

NEWSLETTER

SMALL TOWN | BIG NEWS

Breaking Common Ground

The Downtown Duncan BIA (DDBIA), with funding from the City Of Duncan and Island Coastal Economic Trust, is pleased to announce the opening of the Station Street Common on Tuesday, July 7th. To start, this open air food court will run from Tuesday through Saturday, from 11am-7pm. Menus for local restaurants can be accessed by scanning a QR code on the tables. Or you can pick up some take-out from the Depot Dawgs and other vendors at the Duncan Farmers' Market and bring it over to the Common to eat! This space is self-serve, which means that after ordering food you will need to pick it up yourself. An on-site host is present to manage physical distancing and sanitation protocols. There are also life-size game sets including a checkers board with wooden dowels which are cleaned between each use.

Inspired by the piazzas of Paris and Rome, this pop-up dining spot has taken over the greenspace at 85 Station Street, known as Station Street Park. The vacant grassy lawn has been transformed into a park space resplendent with roses, boxwood and dappled willows, red umbrel-



Station Street Common welcomes all to enjoy a pleasant place to enjoy take-out from your favourite downtown Duncan restaurants.



las, and teal bistro sets until September 1st. While enjoying convenient access to takeaway orders from your favourite downtown Duncan restaurants and cafes, you can also listen to a live stream of the 39 Days of July music! From folksy tunes to world beat jams, the online music festival is full of indie acts worth tuning in for this year, including many based right here on Vancouver Island. This way you can support your local music scene while enjoying local food. This project came about because restaurants have been mandated to reduce the capacity of indoor seating in order to maintain manda-

Station Street Common has been made possible through funding from the City Of Duncan's COVID-19 grant funding program and the Island Coastal Economic Trust in addition to the hard work done by the DDBIA staff and newly hired hosts.

STATION STREET COMMON

Hopefully, efforts like these will continue to pay dividends to downtown businesses but also provide residents and visitors with a welcoming space.

tory social distancing rules. This, of course, has put additional challenges in place on the journey to economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 shutdown. Ordering take-out from local restaurants is a great way to enjoy a meal and show support for your community and economic recovery. In addition to this, outdoor dining has been shown to have a significantly lower risk of virus transmission.

The Station Street Common also presents an opportunity for the Cowichan Valley community to think about the kinds of spaces we would like to see in our capital and other parts of the region. The City of Duncan recently invited the public to weigh in on a place-making initiative for the grassy space at 85 Station Street that has been temporarily transformed into a pop up food court. Some of the ideas on the table for the future of this park are super exciting, including a new stage and water installations. What would you like to see happen in the Cowichan Valley in the coming months and years? While dreaming of future community projects and contributing to the local economic recovery effort, we hope you find the time to come downtown and visit Station Street Common to enjoy a meal, a snack or even just a coffee in the beautiful sunshine! From four berry crepes at Ironworks Café and Creperie to spicy panang curry from Sai Thai, downtown Duncan offers a wonderful range of flavours for you to sample in the Common!

- Amanda Vance
Executive Director
Downtown Duncan BIA



THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING BOARD DIRECTORS

With every season comes change and this year has certainly seen its fair share. To put it lightly. Two long time board members, Judy Stafford and Jean Cardno will not be taking part going forward but remain valued members of our downtown business community. In their time with the BIA, both have taken turns as board president among various other roles on committees. We would like to take this time to thank Jean and Judy for

all of their time and contributions to downtown Duncan over the years, this place would certainly not be the same without them. We wish them all the best in their ongoing endeavors and business pursuits.



If you want to know more about what we do at the DDBIA, don't hesitate to call, we are here to support our members.

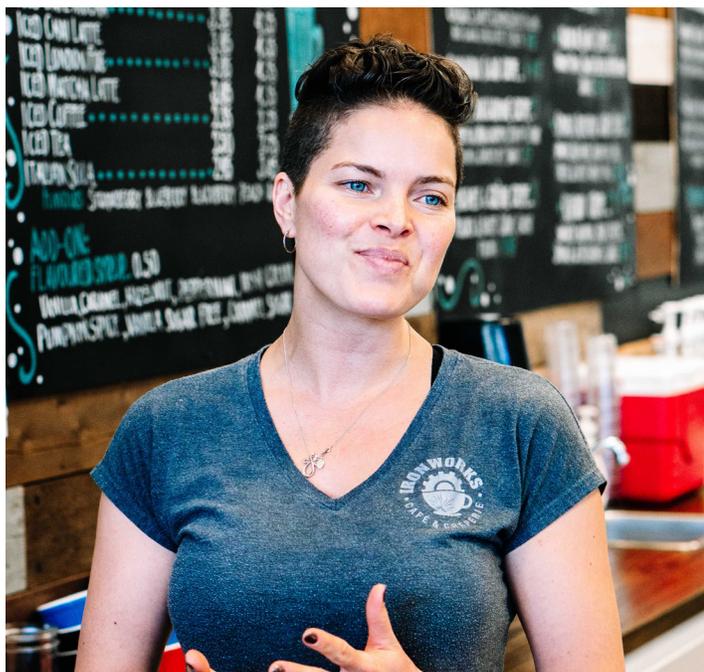
NEW BOARD MEMBERS

2 new faces and the return of a founding member bring a fresh look

the valley with his business Ravenwood Financial Services Ltd which has just landed a contract with Sun Life Financial. John will be a valuable asset to the board as he brings expertise in investment, insurance, and financial planning in addition to a keen interest in regional politics having previously run for office in the last federal election.

Last but certainly not least, the DDBIA Board Of Directors is pleased to welcome back Jeff Downie one of the BIA's original founding members. Jeff has been a fixture in the downtown Duncan business community for more than 20 years now and brings an essential institutional memory to the table in addition to his huge heart for this city.

We at the office are grateful for the contribution of all of our board members and the many volunteer hours it takes between board meetings and committee activities. Serving on the board of the DDBIA is a great way to actively participate in economic development efforts while getting to know your fellow downtown business and property owners. A good thing to remember is that there is always room



SERVING ON THE DDBIA BOARD IS A GREAT WAY TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although our AGM took on a much different format this year, we were able to successfully execute all necessary operational functions including the nomination of new board members. For the 2020/21 session, we've welcomed Dina Stuehler, John Hurst, and Jeff Downie.

Dina Stuehler is the owner and operator of Ironworks Café & Creperie and also the recipient of this year's best new business award. She is a first-time board member and has boldly taken on the role for Vice President. We look forward to the addition of her enthusiasm and ambition to board activities.

John Hirst, originally from Nanaimo has recently moved to



BOTH STAFF AND BOARD ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER

to get involved, and all members are eligible to be part of our various committees for marketing, downtown development, and more.

- Ian Locke
Creative Director

NEW IN DOWNTOWN DUNCAN

It's summertime in Cowichan! Come downtown and discover what's happening now!

The Covid-19 crisis rattled everyone, but downtown Duncan is not only recovering - it is growing. In the last few weeks, several new

shops have opened as well as a food court. Whether you are looking for financial planning, art, food, or a gift, downtown Duncan has lots of new offerings worth checking out now.

The newest addition to downtown, the Station Street Common food court, opened up in Station Street park on the corner of Craig and Station streets, just in time for the seasonal sunshine. Running from 11am-7pm, Tuesday through Saturday, the Common presents an opportunity to come to Duncan and enjoy take out from our many delicious downtown restaurants while also listening to music under a red umbrella by planters resplendent with roses and boxwood. Pick up some fish tacos from Fresh Kenny's or a coffee from Tin Cup. Or play some checkers on a life-size board on the grass by star-shaped topiaries and just enjoy the Common's ambiance. The space is monitored and sanitized by a host to ensure safety.



**DESCENDANTS OFFERS
CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL
FIRST NATIONS ART
RIGHT HERE IN DOWNTOWN**

While you're sunning in the park, why not go shopping? Aside from the usual mainstays like Outlooks for Men and Cardino Shoes, there are also lots of new shops to discover.

One of the most recent shops to open is VayVay Baby on 38 Station Street. This lovely new boutique offers baby jumpers by brands like Parade, toy blocks, plush animals, and more necessities for your little one. VayVay Baby has taken over the old Matria Baby Boutique space and is a perfect spot to pick up a special gift for a friend's baby shower. Right next door, The Descendants Native Art Gallery has opened up at 24 Station Street. Suzan Kostiuk of Acho Dene Koe band



and Excellent Frameworks – E.J Hughes Gallery notoriety has partnered with renowned Coast Salish artist Shawn Johnny to launch this gallery space featuring First Nations art from across Canada. From Ojibwe artist IceBear to Anishinaabe artist Mike Alexander, The Descendants is full of stunning original artwork worth bringing home. Over at Little Bird there is also a new gallery addition to the retail shop! Featuring art by late local graphic design artist Dale Nigel Goble, as well as beautiful origami crane mobiles by

NEW IN DOWNTOWN DUNCAN

Downtown Duncan continues to be one of the most unique shopping areas on Vancouver Island and we couldn't be prouder of our members.

Trisha Klaus and collages by Bara of Arrow & Longing, the new Little Bird art gallery fully compliments the original space full of cards and gifts.

Open Monday-Friday from 10am-4pm - visit 163 Station Street to see the new space. Be sure to follow the little white birds on the ground to respect physical distancing guidelines.

Meanwhile, in the old Limberlost Boutique space at 167 Canada Avenue is Bath Naturals by Sarah. This company sells bath products and other small accessories like soothers catered to children with sensory issues. This charming shop is a great place to pamper yourself or a loved one



with a doughnut or floral shaped bath bomb or a candle shaped like a succulent in a vibrant holder.

Of course there are also old favourites like Essential Remedies. During these Covid-19 times it is worth checking out the Barb Smith cloth masks sewn locally, or the Island Essentials oil blends with cardamom and other herbal scents. Essential Remedies also carries some very popular diffusers and smudging herbs to refresh your home after the last few stressful months.

Whatever you do, come enjoy downtown this summer! Whether new or not, there is lots on offer here, and shops have taken great measures to protect customers. Keep Cowichan strong and buy local!

- Amanda Vance
Executive Director

In the face of many challenges, new businesses and innovative ideas show early promise.



MORE PARKING SOON!

Downtown Duncan is one of the only urban shopping areas on Vancouver Island to offer FREE parking to its customers and is even adding more!



In late December of 2019, the City Of Duncan acquired the lot at 135 Kenneth St for the price of \$351,155.71. There have been amongst council and staff, various proposed uses for the currently vacant lot. However, until such a time where a decision has been made, the space will be temporarily converted into additional customer parking for the downtown area with a maximum stay allowance of 3 hours. Parking and its subsequent availability has long been an issue of note in downtown Duncan. Although there are likely a great deal of thoughtful and creative suggestions that could be put forward for a lot this size, the hope is that additional parking space (for now) will promote an increase in customer flow for businesses in the area. As COVID-19 restrictions have become slightly more manageable, or maybe as we become more accustomed to masks, distancing and face-shields, some businesses have seen an uptick in commerce. Hopefully, with the extension of aid programs like the Federal Wage Subsidy and CEBA loans,

this effort from our municipal government on behalf of local businesses can do its small part to contribute to the larger and longer road to economic recovery.

- Ian Locke
Creative Director

ISLAND GOOD: LOCAL PRODUCERS CAN JOIN THE PROGRAM FOR FREE



For a limited time, Economic Development Cowichan and Community Futures have partnered with the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) to offer their Island Good program for FREE to qualifying Cowichan businesses. The program is a part of a larger initiative to raise the visibility of products produced on Vancouver Island to shoppers.

The program offers local producers of goods a license to use the Island Good branding and labels on their products to better identify it as an item made on the island.

The initial pilot project was launched across 45 grocery stores over a 6 month period in which island produced food and beverage products which had the Island Good label saw a 16% increase in sales. Results like that are hard to argue with and from that the program has expanded to cover all products made and produced on Vancouver Island.

Find out if you qualify and sign up at islandgood.ca.

This program will be offered on a first come first serve basis until the assigned funding runs out, so don't miss out on this rare opportunity!

- Ian Locke
Creative Director

PRODUCTS WHICH HAD THE ISLAND GOOD LABEL SAW A 16% INCREASE IN SALES.

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Get personalized help with your digital needs through Innovation Island's newest program DER3.

The ever increasing digital demands of today's business world can feel overwhelming even on the best of days. For most businesses, a stronger digital presence and greater online integration would undoubtedly increase resiliency, but where does one even start? Social media? A new website?

Fortunately, there is help. In partnership with Island Coastal Economic Trust, Island Technology Association has launched the Digital Economy Response Program (DER3) with additional support through Innovate BC. This program is as straight forward as it comes in providing direct solutions to what can be complex problems. DER3 matches you and your business with local technology experts and creative professionals according to the specific challenge you might be facing and can work with a wide range of budgets as well. Don't hesitate to reach out, no problem is too big or too small when building up your business. Maintaining your business's digital needs is imperative to staying competitive and growing your cus-

tomers base. Finding solutions to this doesn't mean that you'll have to become a tech wiz overnight or somehow learn to program computer code, finding the right help means you can focus on what you're already good at, the thing that makes your business work. Find your solution at innovationisland.ca/der3/ experts are standing by to facilitate your needs today.

- Ian Locke
Creative Director



As the regional voice for technology entrepreneurship, Innovation Island's goal is simple: support entrepreneurs to start and grow technology companies by providing them with programs and resources they need to succeed.

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU



BIA BLOG

We'll use our 5000+ Social Media reach to let people know what's going on with your business for **FREE!**



BUY LOCAL COWICHAN

Get yourself a spot in the next Buy Local Cowichan section in the Citizen for as low as just **\$79.**



BOULEVARD MAGAZINE

Get featured in our double page spread in Boulevard Central Island for just **\$129.**



DBIA BILLBOARD

We'll be starting up our Billboard program again soon, stay tuned! Great location great exposure!