

Mayor's Report – June 16, 2026

Last week, on June 8, I participated in a local government focus group for the Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC) as part of an impact assessment to inform their next strategic plan. We discussed what was working well with ETSI-BC, where gaps remain, and how they can best respond to the region's economic development priorities.

Immediately following that meeting, I attended a webinar with Jobs and Economic Growth Minister Ravi Kahlon who provided an update on the Province's Look West strategy. Separate action plans for key sectors of the economy are being developed, including one for agriculture that will include a target to increase agriculture and food exports by 25% by 2035. Minister Kahlon said local governments can reach out to say where we can lead and to identify local companies that can play a role.

Keeping on the theme of economic development, on June 4, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Penticton to create a joint Regional Economic Development Coordinator position as a three-year pilot (2026-2028). The grant-funded pilot is intended to test the effectiveness of a shared regional service before considering any long-term commitments.

On June 5, I was up on stage in Memorial Park to help open the 45th annual ActionFest, where I congratulated the Summerland Action Festival Society board members for organizing yet another successful event. I gave special recognition, which I'd like to do again now, to board chair Pat Bell, who has been leading the charge for the past 36 years. Despite recent health challenges, Pat has stay involved and was out and about and looking good for this year's festival.

Besides the entertainment, ActionFest weekend also, of course, includes the ball tournament that featured 70 teams, and Giant's Head Run which had more than 500 runners. I trotted along the 5.5km route and had a photo finish with our corporate officer. Congratulations to all the participants, volunteers, staff and business sponsors who make ActionFest such a great community event.

Back on May 27, CAO Statt and I met with snpink'tn Chief Greg Gabriel, Penticton Mayor Julius Bloomfield and RDOS Chair Mark Pendergraft, along with staff from each organization, to discuss the development of a long-term plan to upgrade the KVR trail between Summerland and Penticton. We will need to address public safety, trail rehabilitation, access management, and cultural and environmental protection, and until such time it was agreed the trail through snpink'tn reserve lands should remain closed to the public.

Finally, I have submitted our proposal for an Agricultural Municipality Initiative (AMI) to the Legislative Assembly's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services as part of their Budget 2027 consultation. And in assembling a coalition of like-minded municipalities, in the past few weeks I have made presentations to the councils of 100 Mile House, Spallumcheen, Houston, and Kent. In the next few weeks, I will present to Salmon Arm, Coldstream, Lake Country, Vanderhoof, North Cowichan, and Pitt Meadows. While we are familiar with the proposal ourselves, I was thinking I should give the presentation to Summerland Council as well. So, if everyone is agreeable, I'd like to do that now. *(Presentation provided.)*

- Mayor Doug Holmes