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# cranbrook chamber of commerce

## Voice of Business

### Plying the waters of Lake Koocanusa

BARRY COULTER

Southeastern B.C., of course, is renowned for some of the most spectacular scenery in the world, with innumerable beautiful lakes. Small wonder this area is a vacation hotspot, for both tourists and locals.

And what better way to experience the wonder of mountains and lakes with a houseboat vacation?

Sunshine Houseboats of Cranbrook, operated by Dianne and Brant Cullum, offers access to a vacation option that's increasing in popularity. Sunshine Houseboats is this month's Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce featured business.

Sunshine's vessels ply the waters of Lake Koocanusa, from as far north as the Rock Cliff Islands and as far south as the Canada/U.S. Border, altogether encompassing 200 kilometres of pristine shoreline. Sounds pretty hard to resist.

Indeed, houseboating's popularity is on the rise.

"In the last years we've seen an increase especially with families," Dianne said. "We attribute this to our all-inclusive affordable pricing structure that was developed with families in mind."

Sunshine's packages include fishing tours, one-, three-, four- and seven-night houseboat vacations, and watercraft rentals that include "water toys" like wake boards, knee boards, tubes and water skis.

The company's fleet includes watercraft large and small and in-between — non-motorized craft like canoes and kayaks, and several power boats, wake boats and pontoons. And that's not counting the jewels of the fleet — the houseboats themselves.

"Our houseboats start with our six- to 10-passenger houseboats, and go up as far as our 18- to 22- passenger boats," Dianne said. "From the small and cozy to the large party group that wants to explore Lake Koocanusa at their leisure."

Dianne says they have described a houseboat holiday on Lake Koocanusa as "Glori-



*How often can you camp with a full kitchen, fireplace, hot tub and a water slide?"*

fied camping at its best. "How often can you camp with a full kitchen, fireplace, hot tub and a water slide?"

It seems to be a great selling point, all right. Sunshine's clients come from near and abroad to check out Koocanusa. The majority of clientele are from Alberta — Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, Dianne said, with others coming from other parts of B.C., the Prairies and neighbouring U.S. States. Still more come from abroad — England, Hawaii, Australia, Mexico...

And the locals themselves aren't immune to the charms of being afloat.

"As much as we enjoy meeting new people from other areas, we've noticed a dramatic

increase locally as people continue to discover the excellence of Lake Koocanusa," Dianne said.

It must be said again — the main attraction is Koocanusa itself, and the wonders of our province. Is B.C. the best place for houseboating?

"Unequivocally yes!" Dianne responds. "Especially Lake Koocanusa because of many factors; our lake levels are controlled by Libby Dam in Montana and each winter the dam is opened to lower our lake to allow for the spring refresh. The beauty of this process is that there is no opportunity for weeds or mosquitos to grow, we have one of the cleanest lakes in B.C."

"In the spring the lake waters warm as it's filling from the closed dam and our clients get to enjoy one of the warmest recreation lakes in B.C."

Sunshine Houseboats has been on Lake Koocanusa since 1998 and in its current location at Gold Bay, near the border, for about 10 years. The company operates a full service marina offering fuel sales, on-site mechanics and the dock-side Driftwood store. And all new for 2016 is a floating water park.

Sunshine has grown in leaps and bounds since it's inception.

"We started with only four houseboats in a small corner of Lake Koocanusa," Dianne said. "Now as we relax on the deck of our cabin overlooking Lake Koocanusa we are proud of what we have accomplished and what we can offer the public."

"We started with houseboat rentals and now we're offering watercraft rentals, annual camping, moorage, winter storage, mechanical services, fuel sales, and a dockside store."

Most recently Sunshine has become a boat dealer for several boat brands: Mirrocraft fishing boats, Stingray power boats, Montego Bay pontoon boats. The company is also a Mercury Service Center.

Sunshine believes in giving back to the community. In 18 years on Lake Koocanusa they've offered over \$100,000 to local community needs including local kids programs, sport teams, and charitable events. "We're proud to support our community," Dianne says.

Sunshine hosts and supports several public events as well, including Canada Day celebrations (July 1), a boat sale and swap (July 9), a wake surf event (July 21) and an August long weekend themed event (this year it's zombies).

Sunshine Houseboats can be contacted in several ways: via the website ([www.sunshinehouseboats.com](http://www.sunshinehouseboats.com)); Email, Phone (1.877.489.2610), Live Chat or through social media. Facebook, Google+ and Twitter.

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# Cranbrook Chamber Reacts to Budget 2016

## BUDGET 2016

The Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce gives Budget 2016 a tentative B- grade with hope for the future. "We are cognisant that the Trudeau government has only been in power for 147 days and a lot of plans are still in the works", said Chamber Executive Director David D. Hull. "There was a lot of commitment to the middle class and mostly in the social areas in this budget. We hope the talked about phase two will contain more commitment to spending that will be build a sustainable economy."

The government's 29.4 billion dollar deficit is certainly a concern for the Chamber. "Our debt to GDP ratio is still significantly better than the United States or western European countries however debt is debt," said

Hull. "Smart debt that is going to produce economic growth in the long term is acceptable but it takes a lot of discipline by the government and their ministries."

A lot of the anticipated infrastructure spending has been

deferred to "phase 2" expected to be rolled out in later 2016. Chambers of Commerce and local governments across the country will be looking for fiscal good news sooner than later. Hull summed it that essentially the government has said "we are working on it and will

get back to you."

An unexpected 50 million dollars for Destination Canada was welcome news to the business community. There is no region in Canada that does not benefit from tourism and certainly the Kootenays will benefit from increased Canadian tourism.

The Cranbrook Chamber thinks the one billion dollars earmarked for universities for innovation research may not be the best use of the funding. "We are actually among leaders world-wide in innovation but where we fall short is getting from the mind to the market", said Hull. "We need to monetize our innovation and have it contribute to our economy and our competitiveness."

The fine details of the budget will emerge over the next few weeks and the Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce will be analyzing and commenting as information is release.



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David D. Hull

## Executive Director's Soap Box

By David D. Hull, Executive Director

### Who is catching a cold?

There was an old saying "When the United States sneezed the world catches a cold."

The economy of the United States grew so rapidly and became so dominant worldwide that truly when the American economy got sick, or even had the sniffles, the world was affected. Wall Street was the thermometer of the world economy.

The U.S. economy is, for now, still the biggest economy in the world while other economies, notably China, have grown so large that an American hiccup does not reverberate around the world as dramatically.

Like rare weird diseases spread by mosquitoes in far off lands, you are not too worried if it is not close to you. Keep the sick folks home from the office and break out the hand sanitizer and you should be ok.

Unlike the rest of the world, that has managed to put considerable distance between the U.S. economy and themselves by way of growing their economy and banding together in various

economic unions and trade agreements, Canada still operates in the fiscal and functional shadow of the United States.

In 1969 Pierre Trudeau told the National Press Club that, "Living next to the U.S. is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant. No matter how friendly or temperate the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt."

Our economies are inextricably linked. Canada is the United States second largest trading partner and they are our largest. Most of our trade and commerce with the US runs north and south due to geography.

Our oil production is essentially land locked with the U.S. really being our only customer. Our gasoline trades in US dollars and as a North American commodity leaving 40 million Canadians as the ripple in the 530 million North American pond.

Canada has fought for years for a fair and balanced soft wood lumber agreement. This agreement has been

the bane of the Canadian soft wood industry for decades. High priced and influential U.S. lobbyists have been successful in having a disproportionate influence on the outcomes.

Over many decades Canada has managed along with the elephant on the continent. The occasion sneeze, cold or grunt has been weathered and we carry on with Canadian pride and resolve. A good Canada U.S. relationship, built with a good neighbour attitude on both sides of the border, was the hallmark of coexisting with the elephant.

The future maybe tenuous. What can only be described as a circus sideshow nomination process of

the Republican Party has exposed the underbelly of U.S. politics.

The unwashed masses, Joe and Mary Sixpack, of both the Republicans and Democrats, have had enough. They are tired of rich old white men deciding who will be the presidential candidate and ultimately the "leader of the free world."

The democrats have a quiet riot with Bernie "Feel the Bern" Sanders putting up a good fight raising millions \$25 at a time fighting the millionaire and billionaire funded Clinton campaign. So many people giving small amounts adding up to millions tells you there is a ground swell and change is coming. Maybe not this

time but certainly the next.

The Republicans have imploded and their dirty laundry is the subject of endless political pundit's pontification and the fodder for late night comedy writers. Billionaire Donald Trump, of swollen ego and television fame, is self-funding a kick to the Republican nether regions.

Not taken seriously at the start, Trump has risen like a phoenix with a bad hair piece from the ashes of the burned down Republican Party old boys clubhouse to be the front runner for the party nomination. The old boys don't want him. But Joe and Mary do. They are voting with their finger and they are using the middle one.

What does January 2017, post inauguration, hold for Canada? Within the populist Democratic movement, there is a rising tide against once-popular trade deals. Not that Sanders is likely to be the candidate but he is absolutely against free trade. Clinton has slowly moved away from free trade and is becoming Sanders-esque. They cite that the U.S. has been getting the short end of the free trade stick.

The Republicans... well, who knows. Trump has declared Canada "the least of America's problems." So we are still a problem but not at the top of the list. Good to know the Canada U.S. wall is off the table. Sorry Mexico. Trump

wants to "make America great again" by closing trade borders and adopting a protectionist attitude.

Ted Cruz flops around on free trade issues like a fish caught up in the pacific salmon treaty. He is for free trade, just not TPP, NAFTA and other agreements. But don't be mistaken he is for free trade, he says.

So stay tuned. The elephant on the continent may sneeze, hiccup, catch cold or roll over and implode and the effect on Canada is certainly unknown. We will carry on with Canadian resolve and perseverance but the flu season might be a long one.

## Voice of Business

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cranbrook  
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### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce will be held on Wednesday, March 30, 2016 at the Heritage Inn and Conference Centre, 803 Cranbrook St N, Cranbrook, BC. The meeting will be called to order at 12:01 pm. The agenda and business to be conducted can be found at [www.cranbrookchamber.com](http://www.cranbrookchamber.com)

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## WELCOME to our NEW MEMBERS

It has been a busy summer at the Chamber with the membership constantly growing.

### Cranbrook Boys & Girls Club

Phone: 250 426 3830  
Lynette Wray  
Email: [cranbgc@shawbiz.ca](mailto:cranbgc@shawbiz.ca)

### Kootenay Computer Company

Phone: 250 919 8959  
Seb van der Horst  
Email: [seb@kict.ca](mailto:seb@kict.ca)

### Premier Plumbing & Heating Ltd.

Phone: 250 489 4131  
Jason Sims & Jim Bertuzzi  
Email: [preplumb@telus.net](mailto:preplumb@telus.net)

### Infinity Solutions

Phone: 250 464 0632  
Doug VanHooren  
Email: [d.vanhooren@shaw.ca](mailto:d.vanhooren@shaw.ca)

### Versapay

Phone: 250 489 8721  
Jan & Ron Olson  
Email: [jan.olson@shaw.ca](mailto:jan.olson@shaw.ca)

### Dominion Lending Centres – Canadian Mortgage Experts

Debra Parker  
Phone: 250-421-7600  
Email: [debra@cmexp.com](mailto:debra@cmexp.com)  
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Voice of Business

# Chamber Release Economic Development Policy Paper

Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce has released a major paper on Economic Development.

Cranbrook, Your Future is a statement on economic development that will act as the foundation for position papers forward said Chamber Executive Director David D. Hull.

As a big picture statement on how the Chamber perceives economic development in the framework of trade and commerce in Cranbrook and the region said Hull.

The document provides an outline for the Chamber to develop and advance more precise and specific position papers in the future.

Our Cranbrook, Your Future: Economic Development policy

paper has been six months in the making starting with a forum last fall facilitated by renowned economic development practitioner Robert Fine from Kelowna.

Hull felt it important that the policy was developed from a base of knowledge and not just a gut reaction to perception and inference. "We gathered together civic, chamber and business leaders from the East and West Kootenays and had a great session. After that evening we had a really good, collective, understanding of the many faces of

economic development."

The Chamber's Government Affairs & Policy Committee will now begin examining issues germane to economic development, prioritize them, and start developing position papers that will be advanced to the appropriate level of governments and to those organizations within the sphere of influence of economic development within Cranbrook.

The full policy paper can be found at [www.cranbrookchamber.com/policy](http://www.cranbrookchamber.com/policy)



## Report of the Nominating Committee

As per the bylaws of the Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce the Nominating Committee presents the following list of candidates for consideration at the Annual General Meeting to be held Wednesday, March 30, 2016

- President** - One Year Term  
Chris Thom - Rocky Mountain Diesel
- Vice President** - One Year Term  
Chris Botterill - Genex Marketing
- Past President** - One Year Term  
Dave Struthers - Vast Resources
- Treasurer** - One Year Term  
Mike Adams - Taylor Adams Chartered Accountants
- Director** - One Year Term  
Jason Fast - East Kootenay Credit Union  
Heather Jackson - College of the Rockies  
Ryan Gibbard - McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd.  
Carrie Schafer - eKnow - East Kootenay News Online
- Director** - Two Year Term  
Bill Hughes - Investors Group  
Galen Olstead - Key City Theatre  
Racheal Lucas - Columbia Basin Trust  
Zena Williams - Kootenay News Advertiser

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