

RIDGE BUSINESS BUZZ

Department of Economic Development



Special Summer Edition

Message from Wendy Dupley, Director, Economic Development, City of Maple Ridge

As Christmas markets and snow-covered sidewalks begin appearing throughout the Town Centre, it seems that summer may have finally arrived! Or at least, the annual Christmas movie filming season that runs through July and August each year is back.

The return of the film industry is another sign of the slow and methodical "return to normal" for the local economy. The film industry is a major employer in Maple Ridge and benefits a large number of businesses throughout the community. Over 1,200 residents work in the film industry and over \$45m is paid out in salaries each year; film companies also use a growing number of local suppliers. The City has been working with the industry throughout the shutdown to make sure that we were ready to support with all the require protocols in place for when it returned.

You may have also noticed a number of new patios springing up in the Town Centre as well. Maple Meadows Brewing, Silver Valley Brewing, and Taco Fan are some of the first businesses to take advantage of the City's new expedited patio permitting process. I know that many of you are looking forward to warmer weather and the opportunity to meet family and friends in the safer outdoor venue that these patios will provide.

Although we are far from out the woods, Statistics Canada recently reported that nearly one million more Canadians re-entered the workforce in June. As businesses that had closed due to the pandemic began to slowly reopen, the country continued its May trend of starting to recoup the steep job losses that had occurred over March and April. Statistic Canada's labour force survey showed 953,000 jobs were added last month, including 488,000 full-time and 465,000 part-time positions, and the unemployment rate fell to 12.3% after hitting a record-high of 13.7% in May. It should also be noted that Statistics Canada didn't include any of the gains in Toronto as restrictions in that city were loosened after the survey week.

Hopefully, we will continue to see these types of positive signs as we move forward with our collective response to the pandemic. As always, your economic development department team is here to help and support you.

#ForwardTogether.

Sincerely,

Wendy



BC Government releases new COVID-19 Modelling Information

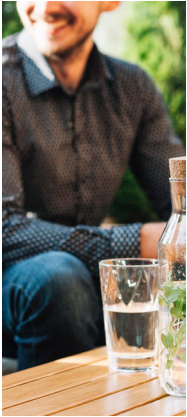
On July20, the BC Government released Covid-19: Going Forward which contains updated COVID-19 modelling data and the survey results from BC COVID -19 Population Health Survey: Your Story, Our Future. In this report, Dr. Bonnie Henry notes that the province has seen an uptick in the transmission rate in recent days. The modelling notes that although we have kept the curve flat, recent data suggests we still have the possibility of explosive growth as our contact rates with others has grown over time. Dr. Henry reminded residents to keep groups small, to maintain physical distancing or to wear face masks when distancing is not possible, wash your hands frequently, and to stay home when you are not feeling well. Overall, Dr. Henry believes we are at a turning point in BC and that we need to re-focus our efforts and do our part to flatten the curve.



Federal Government Extends Wage Subsidy Program

On July 13, the federal government announced that it will be extending the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program to December of this year. This program covers 75% of wages, up to a weekly maximum of \$847, for workers at eligible companies and non-profits affected by the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CEWS program is designed to help employers re-hire workers who had been laid off due to COVID-19 and to better position these businesses to resume normal operations once the pandemic has passed. This extension is currently under discussion in the House of Commons.

BUSINESS



UPDATE Expedited Patio Permitting Program

On June 9, Council voted to approve an expedited permitting process for sidewalk cafes, patios and parklets. The goal of the program is to help the restaurants and cafes offset the indoor seating they have lost to comply with COVID-19 health and safety requirements. The City program is meant to complement the province's new policy directive that allows for expanded liquor service on patios and outdoor seating areas.

"We've seen very strong interest in this program, especially from businesses in the Town Centre" says Bruce Livingstone, Business Retention and Expansion Officer for the City of Maple Ridge. "As the weather improves, I think we're all looking forward to getting outside more. These new patios provide a safer dining option and they bring a renewed sense of activity and vibrancy back in to the Town Centre."

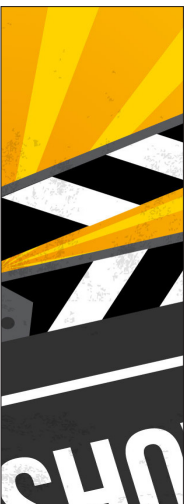


Delivery of packaged liquor from restaurants, pubs extended

The Provincial government has extended the temporary authorization that permits food-primary and liquor-primary licensees to sell and deliver sealed, packaged liquor products alongside the purchase of a meal for off-site consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The authorization, originally set to expire July 15, 2020, will remain in place until Oct. 31, 2020. Extending the temporary authorization will provide businesses with continued relief from the financial hardship of the pandemic and help make it easier for vulnerable British Columbians to continue observing physical distancing guidelines.

FILM



Film Industry Makes a Big Comeback in Maple Ridge

You may have noticed there has been a significant increase in filming activity in Maple Ridge, especially in the Town Centre.

"We have eight productions currently shooting at multiple locations throughout Maple Ridge, with more scouting for August and September" says Marg Johnson, Film Production Liaison for the City of Maple Ridge. "We stayed in touch with the industry throughout the shutdown to make sure we were ready for the re-opening."

Most of the film productions are Christmas and Wedding themed 'movies of the week'. Movie sets will look much different now as the crew are adhering to PHO Guidelines and Recommendations, Worksafe BC Guidelines and the productions' customized Safety Plans. For example, all crew and cast will have their temperatures taken when coming onto set, wear masks and maintain safe physical distancing. The industry has worked hard to implement measures to do their part in limiting the spread of Covid-19.



A Note from Our MLA

Minister Lisa Beare, MLA for Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture posted an update about the province's efforts to support tourism business resiliency: She wrote, "From the beginning of #COVID19, we've worked in partnership with regional leaders to offer one-on-one guidance for tourism businesses to navigate provincial and federal supports."

Learn more about the **BC Tourism Resiliency Network** and ways in which Maple Ridge businesses can access valuable resources and expertise to help guide them through the current health crisis.



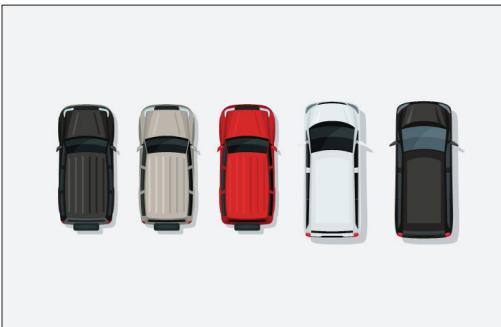
Sharing Our Unique Story through Video

Economic Development and Tourism is working with Colla Films to produce a new video to highlight our beautiful community and natural surroundings.

Our current **VIDEO**, produced in 2017, has had many thousands of views on You Tube and has many more additional visits on the city website and other media. Video offers the perfect medium for sharing our community's unique culture, heritage and natural assets to residents and visitors. According to Dr. James McQuivey of Forrester Research, "One minute of video has the same value and impact as 1.8 million words." We look forward to sharing the finished video in early September.

Here are some additional videos:

Discover Maple Ridge video
2015 Maple Ridge Ale Trail video - 2019.



City begins construction on new commuter parking lot

Work on a new commuter parking lot, located directly east of the Haney Bus Exchange, has begun and will be completed within the next month. This new permeable surface lot delivers 128 new parking spots to address growing parking demands in the heart of downtown.

The successful introduction of the R3 Rapid Bus service resulted in a significant increase in demand for parking in the underground parking lot. As we move into Phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan, the reopening of the Library, Leisure Centre and increased transit ridership are expected to result in increased demand for parking in the Town Centre.

"Council ordered the construction of the new commuter lot as an interim measure along with rate adjustments to manage the weekday demand for parking. This plan encourages commuters to use transit and recognizes the importance of supporting downtown events and activities on evenings and weekends. The new rates also fund development and maintenance of the new and existing parking facilities. Council has signaled future work to develop a comprehensive parking plan for the downtown core," said Mayor Morden.

Canadian Survey on Business Conditions

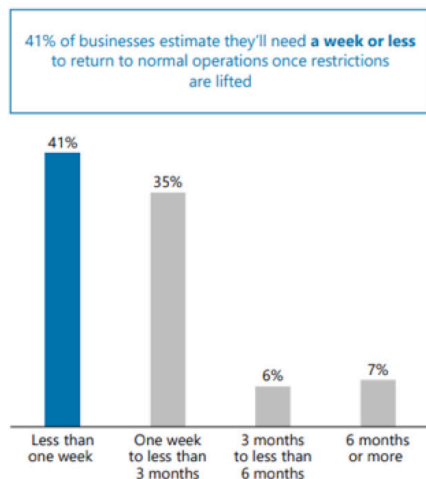
The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Deloitte Canada to develop deeper insight and analysis into the **Canadian Survey on Business Conditions (CSBC)**. The CSBC was a collaboration between the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Statistics Canada to measure the impact of COVID-19 on businesses in Canada. The first iteration of this survey took place in April 2020 as a crowdsourcing initiative open to all businesses across Canada.

As we look to recovery, businesses expect to bounce back quickly but will need some targeted support to do so



BUSINESSES ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE

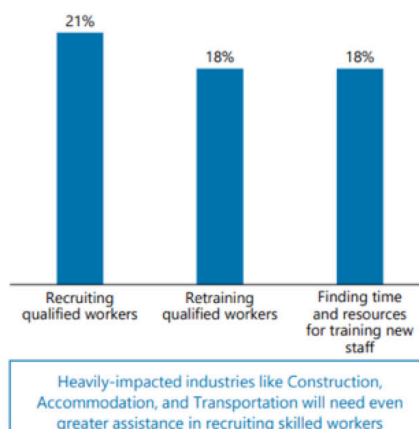
Once distancing measures are removed, how long would this business require to be able to re-open or return to normal operations?
% of all respondents



TO FACILITATE A SMOOTH RECOVERY, BUSINESSES WILL NEED HELP RECRUITING AND RETRAINING WORKERS

To what extent will each of the following be a challenge for this business with regards to recruitment and training as the economy returns to a normal state of activity?

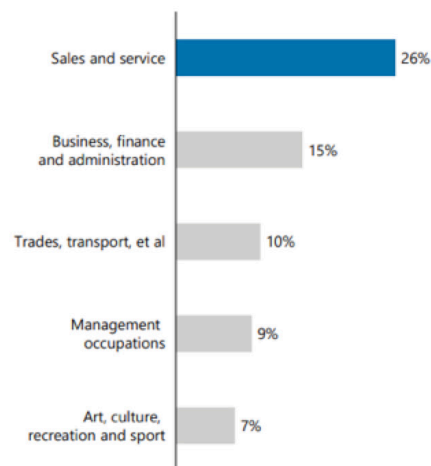
Top 3 largest staffing-related challenges, % of all respondents



GENERALLY, WORKERS IN SALES AND SERVICE WILL BE THE MOST CRITICAL IN NAVIGATING THE RECOVERY

Which of these occupational groups, according to the needs of your business, will be the most needed during the recovery period?

% of respondents indicating occupational group as most needed



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, 12,600 business and non-profit responses, April 2020

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British Columbia