

Mayor's Report – July 7, 2026

I started July celebrating Canada Day at Memorial Park where I was joined by Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillors Peake and Van Alphen. Thank you to the Summerland Legion for organizing the annual celebration, with the help of a \$500 grant-in-aid from the District. And thanks also to our Fire Department for bringing out the new engine, which was a big hit. Once again my job was to cut and serve the Canada Day cake. Or should I say, the three cakes. Dare I say, they went like “hotcakes”.

On June 30, a special meeting of the Collaborative Leadership Table of Okanagan mayors and Sylix chiefs was called to discuss the drought situation. A resolution was passed calling on the Province to work with regional partners on coordinated decision-making and watershed management during drought and other watershed emergencies. The resolution also called for accelerated investments in watershed restoration and groundwater recharge.

On June 25, I attended the BC Agriculture Forum in Penticton, which was organized by the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC). This was the first forum of its kind and was well attended by farmers, food producers, industry associations, and all three levels of government including many federal MPs and provincial MLAs. Besides some thought-provoking presentations and panel discussions on the economics and future of farming, the event included a tour of two Summerland farms and the federal Research Centre.

On June 24, Councillor Barkwill and I and other Regional District directors attended a meeting with Ministry of Transportation (MOTT) staff, who told us they would be conducting traffic counts this summer at the intersections of Hwy 97 and Arkell/Thornber, and Hwy 97 and the Research Centre/SunOka. The Ministry will also look at the configuration of both intersections to accommodate traffic lights if deemed necessary. They also said they were aware of the Food Hub development and will monitor the Hwy 97-Jones Flat Rd intersection for increased traffic after it opens.

On June 23, I took part in a tour of the Food Hub construction site that was organized for Agriculture Minister Lana Popham. The project is coming along and is scheduled to open in October. During the tour, I had the opportunity to update the Minister on our work on an Agricultural Municipality Initiative (AMI) and she re-confirmed her willingness to meet at UBCM with elected representatives from the group of municipalities working together on the proposal.

The Agricultural Municipality Initiative (AMI) roadshow continued with an online presentation to Pitt Meadows Council on the 23rd and in-person presentations to Salmon Arm and Coldstream councils both on the 22nd. I'll soon be making presentations to Vanderhoof and Lake Country councils, while my delegation request to Central Saanich council was denied. Of the Councils that I have presented to, the proposal has been well received and most are now preparing an analysis of their costs to service ALR lands, similar to what we have done. We will collate the collective analysis in advance of our UBCM meeting with Minister Popham.

I have also submitted the proposal to the Legislative Assembly's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services as part of its Budget consultation, and I have spoken about it to a PhD student at the University of Victoria who is doing her doctorate in local government financing.

On June 19, the Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC) held a board meeting here in Summerland, down at the Waterfront Resort. They meet in person twice each year, rotating locations throughout the Southern Interior in order to spend time in the communities they serve. Prior to the board meeting, they held a roundtable discussion with local stakeholders and funding recipients in which I participated along with representatives of the Food Hub and Bottleneck Drive. The Food Hub received ETSI-BC funding for the development of its business plan and Bottleneck Drive received funding for its new wayfinding signage.

On June 18, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where a delegation from Innergex Renewable Energy presented a proposal to install up to 17 wind turbines on Crown land 19 km west of Summerland, near Isintok Lake. The proposal is in response to a FortisBC call for power. We were assured the turbines would not impact users of the Isintok Lake recreational site. To verify that, Cllor Barkwill and I went up to Isintok the Sunday before last and we could see that the proposed locations for the turbines are much higher up and further back from the lake.

Finally, on June 17, Councillors Barkwill and Peake and I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Summerland Chamber of Commerce/Destination Summerland where I had the pleasure of presenting the organization with the 2025 Mayor's Award of Excellence. The Award is an annual recognition given out since 2010 by the mayor of the day to a local organization that makes an outstanding contribution to the community. In presenting the award, I noted that the Chamber of Commerce has been showcasing Summerland as a tourist destination for many years, and that work has recently been taken to a new level with their rebranding as Destination Summerland. I also mentioned that nothing embodies Summerland's spirit and vibrancy more than the annual Festival of Lights, for which the Chamber/Destination Summerland is the long-time organizer.

- Mayor Doug Holmes