



News Release

August 5, 2021

Kelowna to host Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) branch

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, has announced details of the newly established Pacific Economic Development Agency (PacifiCan) including a Kelowna branch. The Kelowna PacifiCan office will help the Central Okanagan region, one of Canada's fastest growing regions, to build on economic recovery momentum and play a key role in Canada's economic recovery.

"As Canada's most entrepreneurial region and a leader in economic recovery, Kelowna and the Central Okanagan is a natural fit for a branch office of PacifiCan" said Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran. "This new agency and branch will build on existing momentum in our economy and ultimately create more meaningful engagement between regional businesses and the Federal government."

Since the announcement of a Regional Development Agency focusing on the needs of British Columbia in 2020, regional partners including the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC), UBC Okanagan, Accelerate Okanagan and Chambers of Commerce have advocated for a Central Okanagan office branch location.

"We are thrilled by today's announcement of a PacifiCan office in the Central Okanagan. The Regional Economic Recovery Task Force has encouraged the Federal government to recognize the Central Okanagan's economic strength by establishing a branch of the new agency in the region" said Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) Chair Gail Given. "We're gratified that Minister Joly has supported our request as demonstrated by today's announcement."

The Task Force, co-chaired by RDCO Chair Given and Kelowna Mayor Basran, was initiated by the Mayors of Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake Country and Peachland, as well as the RDCO Chair and Chief of Westbank First Nation. They recognized early in the pandemic that a regional approach was required to identify economic recovery

needs, support businesses and advocate to higher levels of government for stimulus funding. The Task Force handed ongoing economic recovery work back to the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) in June, 2021.

To learn more about economic development in the Central Okanagan, local economic indicators and the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission visit, investkelowna.ca.



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Backgrounder

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan)

The Government of Canada will enhance its federal economic development presence and services in Western Canada by creating two regional development agencies for British Columbia and the Prairie provinces. This approach recognizes that economic drivers and conditions are different in each of the two regions, and entrepreneurs, innovators, institutions, and communities have unique needs linked to where they are located.

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) will be the new federal regional economic development agency for British Columbia. It will build on Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) 34 year legacy to work more closely with BC businesses, innovators, and communities; promote connections and investments to foster economic growth; and help organizations navigate federal programs and policies.

In Budget 2021, the Government of Canada provided this new BC-focused agency with \$553.1 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$110.6 million ongoing. As a result, in addition to maintaining its current office in Vancouver, PacifiCan will move to establish its new headquarters in Surrey and expand its reach by establishing new service locations in Victoria, Campbell River, Prince Rupert, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kelowna, and Cranbrook.

For more information see [WD Homepage](#)

Regional Economic Recovery Task Force (Central Okanagan)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force was launched on April 14, 2020, initiated by the Mayors of Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake County and Peachland, Regional Board Chair and Chief of Westbank First Nation. It was supported by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission and senior staff from participating jurisdictions.

The focus of the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force was to first help businesses respond to the pandemic (weather the storm) and then recover (emerge stronger). They did this by:

- Providing Central Okanagan communities with a forum for identifying economic recovery needs.
- Positioning and advocating for anticipated stimulus program funding for the Central Okanagan businesses and their employees.
- At a political level, communicating Central Okanagan needs with “one voice”.
- Identifying available areas for collaborative projects to support economic recovery.

As the BC Restart Plan moved forward and businesses returned to many of their normal activities, the Task Force returned continued economic recovery work back to the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission.

Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission

The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission is a service of the Regional District of Central Okanagan providing economic development services to the communities of Lake Country, Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, West Kelowna, Peachland and the Central Okanagan East and Central Okanagan West electoral areas. To keep up to date with COVID-19 resources for local businesses, visit the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission at investkelowna.ca.