



2009 Economic Profile – Introduction to the Central Okanagan Regional District of the Central Okanagan

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About this Document

The Economic Profile is available online through the Economic Development Commission's website: www.investkelowna.com.

The Economic Profile was updated in spring 2009 using the most up to date information and statistics available. Statistics Canada and BC Stats are major sources of information for this document. However, because these statistics are updated throughout the year, the reader may want to compare the statistics herein with the actual federal and provincial sources:

Statistics Canada: www.statcan.ca
BC Stats: www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Throughout the profile, we have also included links to other websites for additional information. The Economic Development Commission of the Central Okanagan is a division of the Regional District of the Central Okanagan. Whenever possible, the information herein reflects the areas within the Regional District boundaries.

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1 Introduction to the Central Okanagan

1.1 REGIONAL DISTRICT OF THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN

The Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO) is situated along the shores of Okanagan Lake in the southern interior of British Columbia. The region consists of more than 2,904 square kilometres (1,142 square miles) of diverse landscapes and topography, including nearly 295 hectares (7,300 acres) of clean, sandy beaches. The area is abundant with rich agricultural land, forested hillsides and mountain peaks. The area is an attractive tourist destination as well as a popular location for a wide range of businesses. The estimated population for the Central Okanagan for 2008 was 180,114¹ which represent over 50% off the Okanagan Valley's total population.

The Regional District of the Central Okanagan is comprised of seven separate areas: City of Kelowna, District of West Kelowna (incorporated in December 6, 2007), District of Peachland, District of Lake Country, Central Okanagan J (census subdivision), Central Okanagan East Electoral Area (formerly Joe Rich – Ellison) and the Westbank First Nation. All have unique characteristics but are closely interrelated.

The Regional District of the Central Okanagan was incorporated in 1967 and has a well-diversified economy, with agriculture, forestry and tourism being the main industries. The warm climate makes this area one of the more important agricultural centres in the province and is one of many attractions for tourists. Improved transportation links to the Lower Mainland have enhanced the Central Okanagan as a place to locate secondary and tertiary manufacturing.

The region has experienced significant growth in residential construction over the past several years. The development of the University of British Columbia – Okanagan campus and growing aerospace industry also attract people. Agriculture and the popularity of the region for tourism and as a retirement centre should ensure continued growth for the region.

For more information: Regional District of the Central Okanagan www.regionaldistrict.com

1.2 CITY OF KELOWNA

With a population of 118,507² in 2008, Kelowna is the largest community in the Central Okanagan. Kelowna is located approximately 400 km east of Vancouver, BC, and 130 km north of the United States border.

Kelowna continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in BC with manufacturing, high technology, health care, tourism and post-secondary education sectors in particular attracting new business and residents to the area. The city's vibrant retail and commercial base attracts a trading area of approximately 450,000 residents, making it the largest centre for urban development, business, commercial, retail, and health care services between the Lower Mainland and Calgary.

For more information: City of Kelowna www.kelowna.ca

¹ *Municipalities, Regional Districts and Development Regions Population Estimates, BC STATS, Service BC, BC Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, February 2009,*

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun/PopulationEstimates_1996-2008.xls (Accessed April 16, 2009)

² *IBID*

1.3 WEST KELOWNA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

The West Kelowna District Municipality (West Kelowna) is a new local government incorporated on December 6, 2007. West Kelowna is the second largest municipality in the Central Okanagan with a population of 27,161³ (2008). The communities within the new district municipality include Westbank, which comprises just under half of the total population -- Shannon Lake, Glenrosa, Casa Loma, West Kelowna Estates, Rose Valley and Lakeview Heights. West Kelowna borders two self-governing reserves of the Westbank First Nation, Tsinstikeptum #9 and Tsinstikeptum #10.

For more information: District of West Kelowna www.districtofwestkelowna.ca

1.4 DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTRY

The District of Lake Country has a population of 11,051⁴ (2008). Lake Country is comprised of four separate communities: Oyama, Carr's Landing, Okanagan Centre, and Winfield. These communities are closely interrelated but are unique in their own right. Like other areas in the Central Okanagan, the area's population growth has resulted in significantly increased residential and commercial activity, and continues to grow and evolve.

For more Information: District of Lake Country www.lakecountry.bc.ca

1.5 DISTRICT OF PEACHLAND

The District of Peachland has a population of 5,232⁵ (2008). Peachland is the southern-most community in the Regional District and is located 22 km south of Kelowna on the west side of Okanagan Lake. Over the past few years, Peachland has undergone a major development program, including improvements to transportation, municipal services and additional residential, commercial and retail facilities.

For more information: District of Peachland www.peachland.ca

1.6 WESTBANK FIRST NATION⁶

Westbank First Nation, historically known as *stqa?tkw'niwt*, is comprised of five reserves totalling 5,306 acres. Tsinstikeptum Reserves 9 and 10 border Okanagan Lake and are in close proximity to the City of Kelowna. Westbank First Nation's band membership totals 657 with approximately 59% residing on reserve lands, along with approximately 9,000 non-members. Approximately 20% of WFN lands are developed and are fully serviced with cable, water, sewer and other utilities. The remaining reserve land are very desirable for future economic growth as the area responds to increasing demands for development. Westbank First Nation is self-governing and has implemented one of the most comprehensive sets of community laws in Canada that cover the development and regulation of reserve lands.

For more information: Westbank First Nation www.wfn.ca

1.7 UNINCORPORATED AREAS

The remainder of the Regional District is made up of unincorporated areas, including Central Okanagan J and Central Okanagan East Electoral Area. The unincorporated areas population totals 18,163 (2008)

³ *Municipalities, Regional Districts and Development Regions Population Estimates, BC STATS, Service BC, BC ___Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, February 2009,*

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun/PopulationEstimates_1996-2008.xls (Accessed April 16, 2009)

⁴ *IBID*

⁵ *IBID*

⁶ *Westbank First Nation, Community Profile, 2008, http://www.wfn.ca/profile.asp (Accessed April 15, 2009)*

1.7.1 CENTRAL OKANAGAN J

Central Okanagan J is located on the west side of Okanagan Lake. It includes the communities of Caesars, Ewing, Fintry, Nahun, Trader's Cove, and Wilson Landing.

1.7.2 CENTRAL OKANAGAN EAST ELECTORAL AREA

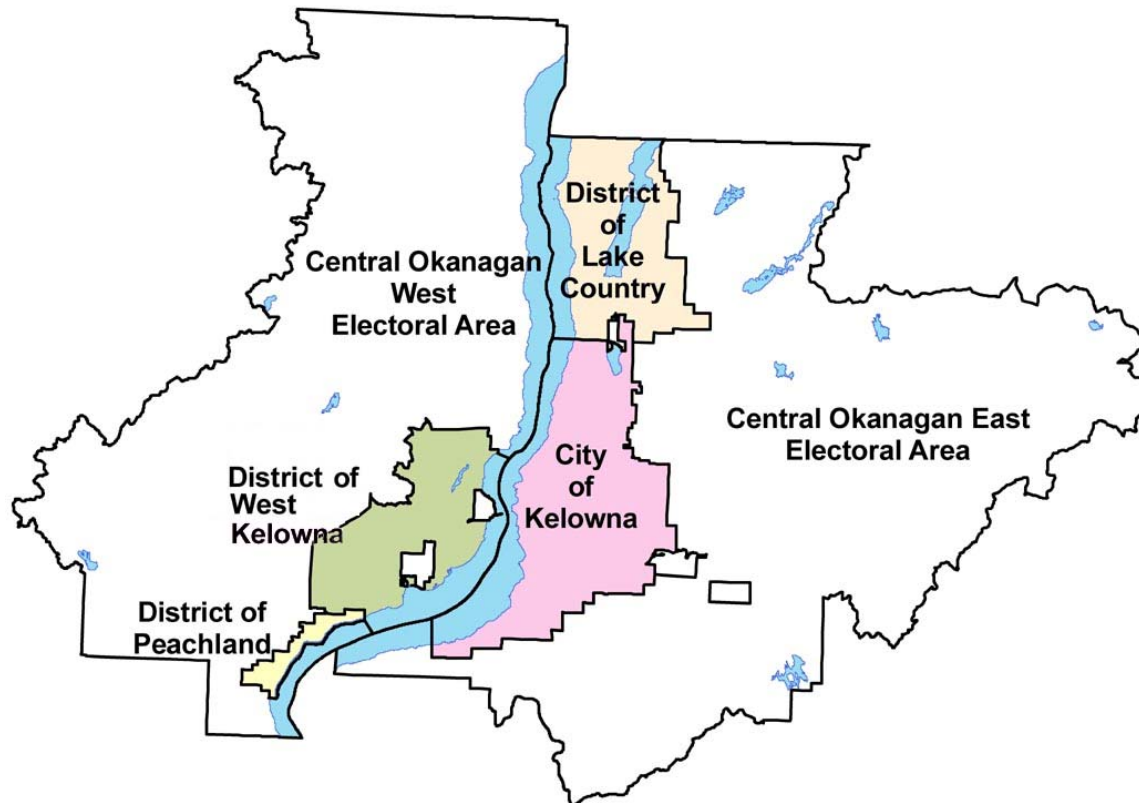
Central Okanagan East is located along the Mission Creek valley approximately 24 km east of Kelowna. This area is known for its natural features, open landscape and residential areas which are removed from the hub of Kelowna, yet only minutes away from its amenities and services.

For more information: Regional District of the Central Okanagan www.regionaldistrict.com

1.8 2006 CENSUS GEOGRAPHY

Census data presented in this report reflect 2006 census boundaries which do include the new West Kelowna District Municipality. A new census profile was commissioned from Statistics Canada to accurately reflect population and demographic statistics for the new geography.

The map⁷ below outlines the current boundaries within the regional district, including the West Kelowna District Municipality. Central Okanagan J area includes the new district municipality but excludes Peachland and Westbank First Nation reserves.



⁷ Regional District of the Central Okanagan Website, *About Us, Population, Map, and General Info*, <http://www.regionaldistrict.com/docs/about/rd-map-small.pdf> (Accessed April 15, 2009)