



2018 Year in Review

To Supporters & Friends of the BC Rural Centre:

It has been another busy and highly successful year for our organization.

In the first few months of 2018, the BC provincial government requested public input on priorities for the development of a provincial rural strategy. In response, the BC Rural Centre made a formal submission recommending five key provincial government actions to help rural BC communities succeed. See <https://www.bcruralcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BC-Rural-Centre-Recommendations-for-Priority-Provincial-Government-Rural-Development-Actions.pdf>

After several months of development and planning, in February 2018, we launched our innovative *Escape the City* contest. The purpose of the contest was to test the level of interest among young urban creative types in moving to a rural BC community. The social media contest was incredibly successful with over two hundred individual entries from across western Canada and farther afield. Through the contest the host community of Kaslo received an enormous amount of marketing and significant additional media attention from CBC and other media outlets. Perhaps most importantly, one of the contest winners, a young couple from Calgary actually ended up returning to Calgary to sell their home, and have bought a house and moved permanently to Kaslo! The BC Rural Centre hopes to work with other BC communities to replicate the contest. See <https://www.bcruralcentre.org/escape-the-city-contest/>

In May and June of 2018, we brought Peter Kenyon, an acclaimed international expert in Asset Based Community Driven Development and rural community revitalization back to BC for a series of ABCD workshops around the province. Peter's highly entertaining delivery and infectious enthusiasm for rural community revitalization continues to resonate with audiences and workshop participants. We look forward to continuing to work with Peter in the coming years.

The BC Rural Centre had partnered with the Real Estate Foundation of BC on a multi-year research project to examine the potential of using Community Land Trusts, land leases, and a "shared-equity" home ownership approach to help provide affordable housing. During 2018, we organized and completed a final series of workshops, webinars, reports, and produced an animated video describing the project's findings. See <https://www.bcruralcentre.org/focus/housing-2/>

In 2016 and 2017, the BC Rural Centre worked with Kootenay Employment Services (KES) to create the first community investment cooperative in the interior, in Creston. Building on that success, in 2018 the BC Rural Centre again partnered with KES on a year-long project funded by the BC Rural Centre, KES and the provincial rural dividend fund to develop two additional investment cooperatives in the interior. During 2018, this project resulted in over 20 community information sessions being held. The project has culminated with over 150 individuals signing up as founding members and investors in the creation of two new regional investment cooperatives - the West Kootenay Boundary & East Kootenay Columbia Community Investment Co-ops. The BC Rural Centre continues to work with a variety of other organizations in encouraging the BC provincial government to develop new regulations and tax policies that would facilitate community controlled investment and develop a BC equivalent to Nova Scotia's highly successful CEDIF program. See <https://www.bcruralcentre.org/focus/community-investment/>

In addition, throughout the year, we hosted several webinars and published a wide range of articles, reports, videos, and podcasts via our website and social media platforms. For an overview, visit <https://www.bcruralcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Looking-Back-2018-1.pdf>.

Finally, 2018 marked the end of our transition and formal legal conversion from our founding organization – SIBAC – to the BC Rural Centre Society.

We look forward to continuing to provide highly inspirational and relevant information, tools and resources to achieve our mission to **Inspire → Share Tools → Cultivate Capacity → Facilitate Action** in order to help Rural BC communities succeed.