



2016 Year End Review

To SIBAC Member Organizations:

It has been another successful and eventful year for our organization.

2016 marked the beginning of the implementation of the new SIBAC 2016 – 2018 Strategic Plan. During the spring, SIBAC Board members and staff were busy making presentations to our member organizations and other groups on the new Strategic Plan – and indeed we continue to do so. As you know, our new Strategic Plan focusses SIBAC's organizational efforts and resources of some key strategic actions and projects that we believe will have the most significant rural development impact on our communities.

Given the new Strategic Plan and priorities, the organization advertised, interviewed and filled the two new SIBAC staff positions of SIBAC Executive Director and SIBAC Communications Director. Gordon Borgstrom of Kamloops was the successful candidate for the SIBAC Executive Director position and Randy Morse of Kaslo was the successful candidate for the SIBAC Communications Director position. Both Gordon and Randy bring many years of experience and a passion for rural development work. Having two full-time employees has significantly increased the organizational communication and project management capacity of SIBAC. Gordon and Randy will continue to travel extensively around the southern interior.

Under our Mobilizing Local Rural Investment Capital project, SIBAC staff worked intensively with Kootenay Employment Services (KES) and a community leadership group in Creston to establish the first community investment cooperative in the interior of BC. In December of 2016, after more than a year of tremendous hard work by KES staff and the community leadership group - the Creston and District Investment Cooperative signed up 107 founding members from the community and will become operational in 2017. www.communityinvestmentcoop.ca SIBAC has been researching and promoting the concept of new locally controlled rural investment funds and organizations for the past five years. We are very proud of the facilitation and supporting role we were able to play in helping the Creston community make their organization a reality. We look forward to helping other southern interior communities in the coming year.

We are also very excited about a new interactive rural communications sharing platform and system we are creating called the BC Rural Centre. As rural communities throughout BC – and indeed North America – we share many of the same rural development challenges and goals. We all know that in rural places it is often the same small group of dedicated volunteers working on community projects. Often, we simply don't have the luxury of spending hours and hours to try and research how other communities may have been able to respond to similar issues. Through the BC Rural Centre platform we will be able to provide timely, useful and appropriate information and tools for rural residents to help them with their rural development projects. We expect to launch the BC Rural Centre in very early 2017.

I continue to believe that SIBAC as a partnership of First Nations and local governments from across the southern interior makes us a unique and valuable organization. We are doing important work that is helping our communities. On behalf of the entire SIBAC Board, thank you for your continued support.

Rhona Martin, SIBAC Chair