



**MCLEAN
MILL**
HISTORIC PARK

2020

YEAR END REPORT

Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce



RFP027-19

In the fall of 2019 the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce responded to the above noted Request for Proposal.

An agreement was reached between the City of Port Alberni and the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce to operate the Commercial Activities as described in the Chambers application and subsequent presentation(s) to Council.

The Chamber understood that the agreement was in place for a minimum of 3 years with option to renew subsequent to that. The Chamber also reminds Council of the reference to 2021 negotiations as of 'near the end of 2020.'

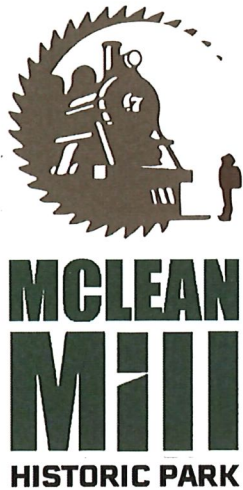
We appreciate your review of the following pages that summarize some, but not all of our activities over the past 12 months.



The above was the title page of our application

The Business of Success

Even prior to the final agreement put in place the Chamber initiated critical steps toward a successful outcome. Some of these steps included:



- Legal Advice
- Insurance Advice
- Legal Preparation of Required Contracts aimed at protecting all parties including the Client, the Chamber and the City of Port Alberni
- Management Recruitment
- Business Acumen. The Chamber committed in 2019 and continues to commit to a leadership style that not only brings the same levels of passion that all have demonstrated along the way but a commitment to a Professional Operation that is focused on Guest Satisfaction, Revenue Development, Sales Growth and Sound Business Practices

The result of these steps is a complete suite of materials that allows us to market and sell our services knowing that protections are in place.

One example of the consultations held in advance is the determination of how to manage Camping such that guests would understand and acknowledge that 'fires' were not permitted. Prior to this it is not apparent that any such steps were taken thus some liabilities may have existed without people realizing the risk(s).

Photo by Chris Boar



"Forest Service Recommends Hugging trees while you can't hug others"

from the ICELAND REVIEW

On March 1, 2020 we held an information meeting at the McLean Mill National Historic Site within the Grand Hall. The meeting included about 8 current Volunteers through the Chamber's Ambassador Program. Also in attendance were employees of the Chamber including all FT and PT individuals along with members from our Board of Directors. The City was represented by the CAO, by the Museum Director, and others. All told about 30 people were on site. The theme of the meeting centered around a 'ball game' where we used baseball references such as: A Base Hit, A Double, A Triple, Home Run and....a Curve Ball.

We positioned ourselves to handle most any Curve thrown at us but quite honestly the one now known worldwide as COVID - 19 was not the type of curve we were expecting. We hadn't considered a 'Knuckleball.'

One week later the Chamber hosted the annual Paper Chase 15k run part of which goes through the McLean Mill Historic Site. That ended up being the last community event held in 2020 or since to this date. *Photo credit on the first page to Tashia Potter Photography*

McLean Mill Operations - Version COVID - 19

Once the doors shut for many local businesses we remained active in the background as much as we could be. Our recently hired Operations Manager moved to Port Alberni the day before things shut down. Nonetheless she alongside our Retail Manager and the Chamber CEO continued to work for the betterment of the organization and community at large.

Some early focus points:

We began with the reorganization of material assets much of which had been removed from the Non-Historic Site. All of this was moved, inventoried, assessed, relocated, and re-purposed within the areas best suited. The food service area was completely cleaned and readied for the planned reopening of things at some point in the later Spring/Summer. We acknowledge that we secured two lovely decades old desks - in very good condition from the closed 'House of Service.' Computers were secured via local purchase, historic files pertaining to the former operations were reviewed and confirmed for future access. Significant time was spent researching confirmed events, particularly weddings, many of which had been partially or fully paid for in advance. These customers were contacted personally and in some cases were met with in order to determine the best course of action moving forward. There was no shortage of things to do!



When the doors opened - albeit slightly

By June of 2020 we were well-immersed into the redevelopment of the former gift shop, and former to that the building was known as the Steamspot Cafe. The building underwent a flooring revamp in order to increase the selling space in a relatively small overall environment. Some changes to the electrical occurred and the building was repainted. New fixtures found their way into the building most of which were/are far from new. Consider them re-purposed.

While the Gift Shop was being developed we were at the same time working in the 'Canteena' setting it up to reopen as soon as permitted by the Government; and by Island Health. On the latter, we went through a significant level of scrutiny ensuring that we were able to operate.

The Gift Shop opened for test runs in later June and then for good as of Canada Day - 2020. The Canteena opened about 10 days later.

At the same time we'd been successful in getting some Govt support for Students and through that we hired a local young woman to assist us with our development of Tours. Our initial plans (pre-COVID) was to operate community wide Tours. Because of the pandemic and health restrictions put in place we were not able to promote much in the way of tours, of any type, through 2020.

The Campground portion of our Business Model was stalled through the Spring months as we aligned with the position of BC Parks and others as a means of slowing travel. Once things reopened we did welcome folks to the site however our marketing was limited due to ongoing concerns. Remember, our Campsite is not widely known thus we still have to tell people about it.

For more specific information on our progress over 2020 we encourage a review of our FACEBOOK PAGE: www.facebook.com/mcleanmill

And what else...

In March/April we focused significant time and energy into redeveloping our website found at: www.mcleanmill.ca The site enabled us to take bookings for our Tours, the Campground, and other aspects of the operation. At first, we did this restructure internally but later in 2020 we decided to go a step further with the website resulting in us contracting out the second portion of the website revamp to an outside organization who we'd become quite familiar with. Today the website pairs nicely with a second web presence offered by the Chamber of Commerce - www.BetterBuyPortAlberni.ca . Both sites are capable of taking online orders. Taking this a step further yet we'll be working closely with other local websites including: www.albernavalleytourism.com, www.exploreportalberni.ca and soon our own through the Visitor Centre; www.portalbernivisitorcentre.ca

Our system uses SQUARE technology which includes the ability to manage our inventory ensuring that we have constant information pertaining to our data files.

Our online sales became critically important for our overall marketing plans and we're pleased to report that we've sold items in many places outside of Port Alberni including: Port McNeill, Victoria, Parksville and....places far away such as Oslo, Norway.

On the latter, we were reached by the purchaser as his daughter had found what she wanted via an online search. We shipped the item out to him and through our dialogue we learned a bit more about his family and their habits. Because of that we included some personally held NHL material which resulted in a return package from them thanking us for our efforts. Again, this is a marketing effort that has long-term value.

As a point of interest our system through SQUARE coupled with our use of SAGE Accounting has confirmed that after our YE Inventory Counts held at both the McLean Mill and AVCOC Gift Shops (and Canteena) that we are at a .88% inventory shrink - well below a best case scenario for most businesses who target 1%.

Summer 2020

The Gift Shop opened for the season on Canada Day under strict COVID protocol. We operated daily to well into September with hours set at 10am to 4pm. Staffed by Chamber/Mill employees, and our management team, the gift shop became the focus point of our operations through the summer.

The Canteena was a bit more challenging to operate due to variances within the Health Orders and the interpretation of what could and what could not be done. We did open for 'outside' business only

operating from Mid-July through early September - Wednesdays through Sundays.

Tours were managed online so that we could pre-schedule volunteers to assist us with this program. In retrospect we should have used a different approach as its likely we missed out on some opportunity.

In August of 2020 we initiated a program of 'Music in the Park' that we offered every Sunday afternoon through to the end of September. This helped generate more visits to the park. The musicians were thrilled to participate.



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*In the month of
December our 36
pictures posted
online were
viewed 13281
times!*

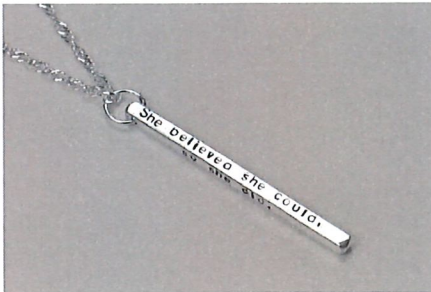


*We carry locally produced
Coombs Country Candy
Chocolate Bars and more!*



*Guy and Dennis - well-known local
artists joined us one Sunday
afternoon*

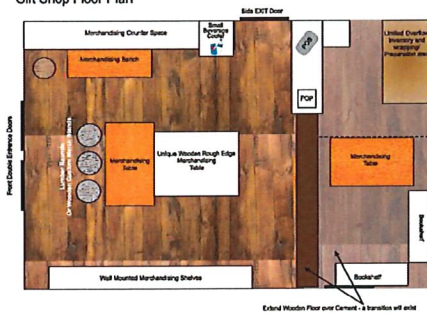
She believed she could



Our Gift Shop was coordinated by our now McLean Mill Site Manager - Anita Sutherland. The shop became her pet project over 2020 starting first with a vision, then a reconstruction of the shop itself. Everything within the shop was removed. Flooring was partially replaced some of that supported by various local businesses. New (re-purposed) shelving was put inside the shop and of course every detail pertaining to COVID requirements was considered. The walls were repainted according to Anita's vision and by Father's Day 2020 we were ready.

Almost all inventory purchased originates from Vancouver Island Artists and Crafters. What doesn't come from this area comes from the Gulf Islands or in some cases the Lower Mainland.

McLean Mill National Historic Park Gift Shop Floor Plan



The photos included below and on the next page show the transformation of what has now become one of Port Alberni's finer Gift Shops. Much of the work involved was completed by volunteers. All products purchased for the reconstruction were from local businesses and in many cases we received donated materials.

Today the building hosts a fair bit of inventory merchandised in a manner conducive to sales development. We use iPads with Square Technology and included with that we use a Spotify Music System both inside the Gift Shop and outside in the Courtyard.

All staff are properly trained on the Inventory Management System and most are now trained on best practices for Physical Inventory Counts (this includes the Food Services area).

As a side bar note: All of our Employees are now Food Safe Certified thus providing them with a valuable skill that many employers will be seeking. The Chamber paid for all courses for all employees.



The transformation





At opening in early July (top) and below as it looked from the outside in December. The Chamber has invested heavily in Inventory accumulation

REVENUES - 2020

MM Heritage Light Up Donations	345.00
MM-BCCHF	447.00
Community Tours External	0.00
Camp Site Revenue - MM	1,424.15
Community Tours - MM	185.78
Donations - MM	3,174.72
Facility Rentals - MM	0.00
Food & Beverage - MM	2,679.82
Heritage Fee	4213.12
Gift Shop - MM	22,467.69
Miscellaneous Revenue - MM	244.12
Other Events - MM	1,500.00
Wedding Events - MM	2,523.00
City of PA - Fee for Service - MM	150,000.00

Total Revenue 189204.40

NOTES: Revenues

Heritage Fee includes fees collected at the Chamber's Gift Shop.

Top two line items collected on behalf of the BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

Other Events at \$1500. is from the Robbin's and Co. contribution for the Heritage Light-Up event that was canceled for 2020. The balance of their contribution is being held in Deferred Revenue for 2021.

NOTES: Expenses:

Wages net of rebates

Wages do not include CEO or other support staff

Office Rental required due to lack of Internet at the site

EXPENSES - 2020

Accounting @ 50%	4,250.50
Advertising - Social Media	1,571.45
BCCHF	792.00
Banking Fees/Payroll Cost/POS	695.71
Bookkeeping @ 50%	3,008.50
Campsite/Includes Porta Potties -	695.50
Computer Repairs/Software	1,134.32
Cost of Goods Sold - Food/Beverage	2,728.86
Cost of Goods Sold - Gifts	10,834.45
Total Cost of Goods Sold -	13,563.31
Equipment -	2,934.07
Food Service Supplies -	4,894.06

Heritage Fee 4213.12

Insurance -	5,209.00
Janitorial -	260.00
Janitorial Equipment - Back Pack	748.62
Maintenance - Repairs	2,698.27
Marketing/Advertising	5542.99
Miscellaneous -	11,679.10
Office Rental	7,200.00
Office Supplies -	2,073.11
Other Event Cost -	2,474.82
Payworks @ 50%	497.65
Repairs -	601.81
Square	646.82
Staff training	850.30
Tours -	335.94
Travel/Mileage -	1,450.00
Wedding Events -	332.75
Wages: Salaries -	97895.45
Webmaster	2403.49
Utilities -	9,087.86

Total Expenses 189740.52

Disclaimer:

Some expenses are assumed or otherwise calculated based on best guess between the operations.

What they're saying

"Today we rode our E-Bikes on the Log Train Trail in Port Alberni, stopped here on the way and talked to some lovely people putting up Christmas Lights in the Mill. It's a piece of Heritage and well worth a visit." Kathleen P.



"One of my favourite places to visit in Port Alberni. Amazing history and crazy stories are here to be discovered. Walking around this site gives a glimpse into the hard as nails lives the men and women lived while keeping this mill alive. I would highly recommend that everyone donate a few bucks to help preserve this amazing piece of history for everyone to see!" Tristan S.



"Decorated so beautifully for Christmas. The Gift Shop is Awesome!" Meloney E.

DYK



- One of the many events canceled in 2020 due to the COVID - 19 Crisis was a 'smaller one' but in fact one that had significant benefit for all in Port Alberni. We were pre-paid for this event back in February of 2020 by a University Group out of Gloucestershire in the UK. They planned to visit Port Alberni with particular focus on the McLean Mill National Historic Site. About a dozen people were joining the group. All were scheduled to stay in the Alberni Valley at local hotels and B&B's.

While we had to refund them they have indicated a desire to return at some point in the future.

- A group from Sweden was planning to be here in the fall of 2020. This years' group was going to be the largest yet. Many have come to the area in the past
- We canceled tens of thousands of dollars worth of Weddings that were confirmed for the McLean Mill in 2020. Some have indicated a desire to try again in 2021.

Should be noted that many venues offering such services did NOT provide full refunds. We did.

Grant Application

In the fall of 2020 we became aware of a Grant Opportunity through the New Horizons for Seniors Program. The grant offers upwards of \$25,000. for programming and equipment designed for the health and well-being of the Seniors Community.

Our Application was titled "The Bike SEAT Program

S = SOCIALIZE

E = EXERCISE

A = ADVENTURE

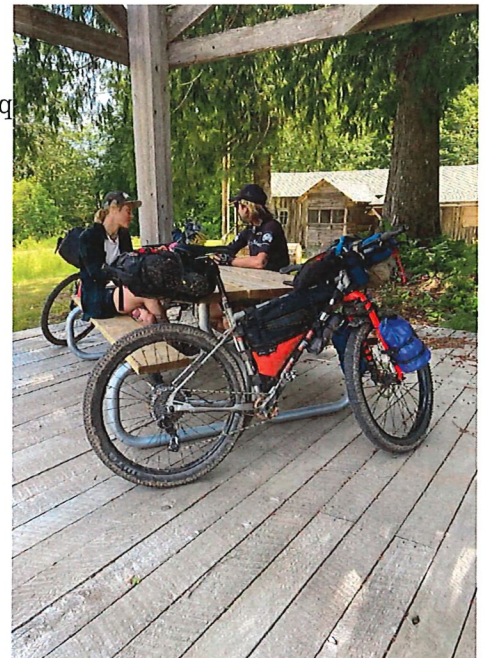
T = TECHNOLOGY

The application surrounded the purchase of several E-Bikes for use throughout the Non-Historic and Historic Site at the McLean Mill.

The Grant Application focused on the Acronym (SEAT) paying attention to the value of Socialization for Seniors via a program aimed at Health and Fitness (Exercise) . E-Bikes have become a desired asset for many people and getting Seniors on them through our vast trails network would add to the thirst for Adventure. A last component of our presentation was to include a Technology portion for people that could be held on our Deck, in the Courtyard or inside the Grand Hall either before or after a ride through the trails.

Reservations for the program would be done in person at the Visitor Center, at McLean Mill, or via our Online Booking System.

While we wait for confirmation of acceptance we are considering other options along this line of thinking should we not be successful with the application. Fingers crossed.



The Future

We believe that we are on the right track for self-sufficiency at the McLean Mill National Historic Site in the foreseeable future. We continue to focus on FIVE primary areas of Business (Commercial Activity) each of which have significant growth and revenue potential.

Assuming the following:

- Confirmation of continuance with our Agreement through the end of 2022 (at least).
- All attempts made to remove the area from the ALR
- Some semblance of normalcy achieved by fall of 2021 pertaining to COVID restrictions.
- MRDT implemented within one year.

Gift Shop revenues for **2023** based on above could reach \$100k per year

Food Service revenues for 2023 can be projected at \$75k

Events revenues based on year-round operations could reach \$150k per year

Campground revenues based on the current RV sites plus some access to the tenting areas and permitted at least 9 months per year could reach \$50k per year

Tours revenues offered both at the McLean Mill and through the community has potential of \$25k per year.

These revenue projections are attainable with the support of City Council for the duration of our contract. It should be noted that such revenues equate to ~* \$40,000. in Heritage Fees payable to the City as collected by us through our operations.

*** Heritage Fee will always be higher than 10% of McLean Mill revenues due to the implementation of the fee at the Visitor Center (Gift Shop). The Visitor Center's best Gift Shop year - 2017 saw > \$80,000. in sales**

McLean Mill National Historic Site

Join Us Family Day Long Weekend

A Story Walk

at McLean Mill National Historic Site

Take a walk through the forest and National Historic Site while you read this winter classic.

The story walk is a children's book installation along the trails at McLean Mill for families to read together. This installation is open for the Family Day Long Weekend.

Sat Feb 13th - Mon Feb 15th
10am to 4pm

FREE Family-Friendly Event

Story Walk souvenirs available while quantities last. One per family.

#PASTORYWALK

Presented By
Pacific Rim Children And Families
& PacificCARE Childcare Resource and Referral

