

Mayor's Report – October 1, 2025

Yesterday was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which coincides with 'Orange Shirt Day', for which Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillor Barkwill joined me on the 'Walk For The Children' from Penticton to the Sylix Residential Schools Monument on the Penticton reserve. The walk serves to honour the children who never returned home and the families that are still affected by the legacy of residential school system.

Last week, from Sept 22 - 26, five members of Council – myself, Deputy Mayor Trainer, and Councillors Barkwill, Betts, and Peake – attended the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) annual convention in Victoria. The UBCM convention provides an important forum for dialogue between local and provincial governments with inter-governmental workshops, resolution debates, and one-on-one meetings with provincial ministers and ministry staff.

We had formal meetings with six ministers:

- *Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport*, to speak about our request to apply a Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), or hotel tax.
- *Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance*, to discuss support for rural infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- *Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land & Resource Stewardship (WLRS)*, to discuss a Sourcewater Protection Plan for the Trout Creek watershed that the District of Summerland is developing with the Penticton Indian Band.
- *Jagrup Brar, Minister of Mining & Critical Materials*, to discuss ongoing concerns with the Garnet Valley gravel pit that was approved last year.
- *Diana Gibson, Minister of Citizen Services*, to talk about the possibility of a pop-up Service BC Centre in Summerland one day a week.
- *Amna Shah, Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Addictions*, to discuss youth mental health in light of recent local tragedies.

We also requested but were not granted meetings with the Premier, Minister of Housing & Municipal Affairs, Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation & Transit, and Minister of Health. However, we did meet with senior staff from those ministries as well as from BC Assessment and BC Hydro.

For the second straight year, the District of Summerland also organized a meeting of UBCM delegates from farming communities, which was attended by more than 50 mayors and councillors from 20 municipalities. This year we were also joined by Agriculture Minister Lana Popham, senior staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, the chair of the Agricultural Land Commission, and the CEO of the Agricultural Land Commission.

The week prior to the UBCM convention was filled with meetings and community events here in Summerland.

On Sept 20, I was joined by Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillors Patan and Peake at the railway station on Bathville Road for a celebration to mark 30 years of operation of the heritage steam train. Since 1995, the steam train has taken 350,000 riders to the trestle and back. Congratulations to the Kettle Valley Steam Railway (KVSr) Society for creating what I'm told is the single most popular tourist attraction in the Okanagan. As I said to the Society's volunteers and staff, we hope they keep chugging for many more years to come.

On Sept 19, Deputy Mayor Trainer and I welcomed provincial Opposition Leader John Rustad to Summerland, and over a coffee we discussed several issues with him and Penticton-Summerland MLA Amelia Boulton.

On Sept 18, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where we received an update from Parks Canada on the proposed National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Parks Canada is trying to create at least 10 new national parks by 2030 and is working with Indigenous communities to co-develop and co-manage new protected areas.

On Sept 17, I had the honour of officially opening the 10th annual Ryga Arts Festival at the Festival Launch and Opening Night Reception at the George Ryga Arts and Cultural Centre. The opening night included a variety show reflecting the festival theme of 'Words, Theatre, Music' as inspired by George Ryga.

On Sept 14, I joined Deputy Mayor Trainer and her family and many other Summerlanders on the Terry Fox Run in support of cancer research.

On Sept 13, I had the honour of officially opening the Fall Fair and then made my way over to the Endless Summer Show and Shine. Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillors Betts and Peake, I believe, were also there, and maybe other councillors as well... Both events were very busy.

As our summer winds down, it has been great seeing so many people out and about, thanks to such a diverse calendar of community events that provides something for everyone. Thank you to all the volunteers who make these events possible and contribute to the vibrancy of our town.

- Mayor Doug Holmes