



imaginekootenay

Your better life

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2018-MARCH 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you for reading our 2018-19 Annual Report. This past year was another stellar one for the Imagine Kootenay partnership. Every year our online reach and marketing tools and services reaches higher levels, and this year was certainly no exception.

The Imagine Kootenay partnership is a unique partnership that provides a joint marketing platform for 10 communities in the Kootenay and Boundary region. Together we create a one-stop online resource – imaginekootenay.com – that promotes workforce and investment attraction and highlights the benefits of living and working in the Kootenays. Our model is consistently noted as a best practice for a regional approach to economic development and workforce attraction.

The Imagine Kootenay staff and steering committee members provide communities with the tools and support to be investment ready, to attract new businesses

and to retain those that create the fabric of our communities and the Kootenay region.

We support businesses with the resources they need for succession planning, regional investment data and access to capital. We continue to support labour market needs and partner with key regional organizations to attract talent in the technology, tourism, trades and health care sectors.

We look forward to continuing to meet our goals of connecting with investors, supporting workforce attraction initiatives and increasing the strength of our regional partnerships and connections.



Terry Van Horn
Chair,
Imagine Kootenay
Partnership

ABOUT US

Imagine Kootenay (IK) is a joint-initiative of local governments, economic development organizations and Chambers of Commerce with the aim of attracting and supporting investment and workforce development throughout the Kootenay and Boundary region.

Current Partners

City of Nelson & RDCK Areas E & F

City of Revelstoke & CSRD Area B

City of Castlegar

Creston Valley – *Kootenay Lake, Yaqaan Nukiy – Lower Kootenay Band, RDCK Areas A, B & C, Town of Creston*

Columbia Valley – *Invermere, Radium Hot Springs, Canal Flats, RDEK Areas F & G*

Trail, Rossland & Area

Boundary Country

Village of Nakusp

Golden and CSRD Area A

Elk Valley – *Sparwood, Fernie, Elkford, Tobacco Plains*

IMAGINE KOOTENAY PROGRAM GOALS



Raise the profile of the Kootenay region



Connect investors with opportunities in the Kootenay & Boundary region and stimulate regional investment



Attract a diverse workforce to the region



Achieve long-term sustainability for the partnership network

SERVICES WE PROVIDE TO MEMBER COMMUNITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS THE REGION:

- Free business listings
- Job search tool
- Community profiles
- Regional data
- Success stories
- Content marketing
- Capacity development



WORK

Imagine Kootenay offers the region's employers a rich recruiting resource. Through our comprehensive Web platform, ongoing social media initiatives and sector partnerships, we promote the advantages of working and living in a unique part of Canada.

INVEST

Imagine Kootenay connects entrepreneurs who want to grow or exit their business with potential buyers or investors. We use the power of story, and human connection through community-based points of contact, to provide context to featured businesses.

LIVE

Through our Web platform and sharable content - including podcasts and success stories - we showcase the many work, business, learning and lifestyle opportunities found here. Attracting and retaining workforce and investment is the foundation of our collective success.

2018-19 PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

WEBSITE

89,143
Website visits
(14% increase)

940
Job searches
per month

Over
2,200
Registered
Investors

SOCIAL MEDIA

2,274
Facebook followers
(11% increase)



1,204
Instagram
followers
(28% increase)



1,674
Twitter followers
(4% increase)



SOLD

9
Verified sales
= \$2.363M



670+
Direct "inquiries"
to opportunity
holders
(10% increase)



23
Additional
business
transactions
tracked (\$18M)



LEVERAGED

\$127.8K
in funding
(on top
of partner
contributions)



PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

Investment Attraction

A key area of focus, we work to raise the profile of the region as a great place to do business as well as strive to connect investors and entrepreneurs to existing opportunities available across the region. We have a history of making successful connections and bringing new investment to partner communities.

Regional Workforce Development

Taking a collaborative approach, IK works to support workforce attraction efforts across industries and communities. We work with industry, employers and communities to support outcomes.

Leveraging Partnerships

The power of the IK network has allowed the partnership to successfully leverage local, provincial and national funding pots. It also provides community partners opportunities to pool resources on large-scale projects with collaborators such as the Ministry of Trade and Investment, provides a platform to quickly scale up smaller projects across multiple communities.

Community Capacity Building

Funding is allocated each year to support community specific projects to enhance local investor readiness and investment attraction activities.

Working Regionally

Recognized as a best practice for economic development partnerships in British Columbia, IK works regionally to promote the region as a great place to live, work and do business. Marketing regionally allows smaller rural communities access to new partnerships, bigger marketing opportunities and a wider external audience.

Research and Reporting

Over the past few years, IK has made significant investment into strengthening our capabilities in data collection and reporting. In turn, we are able to provide stronger insights and metrics to communities, opportunity holders and website visitors.

Partner, Staff and Contractor Expertise

The combined power of knowledge, experience and networks across partners, staff and contractors provides not only innovation in the way we collaborate and do business, but also new ways of supporting community and stakeholder goals.

Marketing, Communication & Story Telling

Imagine Kootenay is creating and promoting original content to highlight our partner communities and to support businesses across the region. Through the development of blogs, videos and compelling success stories, we work to raise the profile of the region to as a great place to live, work and do business!

TRANSITIONED BUSINESSES

Imagine Kootenay directly supported the sale of 9 businesses and tracked the transition of an additional 23 businesses and commercial properties.

Trail Coffee Shop
Trail, BC



SOLD (\$149,000)

Morris Flowers,
Creston Valley - Kootenay Lake, BC



SOLD (\$1.4M)

Kicking Horse Janitorial,
Golden, BC



SOLD (\$25,000)

What business owners are saying....

"I think Imagine Kootenay is an excellent medium for business owners to market their business opportunities. Thank you for your support."

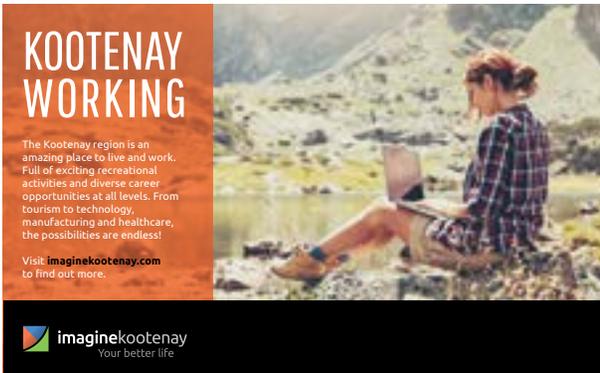
"I have other listings on the site that have had very good response to date. One client commented last summer that he thought it was one of the best sites he'd seen for finding a business"

"Relative to the number of prospects who self-identified from other web listings used, by far Imagine Kootenay prospects out numbered those from other websites. Additionally, the quality of the prospects from Imagine Kootenay was higher. Will use this service again."

MARKETING, COMMUNICATION & STORY TELLING

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Print & Digital Advertising



KOOTENAY WORKING

The Kootenay region is an amazing place to live and work. Full of exciting recreational activities and diverse career opportunities at all levels. From tourism to technology, manufacturing and healthcare, the possibilities are endless!

Visit imaginekootenay.com to find out more.

imaginekootenay
Your better life



**BIG LIFE
BIG RETURNS**

THE KOOTENAYS ARE THRIVING

[VIEW BUSINESS LISTINGS](#)



"ALL THE TALENT, EXPERIENCE AND SKILL WE NEED TO OPERATE OUR BUSINESS EXISTS HERE."



AFFORDABLE LIVING
COMPARING MOUNTAIN HOME PRICES

KOOTENAYS
\$349,542

PRECEDENT
\$1,011,200



BOOMING BUSINESS
KOOTENAY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH IN Q2 2019

KOOTENAY	8.8%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	8.7%
ALBERTA	8.8%
ONTARIO	7.2%

Stories & Blog Content

Making a Clean Start in Golden

(Feb 2019)

Scott and Alycia Weir are the new owners of Kicking Horse Janitorial in Golden, BC.



Motels For Sale in the Kootenays

(Nov 2018)

If you're interested in getting into the hospitality business, buying an established motel can be a great place to start!



5 ways Imagine Kootenay supports small business

(Mar 2019)

Though its main focus is attracting workers and investors for outside the region, Imagine Kootenay also benefits local businesses...



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