

Mid-Island Business Initiative (MIBI)

John Hankins

November 26th, 2018

History and Purpose of MIBI

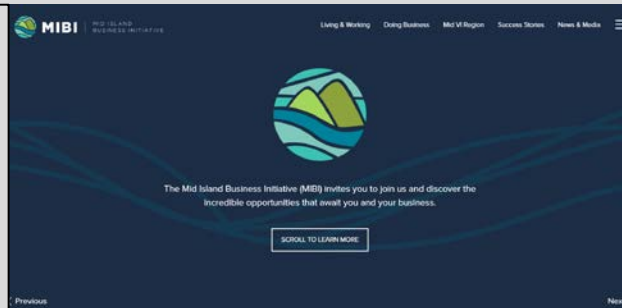
- **Launched:** Feb 2017
- **Purpose:** To raise awareness of the region to attract and facilitate businesses to locate or invest in the area.
- **Geographic Area:** Ladysmith to Qualicum Beach.
- **Staff:** one part time employee

MIBI Members since Launch



Activities - Raising Awareness

Logo Designed
Website Launched
Facebook Page
Linked-In Page



Vancouver Events



Ralph Nilson - VIU
Adrian Legin - CCCU
Colin Dobell - Inukturn



Kent Flint - REW
Tod Gilbert – VMAC



Island Ferries



13 Consul Generals from Brazil, China, France, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam

Connecting with BC and Federal
Trade
Officers in the Pacific North West

- *“We had no idea, all this was happening on the Mid-Island”*
- *“This really is a viable option to assist companies retain talent by offering affordable, west coast living next to Vancouver”*

Activities – Collaboration

- **Manufacturers Technology Entrepreneurship Council (MTEC).**
 - Purpose Develop a catching glove and Manufacturing, Tech and Entrepreneurship community.
 - Initial Council: Rebecca Kirk, Dave Witty, Chris Beaton, Omar Karim, John Hankins.
 - Awaiting Provincial Funding decision.

- **Development & Building Permit working group.**
 - Purpose: Review current process to create an agreed end to end process for Developments.
 - Participants: Developers, Architects and Planning Department

- **Established Promotional Authorities Monthly Meeting.**
 - Purpose: Coordinate, attract events, create stickiness
 - Participants: MIBI, MTEC, VICC, TAVI, City of Nanaimo, Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
 - Angel Forum coming to Nanaimo on January 24th, 2019

Marketing Awareness Campaign

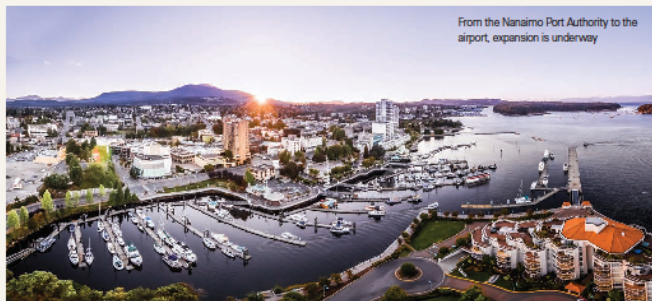
- *"We had no idea, all this was happening on the Mid-Island"*
- *"This really is a viable option to assist companies retain talent by offering affordable, west coast living next to Vancouver"*

- Focused on Vancouver
- Initial 6 Month Campaign
- Target Audience: Business Decision Makers
- Launch Event in Downtown Vancouver – Late January



BC Business Magazine – Dec / Jan Edition

BC BUSINESS + MID-ISLAND BUSINESS INITIATIVE



Mid-island Business is Taking Off

Initiatives increase the popularity of satellite offices in Nanaimo

For decades, mid-Vancouver Island and its epicentre Nanaimo were known mainly for great desert bars, bathtub races, and as a world-class export in the form of jazz musician Diana Krall.

But today the region is increasingly being viewed by tech and industries sectors as a desirable base of operations, and nobody is more excited by this than John Hankins, CEO of the Mid-Island Business Initiative (MIBI).

The MIBI is completely funded by businesses within central Vancouver Island that share the common goal of highlighting and promoting economic development from Ladysmith to Qualicum Beach. And while the region moves toward laying its claim as a tech hub, area businesses continue to plant roots here rather than opting for Lower Mainland locations.

Hankins says: "We're not trying to compete with Vancouver but the fact is a growing number of business leaders realize that attracting and retaining talent, as well as expanding physically, is severely impacted by an exorbitant cost of living. Mid-island cities like Nanaimo are very affordable—you can still buy a new house here for around \$550,000—plus you can

easily commute to Vancouver or other Pacific Northwest cities."

Hankins' enthusiasm for the mid-island is supported by remarkable business activity in 2018. Jean-Guy Niquet, with East Side Games, says: "We were growing fast in Vancouver and wanted to open another studio—and we did so in Nanaimo in July, not only for the obvious benefits but also because we wanted to create a gaming community to complement those in Vancouver and Victoria."

Niquet adds: "We will expand from seven to 20 people by next year, which means we'll be procuring more space. We're here to stay."

A virtual reality developer counterpart to East Side Games, Cloudhead Games—which won the Best Virtual Reality Game of the Year for 2018 award—is located in Qualicum Beach and has about 30 employees. Other regionally based companies with international reputations include the multi-mission modular robotics company Inuklan services Ltd., and VMAC, which designs and manufactures the world's most innovative mobile air compressors and multi-power systems.

Also this year, the leading provider of attribution intelligence tools for cybersecurity

professionals, Nanaimo-based iSec, received \$6.2 million in funding from Microsoft's Venture Fund, to build on its current products and services and develop new technology.

Mid-island infrastructure development has been significant in 2018 as well. Nanaimo Port Authority's vehicle processing facility project at its assembly wharf received a \$6.3-million injection of cash from Ottawa in order to redevelop the wharf into a multipurpose terminal that will house a 5,574-square-metre import vehicle processing centre. Two hundred jobs will be created during construction and another 100 positions are anticipated when the facility is fully functional.

Capping all this off is the launch of Nanaimo Airport's \$55-million expansion—a critical undertaking for a facility that processed 358,000 passengers last year, a 110 percent increase in six years.

"There are always challenges in economic development, but we're enjoying remarkable growth in the mid-island, and it's encouraging that so many quality businesses view this as a great place to work and live. We strongly believe that this is only the beginning of a remarkable story," says Hankins. ■

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Over 40 Organizations Involved

