people attended more than 200 events, she said.

The capacity at shows is the same, and once again there are more than 200 shows scheduled.

That includes the plays and special events, such as a **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra** performance June 28, and four opera performances that are set to take place Sept. 12 and 13.

Barbecue events will take place on the site during **Honda Celebration of Light** nights.

Those wanting a twist on Shakespeare will be able to attend *Something Rotten!* at **Theatre Under the Stars** (TUTS). That show is set in the streets of Elizabethan England, where Shakespeare is a Renaissance rock star while the playwright’s siblings Nick and Nigel Bottom are stuck in his shadow.

That play will alternate with *We Will Rock You* – a musical inspired and featuring music from **Queen** – between July 2 and Aug. 27. ■

Pro sports teams hoping for some summer 2022 wins

SPORTS | Revitalized fan support, revenue flow expected with the return to normal attendance rules

BY CHUCK CHIANG
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After two seasons filled with cancellations, restrictions and uncertainty, Vancouver's major summer spectator sports are returning to full-capacity operations this year – a first since 2019.

And the reaction, unsurprisingly, is one of relief, excitement and unbridled joy, team officials say.

"It's amazing," said **Andy Dunn**, president/partner at **Vancouver Canadians Baseball**, the city's **High-A Northwest League** team. "It's been everything we've wanted it to be ... I've been through quite a few opening days now, and this one might have been one of the most emotional things I've ever seen. Some people were walking around with tears in their eyes, just happy to see their friends at the ballpark again."

Despite this spring being one of the rainiest and coldest in recent memory, the Canadians have already reported several sellouts at **Nat Bailey Stadium** since returning to their first full season in Vancouver since moving up to **High-A** – which brings with it a higher level of play.

As summer approaches, Dunn said he is optimistic about the Canadians returning to its status as one of the city's most popular fan events.

He noted that season ticket holders have largely returned and this year's preseason tickets sales are likely the highest they've ever been.

"What we've been through the last two years, with a cancelled season [in 2020] due to COVID and then having to play remotely the year after, just having games again at home is special."

"This year is just about, 'Let's play some games; let's try to get life back to normal and get out and enjoy the crowd, the excitement.' That's what we're all looking for."



Home games for the Vancouver Whitecaps are finally back in BC Place Stadium | WHITECAPS FC/BOB FRID

The same excitement is also readily apparent for the two BC Place Stadium tenants: the **Canadian Football League's (CFL) BC Lions** and **Major League Soccer's (MLS) Whitecaps FC**.

The CFL also had to cancel its season in 2020 before playing an abridged version last year; the MLS had to resort to holding tournaments in Florida and moving home games for teams like Vancouver temporarily out of Canada to maintain a season during the onset of the pandemic.

Whitecaps FC CEO and sporting director **Axel Schuster** noted that the MLS also started its season earlier than either the CFL or **High-A** baseball, leading to a few restrictions still being in place when the team opened its home schedule on March 5.

As such, Schuster said the team worked hard to keep fans informed of the situation until most restrictions were removed in mid-March, and while he noted that while some fans are not yet comfortable returning to live sporting events, more are making their way back.

"I think so far, I would describe it up to this point as getting back to normal and communicating with people on what the situation is," Schuster said. "Going into the season, a lot of people

still thought we had restrictions in regards to capacity, and some people maybe would have been more comfortable if there were more restrictions."

"Now, all the restrictions are gone, and we are back to full normal. But even now, we still have to explain to people that it is safe to come back and – also for the stadium experience – it's back to what it was before."

Whitecaps FC attendance so far this year has hovered between 16,000 and 18,000. That's a couple of thousand below pre-pandemic levels, but **Blake Price**, the team's TV play-by-play voice, said those early-season attendance numbers aren't necessarily indicative of the team's support among fans.

"The springtime is never a great time [for Whitecaps FC attendance], especially with the hockey season overlapping an additional three weeks ... over the MLS season."

Price added that the **National Hockey League's (NHL) Vancouver Canucks** team has had a busy off-season of announcements so far.

"And ... the [Whitecaps] were not playing well in the first two months of the season, so they didn't help themselves in that regard. By the middle of June,

they could be as healthy as they have been all season. So there are reasons to be optimistic."

Schuster agreed.

He noted that Whitecaps FC's injury woes have hurt the most important draw for bringing fans back: the team's on-pitch performance.

"I think the people that are closely connected to our club, they have the right knowledge about our situation."

Schuster pointed out that the team has lost only one game since May.

"We have the best home record in the MLS since the day we returned from Utah [the Whitecaps' temporary home last season]. So people know that, at home, we deliver a good show in terms of entertainment and results."

"We are building back, and when we look at our plans, 2023 will be the best year of our club on the business side."

The CFL's Lions had their own early-season challenge: There almost wasn't an on-time start of the season due to a labour dispute between the league and its players.

But with a new agreement now in place, the team is excited, said president **Rick Lelacheur**, to begin its first full season under new owner **Amar Doman**, who bought the team from the estate of the late **David Braley** last August.

The team kicked off the new season on June 11 with some fresh flair, hosting a concert by rock band **OneRepublic** as the pre-game show and having former **Barenaked Ladies** frontman **Steven Page** perform at its Backyard Block Party on Robson Street in the hours leading up to the game.

The initial results have been promising. The Lions announced days before the opening game that it is opening BC Place's upper bowl for the first time in many years to accommodate ticket demand.

"David Braley was a great owner

for the Lions," Lelacheur said. "But we are into a new generation, and Amar Doman not only is very passionate about the Lions, he's local. And that has played a big part, I think, in our fan base appreciating that he is local and wants to do things to fill up the building and to win football games."

The Lions' slide in attendance since a decade ago has been one of the CFL's most serious challenges, and Lelacheur said the league has implemented a slew of rule changes in an attempt to create more offence and scoring across the CFL.

In addition, the club is introducing a slate of new ideas that, Lelacheur said, the team hopes will generate more fan support for the Lions. Those ideas range from field-level club seats and more aggressive presence in social media/conventional marketing (street banners, bus wraps, event trailers and bicycle teams) to grassroots outreaches to amateur football organizations for fostering long-term interest in Canadian football.

As with Whitecaps FC, however, the key for the Lions will be the team's on-field product. The team is starting its first season without retired quarterback **Mike Reilly** – one of the CFL's biggest names – and has not made the playoffs since 2018. Lelacheur added that while the season-ticket base is stable (no official figures were released), the team will need strong walk-up support to be financially successful.

"It's very important to have a good season on the field," Lelacheur said. "We are not going to win every game, but we recognize that we want to protect our house when playing at BC Place. We want to play exciting football.... We would rather lose in overtime than getting blown out.... But we've got some game-changers on our roster that will make the games very exciting." ■

BUSY SUMMER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

If you don't mind roughing it, there are 1,300 rustic forest service campsites, available on first-come, first-served basis, and searchable at sitesandtrailsbc.ca.

First Nations in B.C. also offer a number of unique camping and fishing experiences. **Indigenous Tourism BC** lists 11 campgrounds and resorts operated by First Nations, like the **Klahoose Wilderness Resort** near Lund on

the Sunshine Coast, as well as a number of First Nations fishing charters.

For multi-day outdoor adventure, premier destinations in B.C. include the West Coast Trail, the Bowron Lakes canoe circuit, the Broken Group Islands (kayaking), the South Chilcotins (mountain biking and horseback riding), and the Berg Lake trail in Mount Robson Provincial Park.

Unfortunately, the Berg Lake trail is closed for the summer, due to flood damage, and may not be

fully opened again until 2025. The Bowron Lake circuit was similarly closed in 2020 due to storm damage. This is one of the complaints noted in a recent survey of outdoor enthusiasts: the inability of **BC Parks** to keep up with trail and bridge repairs and basic trail maintenance.

An **Ipsos** survey done for the **Outdoor Recreation Council of BC** confirmed "soaring interest" in outdoor activities. It also identified some top irritants for park users: lack of washrooms, parking

and reservable campsites, overcrowding and poorly maintained trails.

"BC Parks is definitely not resourced to be able to take all the necessary maintenance or the expansion that is necessary to accommodate a growing population – a population that is increasingly interested in spending time outside in our parks," said recreation council executive director **Louise Pedersen**.

As for overcrowding in popular parks like Joffre Lakes, Garibaldi

and Golden Ears, which has prompted BC Parks to continue requiring day passes, the issue isn't too many people on the trails, Pedersen said, but simply a lack of parking.

"There is long-standing under-investments in our recreational infrastructure," Pedersen said. "Now really is the time to start to invest more in garbage containers, signage, outhouses, more and improved trails and more opportunities for camping." ■

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Is Canada ready to embrace hydrogen's multibillion-dollar bonanza?



PODIUM

ROB BOOKER

Hydrogen is the next big thing and always will be."

It's a clever line and easily adaptable to any product, trend or technology that generates periodic buzz, but never makes the leap from concept to reality.

The global hydrogen economy is in rapid development, and there has been a lot of buzz around it now, as in earlier years. The difference today is that it is much more than a mere potential pathway or prospective "next big thing."

Immense work is underway to plan, design and build-out hydrogen supply, shipping, access and capacities. There's a widely shared determination to do so, and accelerating momentum. Global customers are scouting sources of large and long-term supply, and producing jurisdictions are making investments,

jockeying for position and beginning to sign contracts.

You may have seen some of the high-level projections of the potential importance of hydrogen within the global energy mix. The **International Energy Agency** defines it as one of six "decarbonization pillars" with the potential to meet 10 per cent of global final energy demand by 2050.

B.C.'s hydrogen strategy notes that projected hydrogen demand – in the proximate markets of China, Japan, South Korea and California alone – will be valued at more than \$300 billion by 2050; while the federal strategy cites a possible global hydrogen market valuation of more than \$11 trillion by that same year.

It might be tempting to dismiss such figures as hyped. But they are increasingly validated by real-world technology and project development, national energy planning and private and public transactions.

Japan is a compelling example. It is the first country to develop a national hydrogen strategy and it is investing in technology for co-firing or pure combustion of hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels (such as

ammonia) in what are now fossil fuel power plants.

Japan's largest power generator recently rendered things even more commercially concrete. In February, **JERA** launched an international bidding process to procure up to 500,000 tons of fuel ammonia annually under long-term contracts beginning in 2027 and extending into the 2040s.

Developments such as these are definite indications of a very real next big thing, and they raise a number of questions for Canada.

Most fundamentally, do we want to step up and seize what could be an outsized share of the global hydrogen opportunity? Do we want to leverage our wealth of natural gas, renewables and energy-related expertise to establish ourselves as a leading supplier of first blue and eventually green hydrogen?

Do we want, in turn, to jump-start our own transition to greater hydrogen use domestically – advancing our national progress towards net zero carbon emissions and offsetting lost economic benefits as production of conventional energy products winds down?

And most importantly, are we

B.C.'s hydrogen strategy notes that projected hydrogen demand – in the proximate markets of China, Japan, South Korea and California alone – will be valued at more than \$300 billion by 2050

prepared to act fast, in a world where competitors such as Australia are beginning to outpace us? Or are we content to be a late arrival to global hydrogen markets and accept a smaller and less profitable role as swing producers, as it appears we may be fated to do in global liquefied natural gas markets?

The answer to all of these questions should be a resounding "yes," and British Columbia and the rest of Canada would stand to benefit greatly if it is.

For our part, we foresee hydrogen as centrally important in a transition needed for our terminal: away from our

current exclusive reliance on handling conventional energy commodities and towards establishing Trigon as a key link in global clean energy supply chains.

We're developing relationships with producers, customers and investors and working to build required infrastructure at our terminal.

Many potential partners share our enthusiasm for hydrogen.

This green diversification vision was also the driver behind adoption of our new name and identity – one rooted in the artistic traditions of our Indigenous co-owners and which represents the concepts of transition and upward movement.

Successful transitions are by definition progressive and depend on being able to recognize when a next big thing is taking shape and what's needed to leverage the opportunity.

Hydrogen is clearly one such thing, and there's no question in my mind that Canada (and Trigon) can and should be a key player. ■

Rob Booker is the president and CEO of Prince Rupert's Trigon marine terminal, formerly known as Ridley Terminals Inc.

First West Capital

SPONSORED CONTENT

Building on success: one B.C. developer's incredible journey in hospitality

From working a motel front desk to constructing hotels, through his focus and hard work, Ron Mundi is building an empire

When Mundi Hotels & Mundi Construction owner Ron Mundi first moved to Canada in 1994, he had a dream of owning his own company. While he wasn't sure what that business would be, an offer from a friend to manage the front desk of a motel in Kamloops jumpstarted his love affair with the hospitality industry. Now Mundi owns 14 hotels and oversees a visionary company specializing in purchasing, renovating, and developing hotels and apartments in Western Canada.

"When I arrived in Canada, my goal from day one was to have my own business" Mundi says.

Working seven days a week, Mundi took care of every aspect of the motel while simultaneously falling in love with the hospitality industry. Ultimately, his hard work paid off, and he managed to buy a small ownership stake in the property.

In 2005, his fellow partners decided to sell their shares of the business, and Mundi was able to buy the motel from them.

"I said, 'I love this industry, and I don't want to do anything else,'"



Mundi recalls.

"I was still working the front desk, but now I owned 100 per cent of the motel. I took it more seriously than many would because it was my life and my passion. I made sure everything was top-notch."

Mundi also started getting more involved in the local community, volunteering his time and resources to Thompson Rivers University (TRU), where he served as a director on the University Trust Board for over seven years and as a BC government-appointed director with the BC Pavilion Corporation.

As his experience grew, Mundi began

acquiring other motel properties that he could update. He would look for underperforming properties with low vacancy rates but which he saw had the potential to be renovated and improved and eventually sold to a new owner for a profit. To date, he has purchased and sold 40 hotels and motels.

His team also grew over the years, as did the scale of projects, prompting Mundi to move from purchasing and renovating motels to constructing new hotels, building a new Coast Hotel in Oliver in 2018 and a new Hyatt in Prince George in 2020. Mundi also opened a Fairfield by Marriott in Penticton in the summer of 2020.

To support financing and operating his business, Mundi has worked with Valley First, a division of First West Credit Union – of which First West Capital is a subsidiary – for many years. When he needed capital to build a new Four Points by Sheraton hotel in Penticton, his credit union advisors referred him to First West Capital, and he began working with director Geoff Devereux.

"Ron was introduced to us as he was launching his Four Points by Sheraton hotel construction project in Penticton. We really liked the project and Ron – his vision for the Mundi Group, depth of experience, and community spirit were key in supporting the deal," says Devereux.

The new hotel, slated for completion in summer 2023, is located across from the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre, an important tourism draw for the city.

"The community's support for the project has also been outstanding," says Devereux. "It's a great location and something that will solidify the vision for the Penticton tourism area."

Mundi Construction has recently expanded outside of the hospitality

industry into the residential market, with six apartment building projects currently on the go.

"We now have the expertise in our company to move into development," Mundi explains.

Hiring and keeping the right people on his team is of utmost importance to Mundi.

"We treat our team like family," he continues. "My philosophy is that I want everyone on my senior team to be with me for a long time."

Over the years as his business has expanded to construction and development of the hotel and residential sector, Mundi's same sharp focus, passion and dedication has persisted.

"This is a new chapter for our business," Mundi says. "I don't want to ever retire. I want to continue doing this for the rest of my life."

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BRIEFS

ENTERTAINMENT

Film directors, producers settle labour dispute

It appears the threat of lights, camera, job action is off the table for made-in-B.C. film productions.

The B.C. chapter of the **Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)** announced last week it has reached a tentative agreement with employers that would remove the pall of potential job action hanging over local film productions. The guild said in a statement it's still finalizing the language of the memorandum of agreement and "will release further details as soon as that's completed."

The negotiating employers, the **Canadian Media Producers Association** and **Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers**, told *BIV* in a statement they were "pleased" to have reached a deal with the directors "to restore labour stability" in B.C.

The guild and the producers had been at loggerheads over issues such as retroactive wage hikes and pay differentials that would increase wages for lower-paid positions as the minimum wage goes up across the province.

ECONOMY

B.C. economy falls to 'middle of the pack'

Bolstered by a white-hot housing market and global demand for commodities, B.C.'s economic growth led the big provinces last year. Just don't expect that pace to keep up in 2022, say economists at the **Royal Bank of Canada (TSX:RY)**.

The bank is forecasting the West Coast economy will expand 4.2 per cent this year – down from 2021's 5.9 per cent growth. Last year, B.C. registered the highest rate of economic growth among

the four largest provinces and second in Canada only to Prince Edward Island. Economists **Robert Hogue** and **Carrie Freestone** said in their report last week that B.C. will fall into the "middle of the pack" this year, along with Ontario (+4.1 per cent) and Quebec (+3.6 per cent).

Instead, Saskatchewan (+6 per cent), Alberta (+5.7 per cent) and Manitoba (+4.8 per cent) will be taking the lead as the housing market cools in B.C. and Ontario.

CANADIAN THINK-TANK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Law, a Canada West senior fellow and a decorated public-private service official in the Canadian transport sector, noted in the report that there is a precedent for success in Canada on a well-organized infrastructure initiative.

He said the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative has been well received by industry and government officials. It has also earned international accolades in bringing a coherent set

of investment/policy measures to advance infrastructure goals.

The key set of "building blocks," Law noted, must include policies that clearly define Canada's national trade corridor network, develop criteria "of national importance" to guide decision-making, institutionalize advice and input from the private sector, maintain a long-term project pipeline and regular process assessment and upgrade data/intelligence gathering to forecast what's happening on the ground.

"Lessons from Canada's successful trade corridor history

and best-practice learnings from competitor countries have the potential to make manageable the daunting task of establishing a new national framework to enable Canada's economic future," the report said.

Without such concrete moves that look beyond piecemeal development of "shovel ready" smaller projects that do not achieve a long-term goal of connecting to a national trade transportation network, Canada will not be able to stave off the continued decline of its trade competitiveness during a time

when it is needed the most, the report argues.

"The urgency to move forward with tangible first steps cannot be overstated," the report said.

Law added that there are opportunities to act now.

"... Throughout the interviews and public discussions that were part of the research for this report, private sector stakeholders ... have stated a willingness to contribute to the steps necessary for long-term structural improvements to how the country manages the trade infrastructure file."

The report added that "unlike other infrastructure asset classes like schools, hospitals and parks, in Canada the private sector is often the biggest user, the largest owner and primary operator or funder of trade infrastructure assets. It has unique proprietary information critical to making intelligent informed choices. ... Assuring that the private sector has a meaningful role in implementing the recommendations in this report ... is a key ingredient for success."

The full report can be read at cwf.ca/series/reports. ■



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FINANCE

Housing market correction is here



DATA POINTS

BRYAN YU

The Lower Mainland housing market correction looks to be underway as sales plunged in May and prices fell amidst higher borrowing costs.

Multiple Listing Service (MLS) sales in the region spanning Metro Vancouver and Abbotsford-Mission reached 4,261 units, down 12 per cent from April and 41 per cent year-over-year. Notwithstanding early pandemic performance and May 2019, this marked the fewest same-month units sold since 2011.

The rapid decline reflects sharply higher borrowing costs

and expiration of pre-approved rate commitments. Five-year fixed rates have surged above four per cent, and variable rates moved higher on **Bank of Canada** rate hikes. Affordability has been decimated as prospective buyers internalize both the highest fixed rates in a decade and 40 per cent growth in home prices. More buyers are priced out of the market while others are understandably nervous about market conditions and the risks of price declines. Deeper declines in the Fraser Valley region align with the theme of affordability-driven weakness.

Market conditions are quickly rebalancing as steady new listings lift inventory levels. The sales-to-active listings ratio (SALR) fell to about 26 per cent, which was the lowest since mid-2020 and near-balanced market territory. That said, momentum matters, and the rapid fall from accelerated sellers' conditions points to a

softer market than the SALR indicates.

Indeed, home values have declined. The average MLS price fell for a third straight month to \$1.21 million.

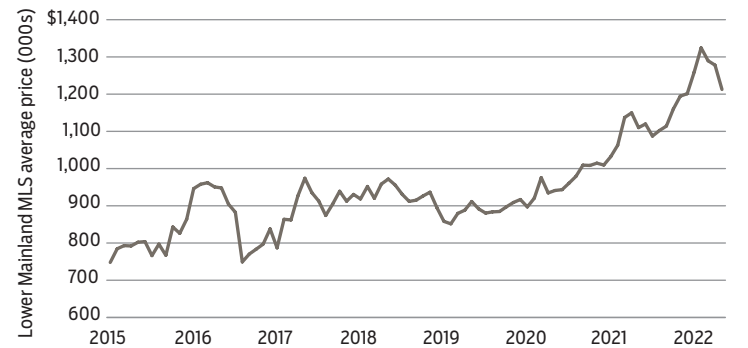
With interest rates heading higher and potentially sharper than expected the downturn will persist. Sales are forecast to decline 30 per cent this year, while average prices retrace back to mid-2021 levels or up to 15 per cent from peak.

Statistics Canada released Canadian Survey of Business Conditions data for 2022's second quarter and pointed to B.C. resilience, albeit with some key headwinds. According to the latest survey results, 71.5 per cent of businesses expect conditions to remain about the same over the next three months. This points to a high level of resilience in the face of uncertainty. ■

Bryan Yu is chief economist at Central 1 Credit Union.

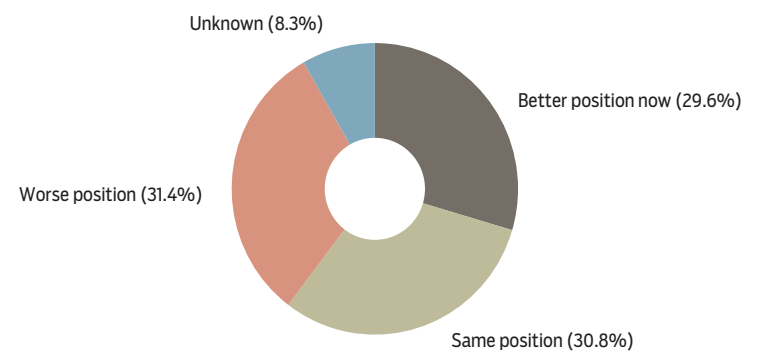
Lower Mainland home prices start to decline

Average selling price falls for the third consecutive month



Inflation headwinds fail to shake B.C. business confidence

Business owners compare current situation with mid-2019



INSIDERTRADING

The following is a list of stock trades made by corporate executives, directors and other company insiders of B.C.'s public companies filed in the week ended June 8, 2022. The information comes from a compilation of required reports filed with the BC Securities Commission obtained from DisclosureNet.com.

INSIDER Gordon Crawford, director
Company: Lions Gate Entertainment Corp. (NYSE:LGF)
Shares owned: 1,148,474
Trade date: June 3, 6
Trade total: US\$561,600
Trade: **Acquisition** of 58,687 shares at prices from US\$9.17 to US\$9.70 per share

INSIDER James Andrew Charles Robinson, officer
Company: Standard Lithium Ltd. (TSX-V:SLI)
Shares owned: 1,566,499
Trade date: June 6, 8
Trade total: \$297,446
Trade: **Sale** of 40,600 shares at a price of \$7.30 to \$7.40 per share

INSIDER John Holliday, officer
Company: Rogers Sugar Inc. (TSX:RSI)
Shares owned: 212,314
Trade date: June 3, 7
Trade total: \$262,138
Trade: **Sale** of 41,800 shares at prices from \$6.25 to \$6.31 per share

INSIDER Stanley Thomas Coleman, officer
Company: Copperleaf Technologies Inc. (TSX:CPLF)
Shares owned: 361,688
Trade date: June 3, 6, 7
Trade total: \$261,720
Trade: **Sale** of 36,000 shares at prices from \$7.01 to \$7.65 per share

INSIDER Michael James Atkinson, director
Company: Legend Power Systems Inc. (TSX-V:LPS)
Shares owned: 1,609,500
Trade date: June 7
Trade total: \$89,100
Trade: **Acquisition** of 495,000 shares at a price of \$0.18 per share

INSIDER James Russell Nelles Starr, officer
Company: Trillium Gold Mines Inc. (TSX-V:TGM)
Shares owned: 2,491,000
Trade date: June 3, 8
Trade total: \$60,000
Trade: **Acquisition** of 200,000 shares at a price of \$0.30 per share

INSIDER Wilfried Bernard, 10 per cent owner
Company: Mountain Boy Minerals Ltd. (TSX-V:MTB)
Shares owned: 15,676,000
Trade date: June 3, 6
Trade total: \$54,040
Trade: **Acquisition** of 472,000 shares at prices from \$0.11 to \$0.12 per share

INSIDER Blair Lawrence Naughty, 10 per cent owner
Company: York Harbour Metals Inc. (TSX:YORK)
Shares owned: 7,052,100
Trade date: June 3
Trade total: \$32,100
Trade: **Acquisition** of 30,000 shares at a price of \$1.07 per share

INSIDER Forrester Clark, director
Company: Fury Gold Mines Ltd. (TSX:FURY)
Shares owned: 450,000
Trade date: June 8
Trade total: US\$30,515
Trade: **Acquisition** of 50,000 shares at a price of US\$0.61 to US\$0.62 per share ■

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Burnaby office building sells for \$112.5 million

COMMERCIAL | Brentwood acquisition seen as top price paid recently for a Metro office property

BY FRANK O'BRIEN
FOBRIEN@GLACIERMEDIA.CA

Metro Vancouver's office market is "the strongest in Canada," according to a new national survey, and a recent Burnaby purchase underlines the demand.

Concert's CREC Commercial Fund LP has bought a fully leased, three-storey office building in the Brentwood neighbourhood of Burnaby. The 160,654-square-foot complex sold for \$112.5 million, considered the highest price paid for a regional office property in the past year.

The sale of the building, which is fully leased to B.C.'s Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), was announced May 30.

The building, at 1795 Willingdon Avenue, is nestled within a

hub of new residential and commercial developments, including the Amazing Brentwood – one of British Columbia's largest mixed-use retail and resident developments.

"This is Concert's first acquisition in the Brentwood neighbourhood, and we're excited to be part of this rapidly growing community as we further expand our commercial portfolio in B.C.," said David Podmore, Concert's president and CEO.

The property sits on a 2.58-acre lot within the core area of the Brentwood Town Centre Development Plan, which identifies the site for high-density, mixed-use development consisting of residential and commercial uses.

The Brentwood Town Centre Skytrain Station is two blocks south of the property.

"We're very pleased to acquire



Interior of 1795 Willingdon Avenue in Burnaby | SUBMITTED

this premium office property in one of the fastest growing areas of B.C. With a long-term, stable, government tenant in PHSA, this acquisition will contribute stable returns to both our portfolio and

to our pension fund and institutional investors," said Andrew Tong, Concert's chief investment officer and managing director of CREC Commercial Fund LP.

A national survey of

commercial real estate released May 26 by Re/Max Commercial noted that Vancouver's office market is currently the strongest in Canada.

Metro Vancouver vacancy rates are trending down, sitting at 9.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2022 compared with 10 per cent during the same period in 2021, Re/Max found, noting that suburban markets continue to thrive.

Prior to the Brentwood sale, the highest prices paid for a Metro Vancouver office property since January 2021 was \$103 million for a new 120,000-square-foot building at 1077 Great Northern Way in March 2021 and the \$93 million paid for the 61,300-square-foot 815 Hornby Street tower in May of 2021, according to an Avison Young survey. ■

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BRIEFS

INVESTMENT

B.C. investors scout Alberta single-tenant deals

With oil trading north of US\$100 a barrel and provincial net migration at its highest level since 2014, Alberta is attracting more B.C. investors, and a popular target is single-tenant commercial property, according to agents with Marcus & Millichap's triple-net (NNN) team in Edmonton.

Team member Curtis Leonhardt said, "demand from B.C. investors has seen a tremendous increase over the past 12 months."

Investor interest continues to be focused on strong national or regional tenants with considerable lease terms remaining.

Recent transactions and offerings in Calgary, Edmonton and the surrounding metro areas have seen multiple offer scenarios, with the bidders predominantly being from B.C."

Many single-tenant properties are attractive because they are occupied by brand-name retailers, such as national banks, pharmacies, quick-service restaurants or automotive gas stations and service centres. They also often have long-term, triple-net (NNN) leases in place, which covers the lease, maintenance and property taxes.

This, combined with the

generally higher capitalization rates and lower property prices in Alberta cities, when compared with urban B.C., has increased interest from Lower Mainland buyers, according to Marcus & Millichap.

The average retail cap rate in Vancouver so far this year is in the range of 4.75 per cent to 5.50 per cent, based on Cushman & Wakefield's Canada Cap Rate Report Q1 2022.

In Calgary and Edmonton, however, retail cap rates range from 6.25 per cent to 7.25 per cent.

Industrial and office properties in big-city Alberta are generating annual yields from 1.5 per cent to two per cent higher than in Metro Vancouver, Cushman & Wakefield reported.

An example of the recent B.C. investment action is a single-tenant, free standing Rexall pharmacy in Stony Plain, Alberta. It sold in December 2021 to a Metro Vancouver-based investor.

Since then, the property has generated interest at prices above the December 2021 sales. It is now listed at \$8.2 million.

—Frank O'Brien
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B.C. leading with law, values in trade negotiations

REGULATIONS | Western focus on regulatory issues signals a shift in global trade agreement priorities

BY CHUCK CHIANG
CCHIANG@BIV.COM

While trade missions typically involve officials going abroad to promote specific industries or products, there may be a new trend on the horizon: the promotion of laws and regulatory standards.

That was the case for B.C. Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation Minister **Ravi Kahlon**, who recently concluded a multi-week visit to Europe to tout not products but the province's environmental, social and governance (ESG) values. It's a move that indicates a shift in the fundamental thinking of pursuing trade relations.

The new emphasis on law, legal standards and regulations when it comes to social and environmental governance is strong in jurisdictions like Europe, Kahlon said, which played into B.C.'s decision to centre its trade mission theme around the topic.

The new direction, Kahlon added, allows the province to pursue a wide range of sectors for engaging a trade partner. Now the entry point of discussion isn't a given commodity, but the fact that a partner market can be assured that B.C. goods are produced in a legal standard that reflects shared values on issues like labour rights and environmental protections.

"The desire [for like-minded partners] to collaborate with B.C. is very strong," Kahlon said of

his trade mission. "We've been meeting with various groups and ... advancing the fact that not only do we have critical minerals here in British Columbia, but we also produce them in a very sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

"We've also advanced our ambitions on forestry and have had talks with companies about hydrogen and attracting investment to British Columbia," he added. "So we have not focused on one sector particularly. It's a very, very broad area of engagement."

The trade visit ultimately produced two deals: one with the Netherlands on resource-sharing in agritech for food-security support and another with Finland on co-operation in mass-timber and the forest bio-economy.

The fact that many Western countries are shifting to leading with the law-regulatory angle in advancing trade agendas does not come as a surprise to **Werner Antweiler**, an associate professor of economics at the **University of British Columbia** and a leading expert on trade and global supply chains.

Antweiler said Russia's invasion of Ukraine this year jolted many liberal democratic markets to reassess globalization – and while confidence in the system has been shaken, the solution isn't deglobalization. Instead, it's re-globalization with a clearer legal framework that fundamentally includes value-based principles, he said.



WILDPixel/GETTY IMAGES

"Essentially, trade promotion and new free trade agreements need to take ESG into consideration to prevent what economists describe as 'leakage effects.' That is, production shifting from environmentally and socially responsible jurisdictions to non-conforming jurisdictions," Antweiler said. "In this time and age, we simply cannot ignore that sourcing goods from the cheapest source can sometimes mean sourcing goods from polluting sources or countries that violate human rights."

That means that the solution – and where the new generation of globalization efforts may go to next – is a combination of trade agreements with clear ESG components and protocols for compliance, as well as trade

promotion that tout a specific, legal certification process for an exported/imported good's ESG integrity.

Some major trade agreements have already started moving into these areas in recent years. The **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, for example, has implemented items such as labour, environmental and intellectual-property protection laws into its requirements for joining the 11-nation trade pact. Other similar bloc deals, such as the China-led **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership**, have not.

"Companies will ordinarily converge on least-cost solutions that pursue comparative advantages regardless of other societal objectives," Antweiler wrote in an April report. "Such objectives

can only be imposed by influencing markets, by creating incentives or imposing regulatory constraints for resilience, retractability and responsibility.

"A combination of green/ethical consumerism and green taxes on negative externalities can go a long way to make international trade more sustainable environmentally and promote responsible production methods and labour standards," he stated in the report. "... It means that we can no longer avert our eyes from seeing where and how our consumer goods are produced. We need greater transparency, visible to all of us, about which products meet which standards."

For Kahlon and B.C., the recent foray into Europe with legal standards as the main angle was successful to the point that it will continue to be a focus as officials look abroad for partners in the province's post-pandemic recovery.

"We saw that we have lots of interest [from Europe] in companies here in B.C., as they want to find partners that have similar values when it comes to ESG," Kahlon said.

"We saw that there was a really good opportunity to advance those talks and tell the B.C. story ... and we are coming away from this with identifying some really exciting opportunities in the years ahead."

Antweiler's report on re-globalization can be read at wernerantweiler.ca. ■

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What to consider when revising your firm's vaccination policies



PODIUM

MAGGIE CAMPBELL

Starting last fall, public and private sector employers introduced vaccination policies into their workplaces.

The policies required employees to disclose their vaccination status and allowed employers to collect this data. The “vaccinate or test” policies then required unvaccinated employees to test for COVID-19 at regular intervals, usually with testing kits supplied by the employer. Other policies prohibited unvaccinated employees from working and placed them on unpaid leaves of absence. In addition, almost all policies required job candidates to be vaccinated in order to be considered for employment.

In the months following the introduction of these vaccination policies, we have seen significant litigation on the issue of vaccination mandates. Unions have pursued

both individual grievances and policy grievances, and in the non-union setting some employees have sued employers, claiming that putting them on an unpaid leave of absence was constructive dismissal.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, there has been significant easing of restrictions, including the lifting of the provincial vaccine passport program and indoor masking requirements. At the same time, many employers are now requiring their workforces to return to a physical workplace, either full time or under a hybrid model.

With the return to the physical workplace and the changing public health landscape, employers are now asking: Should we still be requiring our employees to be vaccinated?

There are different approaches to this issue and no one right answer. Many employers have decided that they will mirror the vaccine passport program and have lifted their policies. These employers are either allowing unvaccinated employees to fully return to the workplace or keeping them remote for the foreseeable future. An employer considering these options

should closely review the potential impact on the rest of the workforce, as many employees are still uncomfortable working alongside unvaccinated co-workers, especially if the options for physical distancing are limited. Further, workers who are being asked to return to the office may be resentful of an unvaccinated co-worker who gets to continue to work from home full time.

Employers who do decide that this is the right time to lift a vaccination policy should be clear with their employees that the policy is suspended, rather than cancelled. This will allow a workplace to quickly and easily reintroduce the policy should the public health situation change in the future.

Other employers are keeping their vaccination mandates in place and taking a wait-and-see approach to the issue. These employers may avoid the morale issues associated with welcoming back unvaccinated workers and may help reduce workplace absences (unvaccinated individuals still have to isolate for longer periods if they are sick or exposed). However, COVID-19 vaccination policies are usually not intended to be in place

forever, and employers should continue to monitor the actual risk of exposure in the workplace and assess whether the mandate is still necessarily to protect the health and safety of employees.

Further, with most employees having received their second vaccination sometime in 2021, employers should also consider amending their policies to require boosters. Without a booster shot, there may now be minimal difference between the vaccinated and unvaccinated in terms of protection, and requiring the workforce to be boosted could help minimize outbreaks and absences.

However, organizations will need to balance these interests with the fact that booster uptake has been far lower than the original round of vaccinations: requiring boosters could result in a significant proportion of the workforce not meeting the definition of “fully vaccinated.”

On the recruitment side, the potential legal risk associated with continuing to require candidates to be vaccinated is low, in that case law has held that applicants have fewer privacy rights than established employees.

As long as employers are clear about their requirements, and treat the information provided in a way that complies with their obligations under applicable privacy legislation, employers should feel free to continue to require candidates to be fully vaccinated even if they suspend their policies for their existing workforce.

Of course, any vaccination policy (including one that applies only to recruitment) should allow for potential human rights exemptions. Employees who are medically unable to get vaccinated or those who have a genuinely held religious belief that conflicts with vaccination, should be able to apply under the policy for an exemption.

Employers who are satisfied that the employee meets the criteria for an exemption should look at accommodations such as work from home arrangements, testing or masking. ■

The article is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Maggie Campbell is a partner at Roper Greyell, where she practises in all areas of employment and labour law.



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Biggest law firms in Metro Vancouver

RANKED BY | Number of lawyers practising in Metro Vancouver



Rank '22	Law firm	Managing partner(s)	Focus areas	Year founded	Additional staff '22/'21	Partners/Associate counsel/Associates	No. of lawyers '22/'21
1	Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP 550 Burrard St Suite 2900, Vancouver V6C 0A3 P: 604-631-3131 F: 604-631-3232 fasken.com	William Westeringh , managing partner, B.C. region	International business law and litigation for every sector in business, industry and government	1889	257/ 216	NP NP NP	155/ 155
2	Lawson Lundell LLP 925 Georgia St W Suite 1600, Vancouver V6C 3L2 P: 604-685-3456 F: 604-669-1620 lawsonlundell.com	Clifford Proudfoot , managing partner	Mining, corporate commercial law, real estate, energy/public utility and regulatory, litigation, labour and employment, pensions and employee benefits	1886	155/ 131	71 8 57	136/ 130
3	Borden Ladner Gervais LLP 200 Burrard St Suite 1200, Vancouver V7X 1T2 P: 604-687-5744 F: 604-687-1415 blg.com	Steve Winder , regional managing partner	Business and corporate commercial, commercial real estate, financial services, disputes and intellectual property	1911	187/ 185	65 13 54	132/ 136
4	Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP 595 Burrard St Suite 2600, Vancouver V7X 1L3 P: 604-631-3300 F: 604-631-3309 blakes.com	Peter O'Callaghan , office managing partner	Corporate finance and securities, corporate and commercial litigation, financial services, infrastructure and real estate	1856	80/ 106	41 0 67	108/ 109
5	Clark Wilson LLP 885 Georgia St W Suite 900, Vancouver V6C 3H1 P: 604-687-5700 F: 604-687-6314 cwilson.com	James Speakman , managing partner	Commercial real estate, capital markets and securities, information technology and intellectual property, mergers and acquisitions, estates and trusts	1911	179/ 153	65 2 39	106/ 97
6	Alexander Holburn Beaudin + Lang LLP 700 Georgia St W Suite 2700, Vancouver V7Y 1B8 P: 604-484-1700 F: 604-484-9700 ahbl.ca	Christopher Hirst , managing partner	Litigation/dispute resolution, insurance, business law, construction and engineering, aviation, labour and employment	1973	121/ 130	41 7 48	96/ 86
7	Norton Rose Fulbright LLP 510 Georgia St W Suite 1800, Vancouver V6B 0M3 P: 604-687-6575 F: 604-641-4949 nortonrosefulbright.com/ca/en	Kieran Siddall , managing partner, Vancouver office	Real estate, estates, trust and wealth management, business law, dispute resolution and litigation, employment and labour	1794 ¹	158/ NP	41 7 47	95/ 99
8	Harper Grey LLP 650 Georgia St W Suite 3200, Vancouver V6B 4P7 P: 604-687-0411 F: 604-669-9385 harpergrey.com	Jonathan Meadows , managing partner	Medical negligence defence, insurance, commercial litigation, business law, professional regulation, environmental, family, workplace, wills and estates, class actions, securities, construction and engineering, Aboriginal business law, insolvency, defamation, privacy, mediation	1907	141/ 137	30 14 48	92/ 89
9	DLA Piper (Canada) LLP 666 Burrard St Suite 2800, Vancouver V6C 2Z7 P: 604-687-9444 F: 604-687-1612 dlapiper.com	Robert Seidel , Canada managing partner	Full-service business law firm	1892	128/ 129	42 14 35	91/ 95
10	McCarthy Tétrault LLP 745 Thurlow St Suite 2400, Vancouver V6E 0C5 P: 604-643-7100 F: 604-643-7900 mccarthy.ca	Sven Milelli , regional managing partner, B.C.	Business law, litigation, real property and planning, tax, labour and employment	1855	NP/ NP	NP NP NP	90²/ 88
11	Dentons 250 Howe St 20th Floor, Vancouver V6C 3R8 P: 604-687-4460 F: NP dentons.com	John Sandrelli , managing partner	Real estate, infrastructure/construction, corporate, litigation, restructuring/insolvency	2013 ³	84/ 122	39 7 40	86/ 82
12	Farris LLP 700 Georgia St W Suite 2500, Vancouver V7Y 1B3 P: 604-684-9151 F: 604-661-9349 farris.com	Jeffrey Kay , managing partner, Vancouver	Corporate and commercial, litigation, employment and labour, tax, wealth management	1903	118/ 98	46 3 35	84/ 87
13	Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP 550 Burrard St Suite 2300, Vancouver V6C 2B5 P: 604-891-2787 F: NP gowlingwig.com	Brent Kerr , managing partner	Intellectual property, real estate, environmental law, securities and corporate finance, Indigenous law	1903	124/ 121	43 0 33	76/ 74
14	McMillan LLP 1055 Georgia St W Suite 1500, Vancouver V6E 4N7 P: 604-689-9111 F: 604-685-7084 mcmillan.ca	Cory Kent , office managing partner	Capital markets, mergers and acquisitions, litigation, commercial real estate transactions, restructuring and financial services	1904	NP/ NP	39 5 24	68/ 62
15	Bennett Jones LLP 666 Burrard St Suite 2500, Vancouver V6C 2X8 P: 604-891-7500 F: 604-891-5100 bennettjones.com	Radha Curpen , Vancouver managing partner, Jessie Lehal , specialist, marketing and client relations	Business law, litigation, regulatory and tax with focus on energy, mining, finance, tech and real estate	1922	56/ 46	28 3 34	67/ 49
16	Richards Buell Sutton LLP 401 Georgia St W Suite 700, Vancouver V6B 5A1 P: 604-682-3664 F: 604-688-3830 rbs.ca	Jeffrey Lowe , managing partner, Angela Spanjers , managing partner, Surrey	Advanced education and research, business transactions, commercial real estate, litigation, wealth preservation	1871	89/ 100	23 5 27	55/ 48
16	Stikeman Elliott LLP 666 Burrard St Suite 1700, Vancouver V6C 2X8 P: 604-631-1300 F: 604-681-1825 stikeman.com	Richard Jackson , managing partner	Mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and securities, public-private partnerships, real estate and corporate commercial litigation	1952	84/ 78	19 9 27	55/ 48
18	Harris & Company LLP 550 Burrard St Suite 1400, Vancouver V6C 2B5 P: 604-684-6633 F: 604-684-6632 harrisco.com	Lindsie Thomson , managing partner	Labour and employment law, human rights, workers' compensation/occupational health and safety, commercial litigation, education law, administrative law, First Nations workplace law, immigration law, privacy and access to information	1992	45/ 52	28 2 19	49/ 52
19	Boughton Law Corp 595 Burrard St Suite 700, Vancouver V7X 1S8 P: 604-687-6789 F: 604-683-5317 boughtonlaw.com	James Coady , Luca Citton , Richard Uhrle , board members	Business, dispute resolution, personal, public sector	1949	65/ 65	21 15 10	48/ 51
19	Roper Greyell LLP 745 Thurlow St Suite 1850, Vancouver V6E 0C5 P: 604-806-0922 F: 604-806-0933 ropergreyell.com	Delayne Sartison , Gavin Marshall , Michael Kilgallin , Graeme McFarlane , managing partners	Employment, labour, human rights, health and safety, investigations, privacy and freedom of information	2006	34/ 34	22 0 26	48/ 44

Sources: Interviews with above law firms and BIV research. Other firms may have ranked but did not respond to information requests by deadline. NP Not provided. 1 - Year firm was founded in the U.K.; merged with Bull Housser & Tupper, whose Vancouver office opened in 1890, on January 1, 2017. 2 - BIV estimate. 3 - Closure date of merger among SNR Denton, Fraser Milner Casgrain and Salans.

Business in Vancouver makes every attempt to publish accurate information in the List, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Researched by Anna Liczmanska, lists@biv.com.

Next list – Biggest accounting firms in B.C.



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Biggest Metro Vancouver law firms on hiring spree

ANALYSIS | Average number of local lawyers at top firms grew 7.2 per cent over the past two years

BY ALBERT VAN SANTVOORT
AVANSANTVOORT@BIV.COM

The average number of lawyers working at the Lower Mainland's largest law firms grew for the first time since

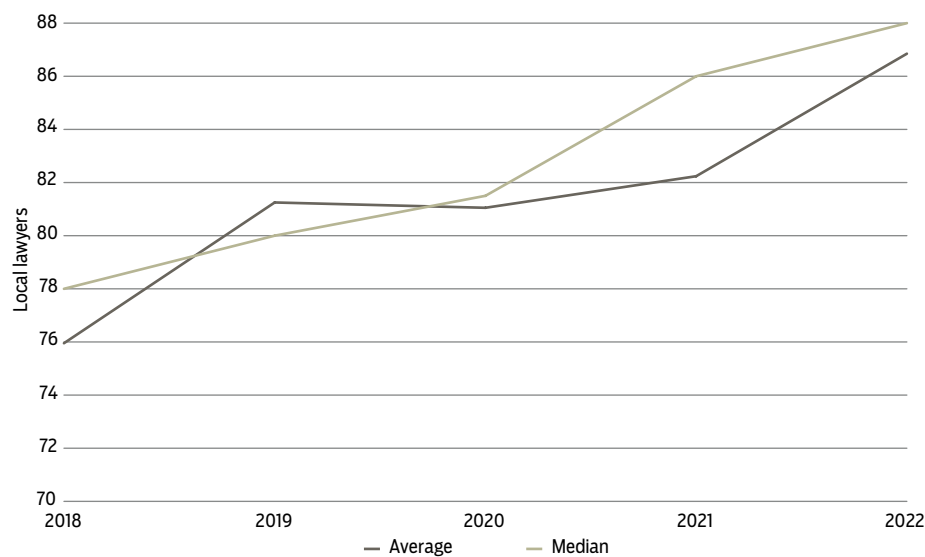
the start of the pandemic, according to new data collected for *BIV*'s list of the biggest law firms in Metro Vancouver (page 16). The average number of lawyers jumped 7.2 per cent amid the COVID-19 crisis from 81.1 in 2021

to 86.9 lawyers in 2022, while the median number of lawyers grew eight per cent, to 88 from 81.5. This suggests smaller firms that are lower on *BIV*'s list grew faster than their larger counterparts. **Bennett Jones LLP** (No. 15) had

the most single-year growth: up 36.7 per cent, to 67 this year from 49 lawyers in 2021. **Boughton Law Corp.** (No. 19) had the biggest decline as its stable of lawyers fell 5.9 per cent, to 48 in 2022 from 51 last year.

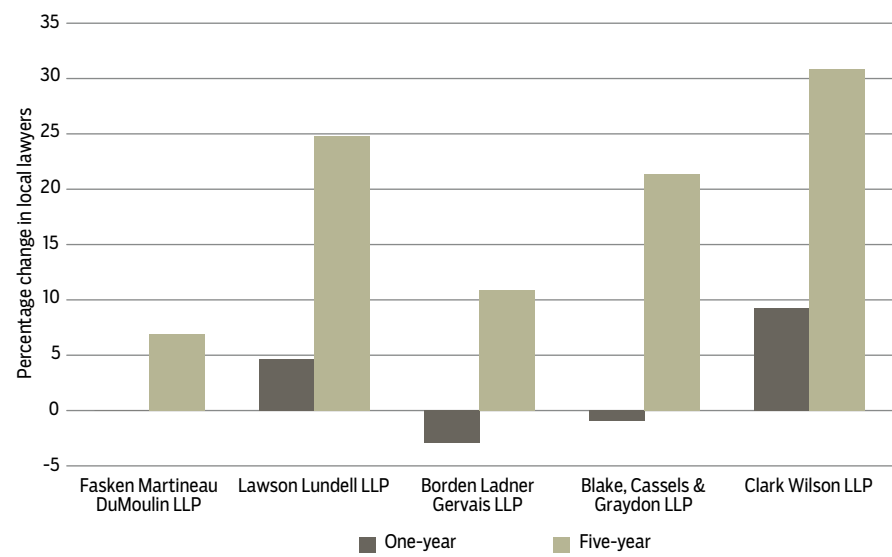
Clark Wilson LLP (No. 5) boasted the most growth (up 30.9 per cent) over five years among the top five firms. It increased its number of lawyers to 106 in 2022 from 81 in 2018. ■

Average and median number of local lawyers at Metro Vancouver's largest law firms
Average increased 14.4 per cent over the past five years



SOURCE: BIV LIST

Change in the number of local lawyers at Metro's five largest firms
Clark Wilson LLP had the largest five-year increase among the top five (30.9 per cent)



SOURCE: BIV LIST

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Automotive Services

Sales of automotive dealerships and related service providers involving multiple franchised and real estate locations.



Maritime/Fisheries

Purchase and sale of vessels (including tugboats and barges), commercial fishing licences and quota, and leaseback transactions.



Professional/Health Services

Purchase and sale of insurance, engineering, architectural, accounting, and law firms; retail pharmacies, health clinics, and dental and physician practices.



Technology

Acquisition of mobile game developers/publishers and blockchain/cryptoasset/decentralized finance businesses, and sale of electron beam sterilization business.



Mining

Mining exploration, industrial mineral production and processing, and mineral interests.



Private Educational Institutions

Culinary institutions, language schools, and health care training centres.



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Local law firms competing for technology edge

TECHNOLOGY | Artificial intelligence, digitization and video appearances can help reduce billable hours

BY GLEN KORSTROM
GKORSTROM@BIV.COM

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), electronic documents and video-conferencing technology have reduced lawyers' billable hours, making their services more affordable for clients.

Some lawyers, however, believe inefficiencies remain.

Video-conferencing software from **Zoom Video Communications Inc.** (Nasdaq:ZM) and **Microsoft Corp.** (Nasdaq:MSFT) transformed work across society during the pandemic.

Courtrooms at Vancouver's law courts installed large video screens and lawyers are sometimes allowed to appear via video link.

A few lawyers told BIV, however, that they think the courts could be more proactive in allowing legal teams and witnesses to appear via video conferencing software.

Courts allow lawyers to appear for chambers applications, but lawyers are expected to appear in person for standard **BC Supreme Court** cases.

"It is incredibly inefficient," **Acumen Law Corp.** lawyer **Kyla Lee** told *BIV*.

"It ends up costing clients money because they have to pay for the lawyer to come to court. Even if it's just the cost of parking at the courthouse, it's an unnecessary expense."

Lee has clients across B.C., and

she said that if she needs to appear in person in Fort St. John, it adds \$2,000 to her client's bill.

Lawyers can request to appear in court remotely and those requests may be approved, the **BC Supreme Court** and **BC Court of Appeal** told *BIV* in an email.

"The Criminal Code requires that certain criminal proceedings be conducted in person," the **BC Supreme Court's** statement said. "In all trials – civil, family and criminal – with viva voce [oral] testimony, there are concerns that judges may find it more difficult to assess witness credibility by video."

Some law firms do not want lawyers to work from home, said **Smith Legal Search** principal and legal recruiter **Warren Smith**.

One lawyer in Vancouver at a major Canadian law firm wanted to move to Vancouver Island and work remotely, according to Smith. The lawyer's firm balked at that arrangement.

Smith then helped the lawyer find work at a firm that would allow remote work, he said.

"Allowing remote work was the clincher in making that career move happen," Smith said.

"There's certainly evidence that people are willing to change employers if the company or the law firm they're working at isn't willing to accommodate [working remotely]."

Other technology that helps lawyers work more efficiently is being embraced.

Harper Grey LLP managing



Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP's Vancouver managing partner Mark Longo believes his firm's AI capabilities make it more competitive | CHUNG CHOW

partner **Jonathan Meadows** called technology a double-edged sword. Decades ago, before email, there were far fewer documents that lawyers needed to disclose in court.

The proliferation of messaging platforms has exponentially increased the number of documents and that has necessitated AI platforms to sort and understand content, Meadows said.

"If firms have not been looking at AI in the past, they're behind the curve," Meadows added.

"Everybody's looking at it, and some are employing it to a more or lesser degree."

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP has its own subsidiary, **Osler Works – Transactional**, which uses AI and assists the firm's offices across Canada and in New York, the firm's Vancouver managing partner **Mark Longo** told

BIV.

"Kira Systems is one of the tools that we have adopted, and it allows us to do due diligence using machine learning to evaluate certain clauses in contracts," he said. "That often used to take hundreds of hours for an articling student or a junior lawyer to sift through, so it does end up saving money for the clients, and it allows us to deliver the service more efficiently."

The head of **Osler Works – Transactional**, **Natalie Munroe**, explained to *BIV* how AI can be used before a merger or acquisition completes. Executives at the acquiring firm will want to ensure that the target company's supplier contracts do not contain clauses that say that the contracts need to be renegotiated in the event of a corporate sale, she said.

AI can zip through those

contracts and provide a prompt answer as to whether that is the case, she added.

Nolan Hurlburt, director of knowledge and legal operations for **Dentons Canada LLP**, told *BIV* that he expects law firms to use AI more frequently.

"Where we see AI starting to achieve maturity is in the document-review space or e-discovery space," he said. "That's the process, typically in litigation or investigations, where legal teams are reviewing thousands, hundreds of thousands or even millions of emails and other business documents."

Lawyers train AI to distinguish which documents are relevant and that helps them arrive at decisions faster, he said.

An emerging use for AI could also be to sift through court judgments to find relevant cases that could be used by lawyers when developing legal strategies.

A separate technology making legal work significantly more efficient is electronic-document management and signing.

Dentons, **Osler** and other firms use Toronto-based **Closing Folders Inc.** to organize and manage documents. That software is often integrated with San Francisco-based **DocuSign Inc.** (Nasdaq:DOCU).

"There's automatic uploads of agreements," Longo said.

"We're collecting all the signatures electronically, and that leads to a quicker delivery of service." ■

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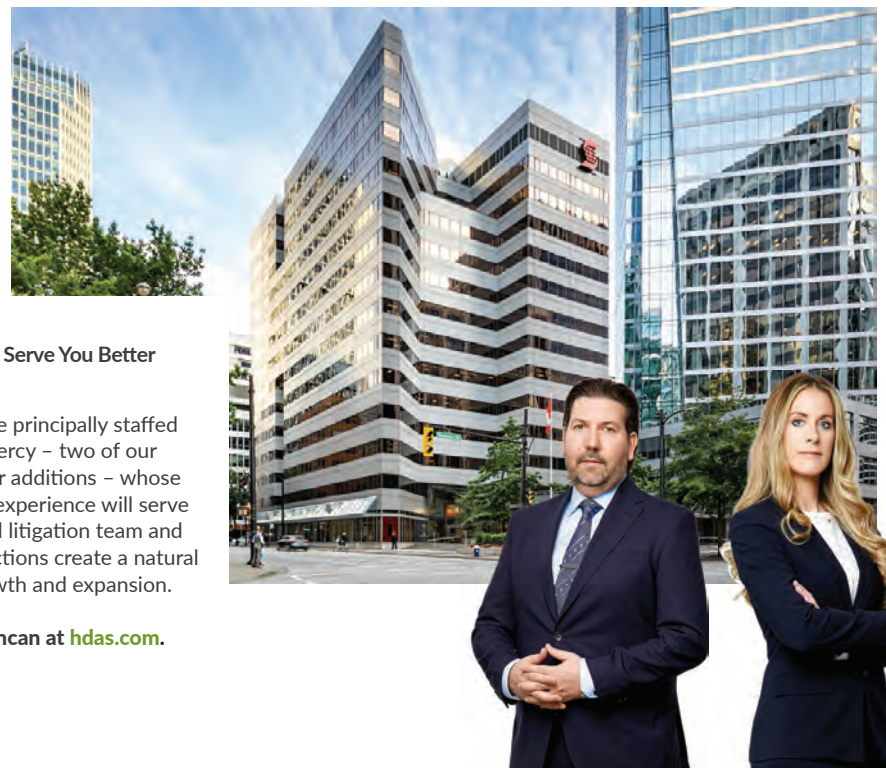
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LEGAL BRIEFS

DRUGS

Recreational psychedelics remain far behind on legalization path

It has been nearly four years since recreational cannabis was legalized in Canada, and many people may have thought grey-market dispensaries were a quirky part of Vancouver's past, but history may be repeating itself as dark-market dispensaries have begun sprouting up again, this time selling psychedelic drugs such as mushrooms and peyote.

At least four dispensaries and several online operators have recently opened in the city. Because there are no government regulations allowing the sale of psychedelics, mushroom dispensaries are operating under a model similar to pre-legalization cannabis retail operations.

The **Vancouver Police Department** has said it is more concerned with trafficking by organized crime.

Robert Laurie, president of AD Lucem Law Corp., said law enforcement may also be concerned that raids on dispensaries will spark constitutional challenges, similar to those related to pre-legalization cannabis.

"Despite all of the excitement with the 'shroom boom', I think **Health Canada** is very reluctant to jump to any conclusions that are going to have the result of recreational cannabis," said Laurie. "There's a lot that still has to happen before you're going to legally see anything happen

beyond access to psychedelic therapy."

Cannabis legalization took 18 years to expand from medical marijuana exemptions to legalization.

The only way to legally obtain psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, is through a health exemption.

But legal framing created by cannabis activists in the early 2000s may have given psychedelic drugs a head start down the path to legalization.

Seventy-five companies focused on the psychedelics industry were trading on Canadian exchanges as of January, according to a blog post from law firm **McMillan LLP**. But Laurie said that doesn't mean legalization is imminent.

"Unlike cannabis, this is very much a medical path. I'm not aware of any companies of consequence that are talking about the recreational use of mushrooms," **Tim Moore, CEO of Havn Life Sciences Inc. (CSE:HAVN)**, told *BIV* in January 2021.

Robert Tessarolo, president and CEO of NeonMind Biosciences Inc. (CNSX:NEON), concurred.

He said his company prefers seeking approval from Health Canada, similar to traditional pharmaceuticals, and that broader legalization is not necessary.

—*Albert Van Santvoort*
 avantsantvoort@biv.com

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Forty
under
40

BIV celebrates 2020's Forty under 40 award winners

At long last, BIV was able to celebrate the 2020 winners of its annual Forty Under 40 awards. Recipients, their families and friends were invited to attend the June 4

Whitecaps FC game in the Edgewater Suite, watch a pre-game interview with CEO Axel Schuster about the team and its business operations and mingle with their fellow award winners.

PHOTOS BY CHUNG CHOW



2020 Forty Under 40 Award winner Joshua Davis, founder of JL Davis Enterprises, co-founder and CEO of Speedee Transport and co-founder of Stark TMS Software, attended the event with his family



2020 Forty under 40 Awards winners and their families listened to Axel Schuster, CEO of the Vancouver Whitecaps FC, being interviewed by Kirk LaPointe, publisher and editor-in-chief at BIV and vice-president, editorial at Glacier Media Group



Solon Bucholtz, co-founder and CEO of LBC Studios Inc., accepts his award with his family



Kirk LaPointe, publisher and editor-in-chief of BIV and vice-president, editorial of Glacier Media Group, with WFC CEO and Sporting Director, Axel Schuster



Jennifer Hollinshead, founder and clinical director for Peak Resilience, accepts her award



Sean Tyson, co-founder and CEO of Quietly Media Inc., accepts his award from Kirk LaPointe



2020 Forty under 40 winner Braam Jordaan, CEO of Convo Communications Canada Inc., attended the event with his wife and team members



2020 Forty Under 40 award winners with their friends and family; winners from left to right: Amir Sharif, principal and CEO of CASACraft Properties Ltd.; Ramin Estifaie, co-founder and CEO of CSN Pharma; Reza Sanaie, co-founder and ex-CTO of Beanworks Solutions Inc.; and Nima Nabavi, founder and CEO of ExcelSense Technologies Corp.

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Recommendations, yes, apologies, no, in wake of heat dome tragedy



PODIUM

KIRK LAPOINTE

For almost all of the 619 victims of last June's heat dome, the blazing temperature outdoors didn't kill them. Solitude indoors did. Their immobility contributed. Their age, their poverty, their frayed underlying health abetted. They perished because their living quarters became ovens. Because most didn't have fans, much less air conditioners. Because many lacked the physical or cognitive means to escape peril. Because many reached out to say they were unwell and weren't helped. Because less than half of them were even checked upon for wellness. Because most who could even get an ambulance didn't make it to the hospital. Because a doubly-busy 911 gave some a busy signal. Because even bearing multiple chronic diseases, not even the medical professionals that most had seen in the last month thought to call on them. Nor, for that matter, did any of us who knew them. The report in recent days from the provincial coroner's "death

review panel" spreads enough blame for the heat-related fatalities to make it impossible to single out a clear culprit. It was systemic fault.

The findings are an enervating 33 pages of advice and 23 pages of appendices. It constantly prodded me to wonder why we hadn't thought of doing all of this self-evident support earlier and worry that perhaps we had but just didn't bother.

The province's chief coroner tapped pretty much all the expert fields that somehow couldn't cope then but claim to have learned enough to be ready if, probably when, there is a next time: emergency management, medicine, public health, First Nations health, seniors, city and municipal planning, health administration, poverty reduction, patient safety, policy, research, housing, police, fire and ambulance services.

Before we get to the prescriptive windshield, let's cast our eyes on the diagnostic rear-view mirror and at one piece of that well-travelled road.

Most stunning for me was that these victims were on the one hand well-known to authorities but on the other hand poorly designated as priorities for emergency help.

Some 91 per cent were on at least one health ministry chronic disease registry, more than 80 per cent of them were on three or more, more than one-third on six to nine of them. More than two-thirds had such conditions as heart

failure, osteoarthritis or Parkinson's disease. Nearly two-thirds had mood or anxiety disorders, dementia or schizophrenia.

Yet the report revealed that these registries don't include clinical diagnoses. Each registry defines its own criteria for inclusion from the tabulated administrative data. Damned little good that seems to have done.

One other terrible set of statistics reflects those days of chaos.

Of the 619 deaths, there had been 447 calls for an ambulance; the other 172 were later discovered.

Of those 447 calls, 332 ambulances were dispatched; the other 115 had earlier died.

Of those 332 ambulances dispatched, 277 were pronounced dead upon arrival or died at the scene.

Of the remaining 55, they made it to hospital, only to die later.

Another well-chronicled matter bears reminding: the federal Environment and Climate Change department had issued a heat warning, and the province and communities were simply lead-footed in responding soon enough.

The report concluded there are three key needs: a co-ordinated heat alert system, the identification and support of vulnerable populations during extreme heat events and prevention and risk-mitigation strategies.

There are 14 priority actions

out of these recommendations, many of them quickies before the next expected bout of hot weather in late July, like a better heat alert system and stronger co-ordination, and some longer-term advice, like improved codes for construction of cooler buildings and plans for canopy in cities.

One recommendation that rings smart is for cooling devices as medical equipment for the most vulnerable, something done elsewhere that could easily be implemented but instead will be studied.

To some credit, the **John Horgan** government outlined next steps one day before the report was issued: it's moving ahead on a better warning system, making a commitment to more ambulance services and planning to move more people to cooler places when temperatures rise dangerously.

But, true to form for most governments, nowhere in the last year or even in the last week has been basic contrition: an admission of administrative failure to contend even with a relatively slow-moving disaster like a days-long descent into hellish temperatures.

While the provincial statement on the debacle included bromides of "our hearts go out" and "it was clear we needed to work together to be prepared," there was no "we are sorry we weren't ready" or "we bear responsibility for losses of life," much less a "we are resigning out of shame for what happened."

The **BC Liberals**, not so long ago in charge of that same system, nevertheless noted the premier's verbal blunders of last June: his ill-considered off-script quip that "fatalities are a part of life" (a gaffe he tried to walk back) and that amid the systemic dysfunction there was "an element of personal responsibility" to blame.

True, that. None of us deserves absolution. We can all be deemed complicit, because we had systematically, indifferently made those victims invisible to live out their lives, having failed to build viably their conditions of safety.

But no political leader can have it both ways. Administration of public safety confers all-in responsibility for it. You can't choose when to sheepishly pass the buck and bray that the buck stops with you – even when the covenant with the public sees it pay so others can look after what we cannot, do not or will not.

None of us had insight into where those vulnerable citizens were, how seriously they were threatened, and what might have been done to bring them to safety.

That, I am afraid to say today, is what a publicly administered health system is supposed to be underwritten by us to record, monitor, and keep safe.

And it didn't. And its political overlords just won't say sorry. ■

Kirk LaPointe is publisher and editor-in-chief of *BIV* and vice-president, editorial, of *Glacier Media*.

Medium-well and middle of the road for the majority of Canadians



PODIUM

MARIO CANSECO

One of the nastiest glances I ever received was from a research industry colleague after I had the temerity to order a steak "medium well" when we were having lunch. What followed was a scathing denunciation of my long-standing eating preferences, along with the promise of a significantly better experience if I switched to "medium rare" instead. Reluctantly, I followed her advice. She was right.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was practically impossible for Canadians to add the desired amount of milk, cream or other non-dairy products when they bought coffee outside of their own homes. While some chains already had a system to figure out how much creamer would be added to a specific order, fear of contagion presented a challenge for those who still wanted to control the process.

As barbecue season begins to materialize, and people return to coffee shops, **Research Co.** and **Glacier Media** asked Canadians about their personal preferences for steak and coffee. The survey allowed for a welcome pre-summer break from our usual concerns about policy, pandemic management and electoral forecasting.

The online survey showed

Canadians two photographs, one with five different slices of steak and another with nine different cups of coffee, and asked them to choose their favourite shades. Let's start with beef.

We found out that 10 per cent of Canadians do not eat steak – a proportion that rises to 14 per cent among women.

Our perception of the perfect steak varies greatly. Only nine per cent of Canadians selected shade No. 1, which some describe as blue, while 21 per cent chose shade No. 2, the medium rare I had avoided for most of my life.

More than a quarter (27 per cent) opted for shade No. 3 or medium, 17 per cent went with shade No. 4 or medium well, and the same proportion (17 per cent) picked shade No. 5 or well done.

The coffee question also

provided some surprises. We can inform readers that 15 per cent of Canadians do not drink it.

When respondents were exposed to the photograph with nine shades of coffee, black was the preferred choice for 17 per cent of Canadians, including 21 per cent of men.

Canadians aged 55 and over are more likely to decline any cream or milk on their coffee (20 per cent) than their counterparts aged 35 to 54 and aged 18 to 34 (20 per cent each).

The largest group of Canadians locate their own coffee cup along shades No. 5, No. 6 and No. 7, a colour that is more reminiscent of beige and well short of passing for whitish. Half of women (50 per cent) and one third of men (34 per cent) are in this category. Canadians aged 18 to 34 are also more likely to be on this middle

ground (47 per cent) than their counterparts aged 35 to 54 and aged 55 and over (40 per cent each).

As expected, there is no universal way to enjoy a steak or a cup of coffee in Canada.

If we were to put these findings on electoral terms, a first-past-the-post system would deliver a country of medium-well steaks and beige coffee – much to the dismay of those who express a fondness for more radical options. ■

Mario Canseco is president of *Research Co.*

Results are based on an online study conducted from May 22 to May 24 among 1,000 adults in Canada. The margin of error, which measures sample variability, is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

TROUBLE

WHO’S GETTING SUED

These corporate claims were filed with the BC Supreme Court registry in Vancouver. Information is derived from notices of civil claim. Civil claims have not been tested or proven in court.

DEFENDANTS

Westport Insurance Corp. and Northbridge Insurance and Scor Reinsurance Co. and Starr Insurance & Reinsurance Ltd. and Hdi-Gerling Industrial Insurance Co. and AIG Insurance Co. of Canada

PLAINTIFF

Kingdom Langley LP and Kingdom Langley GP Ltd. and 1116734 B.C. Ltd.

CLAIM
\$7,630,016 for an insurance claim after shoring collapses at plaintiffs’ construction project.

DEFENDANT

Champion Development Inc.
PLAINTIFFS
OTF Consulting Inc. and David Smith
CLAIM
\$1,566,666 for debt owing on an asset purchase agreement.

DEFENDANT

Ryu Apparel Inc.
PLAINTIFF
Park Royal Shopping Centre Holdings Ltd.
CLAIM
\$750,427 for breach of lease.

DEFENDANT

1022724 B.C. Ltd.
PLAINTIFF
Ishoni Development Group Inc.
CLAIM
\$384,000 for drywall, plumbing, electrical and landscaping services; a builder’s lien.

DEFENDANTS

Sequential Steps Technologies Ltd. and David Jason Bhimji
PLAINTIFF
Business Development Bank of Canada
CLAIM
\$308,611 for debt.

DEFENDANTS

Sea to Sky Exotic Car Rental Ltd. and Philip Garrow and Diana Fiello
PLAINTIFF
Accord Small Business Finance Corp.
CLAIM
\$269,771 or debt.

DEFENDANTS

The 360 Degrees Health & Wellness Company Inc. and Aly Kanani
PLAINTIFFS
Awni Abu-Ulba and Sherri Abu-Ulba and Utopia Enterprises Ltd.

CLAIM

\$258,861 for debt.

DEFENDANTS

Ardor Mining Group Ltd. and Alexander Luymes
PLAINTIFF
Westerra Equipment Ltd. as general partner of Westerra Equipment LP
CLAIM
\$188,983 for equipment rentals.

DEFENDANTS

Jusper Dutchman Trucking Ltd. and Igor Nad and Sanja Nad
PLAINTIFF
Accord Small Business Finance Corp.
CLAIM
\$145,818 for debt.

DEFENDANTS

Bijan Law Corp. and Bijan Ahmadian
PLAINTIFF
Blueshore Leasing Ltd.
CLAIM
\$128,691 for breach of lease.

DEFENDANT

Sujaja Enterprise Ltd.
PLAINTIFF
Star Produce Ltd. dba BC Hot House Foods
CLAIM
\$118,920 for cucumbers.

DEFENDANTS

Wreck Beach Beverage Corp. dba Wreck Beach Spirits and Alana Marisa Alexandra Thomson and Emily Catharine Dewsbury
PLAINTIFF
Accord Small Business Finance Corp.
CLAIM
\$101,350 for debt.

DEFENDANT

Yellowridge Construction Ltd.
PLAINTIFF
JPD Staffing Inc.
CLAIM
\$72,534 for framing and roof truss installation work.

DEFENDANTS

Elements Academy of Martial Arts Inc. and Emma Hamilton
PLAINTIFF
1137482 B.C. Ltd.
CLAIM
\$58,887 for breach of lease.

DEFENDANTS

WSP Canada Inc. and Century Plumbing & Heating Ltd. and Glenco Electric Ltd. and Honeywell Ltd. and National Energy Equipment Inc. and Northwest Tech-Con Systems Ltd. and ABC Cos.
PLAINTIFF
Fraser Health Authority
CLAIM
Damages arising from a diesel spill incident.

LAWSUIT OF THE WEEK

Provincial government faces class action over alleged inaction on dealing with racism in B.C. hospitals against Indigenous peoples

A class of Indigenous people is suing the B.C. government, claiming in a class action lawsuit that the province has allegedly failed to deal with decades of systemic racism in the health-care system.

In a notice of civil claim filed on May 27 under the Class Proceedings Act, lead plaintiff **Candice Patrick** claims Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit people face “widespread racism” when trying to access hospital services in British Columbia.

Patrick, who lives in Houston, B.C., claims Indigenous peoples are “subjected to humiliating, demeaning, and sub-standard hospital care,” and are treated differently than non-Indigenous peoples due to their “race, colour, or ethnic origin” in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

According to the claim, the provincial government has been aware of the problem since at least 2005 after being urged by the **BC First Nations Leadership Council** to take action against systemic racism in the province’s hospitals. Back then, the council advocated for “cultural competency training” for health-care professionals to mitigate the discriminatory treatment Indigenous peoples face when trying to access health-care services.

A year later, the lawsuit says, the province released a “First Nations Health Plan,” committing to developing training programs and signed a memo in recognition of “the need to ensure equitable and culturally sensitive access to health services” for Indigenous peoples.

But the training program developed by the province wasn’t mandatory for hospital workers, and the class action claims the government has failed to take meaningful action to improve the “patient experience” for Indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, in November 2020, the province released a damning report entitled *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care*. The report, the claim says, revealed that Indigenous peoples faced “widespread stereotyping, racism, and discrimination” when trying to access hospital services. In June 2021, the B.C. government released an “action plan” to deal with the issue, finding that the *In Plain Sight* report offered a “blueprint for action to address systemic racism” in B.C. health care.

“Despite being aware – for decades – of the significant problem of racism against Indigenous peoples within British Columbia’s hospital system, the defendant has failed to take timely and appropriate steps to eliminate or reduce the problem,” the lawsuit states. “The failure on the part of the defendant to address widespread Indigenous-specific racism in the hospital system has caused the issue to become deeply rooted and systemic.”

The lawsuit details lead plaintiff Patrick’s experience in June 2020 when she went to Bulkley Valley District Hospital in Smithers after having surgery. She had severe abdominal pain, but the hospital allegedly failed to do blood tests and imaging that would’ve revealed a serious post-surgical complication. Instead, Patrick claims she was accused of “drug-seeking” due to her Indigenous background leaving her “humiliated and distrustful.”

“Had the plaintiff not been Indigenous, further testing would likely have been carried out, and her treatment would not have been provided in a demeaning and racist manner,” the claim states.

Patrick seeks class certification, damages for Charter violations, and declarations that the B.C. government is obligated to “reasonably ensure” that Indigenous peoples can access non-discriminatory health-care services.

The allegations have not been proven or tested in court, and the provincial government had not responded to the lawsuit by press time.

DEFENDANTS

Pitt Meadows Plumbing & Mechanical Systems (2001) Ltd. and MIFAB Inc. and ABC Co.
PLAINTIFFS
Interior Health Authority and Ellisdon Facilities Services Inc. dba Ellisdon Corp. – PRH Facilities Management GP
CLAIM
Damages arising from a flood.

DEFENDANTS

Jeffrey McCord and John Thiesson and Vertex One Asset Management Inc.
PLAINTIFF
Matthew Wood
CLAIM
Declaratory relief to void property transfers under the Fraudulent Conveyance Act.

DEFENDANTS

AD General Partner Inc. dba AD Sopa LP and AD General Partners Inc. and AD Sopa Holdings Inc. and Francesco Aquilini and Renzo Barazzuol and David Negrin and Roberto Aquilini and Kevin Hoffman and Victor De Bonis and Ryan Seminoff

PLAINTIFF

The Owners, Strata Plan EPS 5112
CLAIM
Damages related to construction defects, breach of warranty and misrepresentation in real estate disclosure materials.

DEFENDANTS

Nikita Bersenev and Christopher Legault and Cancon Construction Ltd.
PLAINTIFF
Ace Excavating Ltd.
CLAIM
Damages for breach of contract, conspiracy and breach of fiduciary duty for misuse of confidential information by former employees.

DEFENDANTS

Imperial Oil Ltd. and Home Oil Distributors Co. and the Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. and Desjardins Financial Security Life Assurance Co. and Canada Life Assurance Co.
PLAINTIFFS
Qualex-Landmark Dunbar LP and Qualex-Landmark Dunbar GP Ltd.
CLAIM
Declaratory relief that a property is a contaminated site under the Environmental Management Act and

that defendants are responsible for remediation costs as “responsible persons.”

DEFENDANTS

Mile 37 Craft Canning Company Inc. and Bevmax Inc.
PLAINTIFF
Crysteda Ventures Inc.
CLAIM
Damages for breach of warranty for defendants supplying plaintiff with leaky beverage cans.

DEFENDANTS

Industrial Alliance Securities Inc. and Dominic Spooner
PLAINTIFF
Gisela Waibel
CLAIM
Damages for misrepresentation and breach of contract arising from defendants’ negligent management of plaintiff’s investment portfolio.

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First Forward Building Connections Campaign

FIRST UNITED has been serving Vancouver's Downtown Eastside for nearly 140 years. Our meal program dates back to the Great Depression, and we've been offering free tax and legal services since the 1970s.

But demand for our services has outgrown our space, and the space itself is falling into disrepair. In order to meet the growing needs of our community we're redeveloping our site at 320 East Hastings. The new FIRST will feature:

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Three times our current space
- ▶ **Universal design**
Ensuring accessibility for all
- ▶ **New library and computer lab**
Technology that enables
- ▶ **New counselling spaces**
For quiet moments of care
- ▶ **Day sleeping room**
For those in need of rest
- ▶ **Roof-top deck**
An outdoor gathering area
- ▶ **Interfaith sacred space**
A sanctuary within our city
- ▶ **Multipurpose rooms**
For adaptable programming
- ▶ **Two drop-in centres**
Our neighbourhood's living room
- ▶ **100+ below-market housing units**
Operated by Lu'ma Native Housing Society

We've raised \$23.5 million towards our \$30 million goal.
Demolition starts May 2022, with doors open in 2024.
It is happening.

Will you join us to move First Forward?



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Render images of the new building by project design architects NSDA Architects.

