

RICHMOND SENTINEL



OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

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VOL. 10 ISSUE 2

NOT-FOR-PROFIT

JAN.27 - FEB.9, 2026



NATASHA BURNETT

SINGER
ACTOR
PRODUCER

When Calls the Heart

15

Natasha Burnett starred on stage as Diana Ross & Michael Jackson touring Britain & Europe. She then moved to Vancouver expanding her career in: *Hallmark Movies*, *The Good Doctor*, *Tracker* and *When Calls the Heart*.

Photo courtesy
Irina Stelmakh

OUR CITY

Richmond

NEWS UPDATE
by Florence Gordon



connection, creativity and community pride. Applications are open until **Sunday, February 8, 2026**.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, not-for-profit faith-based groups, Parent Advisory Committees, Community Associations and Student Councils wanting to plan inclusive events open to the public. Funded events may include cultural celebrations, community concerts, movies in the park and other outdoor gatherings that bring people together. Available this year only, the Richmond Celebrates Soccer grant supports community organizations in hosting soccer-centered cultural events from June 11 to July 19, 2026. Local artists, soccer enthusiasts and community members are encouraged to partner with not-for-profit organizations to develop event ideas that harness the power of arts and sport to build social connections.

To be eligible and find out more about the Richmond Community Celebration Grant Program and submit an online application go to richmond.ca/CelebrationGrant.

2. Richmond Launches 2026 Professional Development Series for Artists

The City of Richmond is rolling out the 2026 Art at Work series, offering free, professional development workshops designed for artists and arts organizations.

Running from **January through September**, the annual series features workshops and presentations on a wide range of topics, giving participants the opportunity to build essential knowledge and skills for pursuing a professional career in public art, performance, visual art and community arts.

Space is limited. Registration opens one month in advance of each session date.

This year's workshop sessions are:

- Creating Budgets for Public Art Projects - Saturday, February 28
- Exploring Regional Public Art Programs - Saturday, March 7
- Tax Webinar for Self-employed Artists and Small Businesses - Thursday, April 9
- Preparing for Art Markets - Sunday, May 3
- Art Critiques with Richmond Art Gallery - Wednesday, June 3
- Richmond Arts and Culture Grants Program Information Session - Thursday, September 24

For more information and advance registration, visit richmondartgallery.org/art-at-work. Art at Work is presented in partnership by the City of Richmond and Richmond Art Gallery.



3. Richmond calls for submissions for Lulu Awards celebrating urban design excellence

The City of Richmond is now accepting submissions for the 2026 Lulu Awards, its urban design awards program that celebrates excellence in buildings and public spaces across the city. Submissions are open until **Tuesday, March 31, 2026**, with award recipients to be announced in the fall. Held every four years, The Lulu Awards recognize visionary thinking and innovative design, enhancing neighbourhoods, supporting community life and reflecting high standards of urban design.

This year, submissions may be entered in 11 categories. Private and public sector projects are eligible for an urban design award if they have been approved and completed up to five years prior to 2026. Submissions must be received by the City of Richmond on or before 5:00pm on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, and must meet the City's submission requirements.

For more information on The Lulu Awards for urban design, including eligibility criteria, submission requirements and entry forms, visit richmond.ca/LuluAwards.



OUR CITY

Richmond

NEWS UPDATE
by Florence Gordon



B.C. privacy commissioner orders City of Richmond to remove surveillance cameras

City of Richmond Statement on Privacy Commissioner Ruling Statement regarding Public Safety Camera System Program

The City of Richmond has clearly stated to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia (OIPC) that its Public Safety Camera System Program (PSCS) is lawful and has repeatedly requested over the last 18 months that the OIPC issue an order. Now that the Commissioner has issued an order the City of Richmond is positioned to have the legality of its PSCS determined by the courts.

The use of the PSCS is strictly limited to law enforcement purposes and evidentiary support for prosecutions. The system will not be actively monitored in real time, and video footage retrieval will only be accessible through a production or Court order, ensuring that access is tightly controlled and legally justified. Technological safeguards will be in place, such as tightly controlled restricted access for authorized personnel only. Additionally, the PSCS will operate on its own segregated network to prevent cyberattacks and unauthorized access.

These restrictions and oversight mechanisms are designed to prevent misuse of the system and to adequately protect the privacy of individuals. By implementing robust security measures and adhering to legal requirements, the City aims to balance the benefits of enhanced public safety with the need to protect individual privacy rights. The City's Public Safety Camera System Privacy Impact Assessment, which was endorsed by Council in 2024, provides detailed information on these safeguards.



Crime Map Dec. 26, 2025 - Jan. 23, 2026

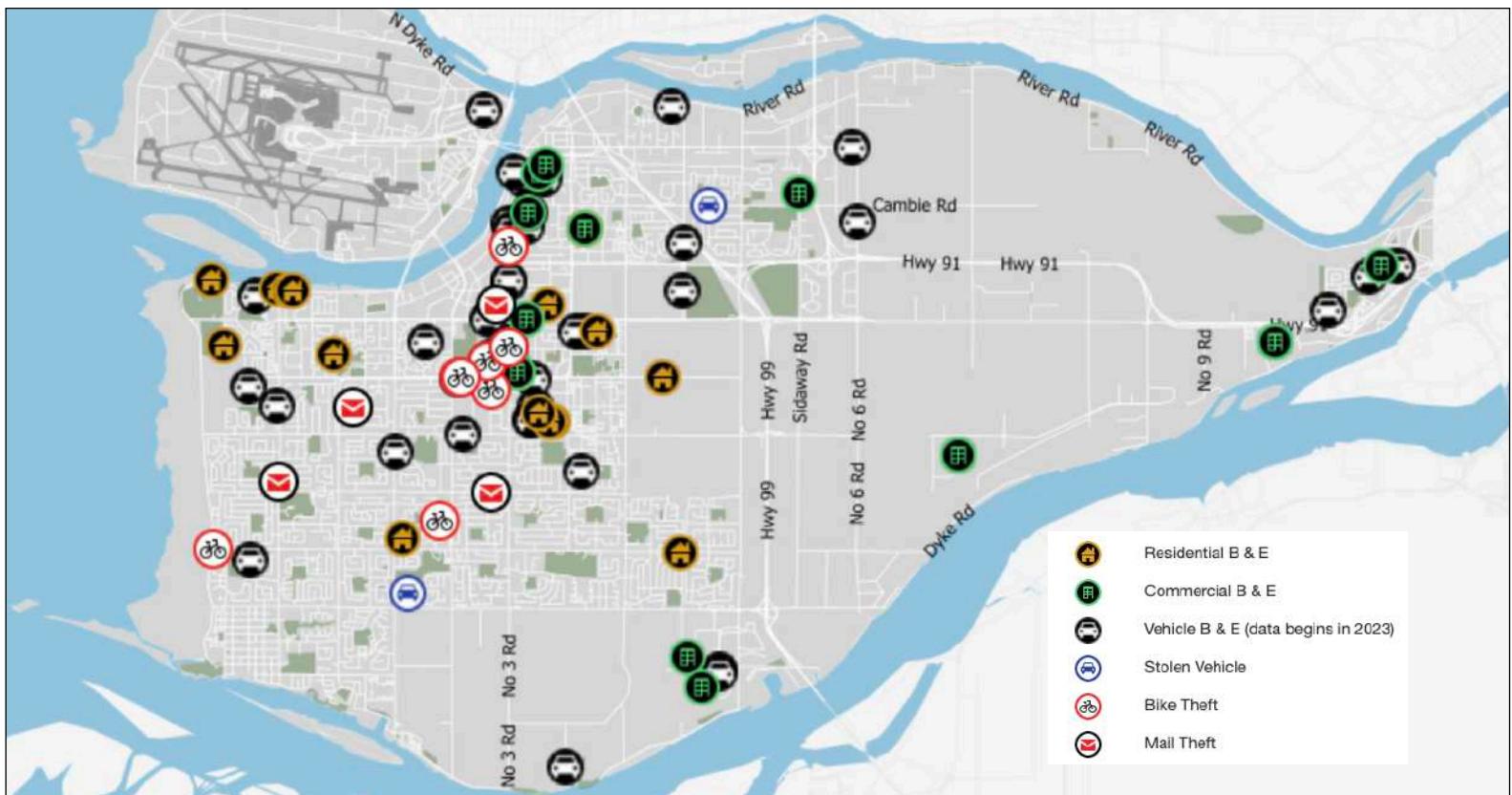


Photo courtesy csgeo.richmond.ca

Richmond launches new online Affordable Housing Hub

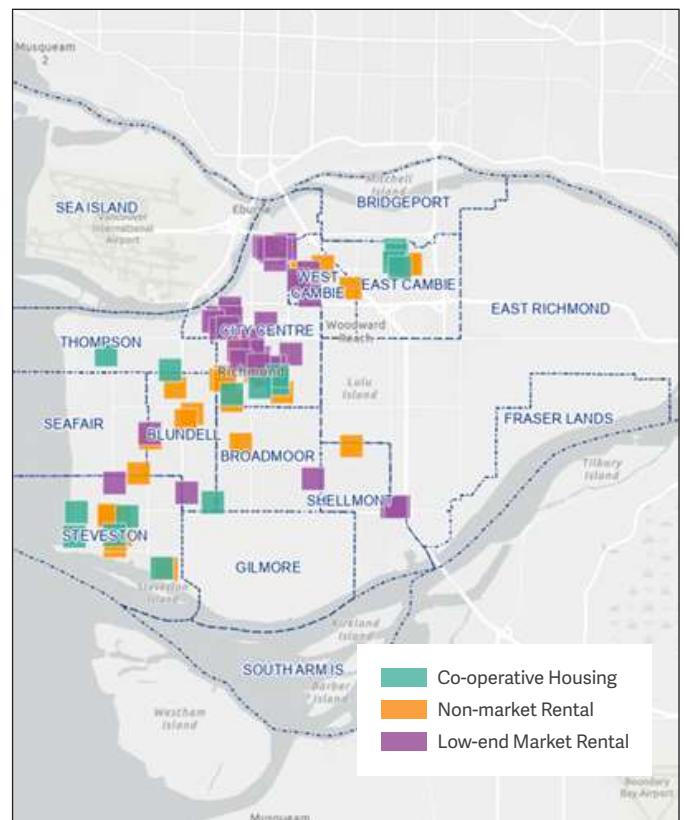
The City of Richmond has launched a new Affordable Housing Hub, an online tool designed to improve access to affordable housing information and make it easier for residents to explore housing options throughout the city.

"Access to safe and affordable housing is essential to a healthy and inclusive city," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "The Affordable Housing Hub brings critical information together in one place, making it easier for residents to understand their options and take the next step toward finding a home that meets their needs."

The Affordable Housing Hub provides information on non-market rental, low-end market rental and co-operative housing in one easy-to-use platform. Individuals, families, seniors, newcomers and service providers can navigate affordable housing options more efficiently and with greater clarity.

Through interactive digital maps, users can explore affordable housing locations and find contact information to inquire about associated vacancies and application requirements. Application details for BC Housing, Metro Vancouver and other partner operator sites are also available—helping users better understand where and how to apply.

Users will be able to use customizable search tools, allowing them to filter results based on rental category, bedroom type, accessibility features and neighbourhood. This enables them to focus on options that best meet their specific needs. By centralizing affordable housing information in one accessible platform, the Affordable Housing Hub supports greater transparency, awareness and access to housing opportunities for residents at all stages of life. Updates on future Hub enhancements will be shared through social media and the forthcoming quarterly Housing e-News. For more information or to explore the Affordable Housing Hub, visit richmond.ca/FindHousing.



How to Apply for Affordable Housing

The City of Richmond publishes the Affordable Housing Guide, which provides a comprehensive list of affordable housing options in Richmond. To apply for subsidized rental units provided by BC Housing, [apply online to BC Housing's Housing Registry](http://applyonline.tohousingregistry.bchousing.org) (bchousing.org).

To apply for below market rental units provided by Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC), apply to [Metro Vancouver Housing online](http://MetroVancouverHousingOnline.metrovancouver.org/services/housing/apply-for-housing) (metrovancouver.org/services/housing/apply-for-housing) or call **604-432-6300**.

To apply for a LEMR unit or Co-op, contact the building operator directly. Each operator has their own application process and waiting list.

Seniors needing help finding or applying for housing can call **604-279-7020** to get help from **Richmond Cares Richmond Gives** (rcrg.org/WhatWeDo/RCRGPrograms/seniors-community-support-services).

For more information, including eligibility details and contact information for each building, visit the **Affordable Housing Hub** (corporate1.richmond.ca/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience) or view the **Affordable Housing Guide** (richmond.ca/_shared/assets/affordablehousingguide66343.pdf).



Non-Market Housing

Low-End Market Rental

Co-operative Housing

Download Affordable Housing Guide (PDF)



Published by
RICHMOND SENTINEL NEWS INC.
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Richmond, B.C., V6X 2T4

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In honour of our soldiers: Hugh John Nelson

By MATTHEW CHEUNG
Contributing writer



Courtesy Veterans.gc.ca

In our previous series, we learned about the 56 men who gave their lives during World War I and World War II, whose names had been inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph and had a poppy street sign named after them. Following our poppy street sign series, we moved onto the young soldiers whose names were inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph, but did not have a road named after them. Those names are compiled of 23 young men who lost their lives in World War I, World War II, or in the Korean War.

Hugh John Nelson was born on July 4, 1916 in Battleford, Saskatchewan, he grew up in Saskatchewan attending Battleford Collegiate for two years before his parents made the decision to move to Eburne, Richmond in 1940. He lived at 372 Odlin Road with his parents Frederick George and Lily Nelson.

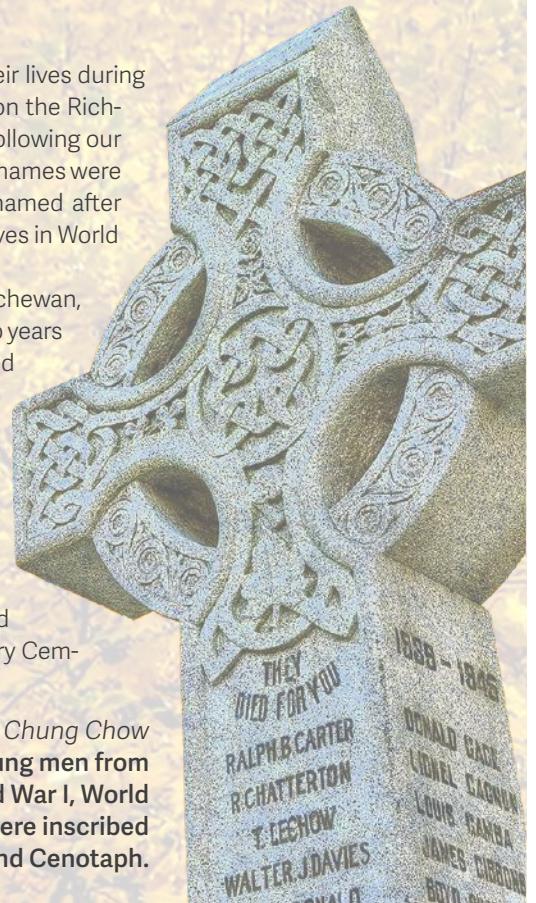
On August 24, 1942, Hugh worked as a truck driver and enlisted in Vancouver; he trained in Chilliwack. In September of 1943, after becoming a qualified military transport driver, Hugh joined the 10th Field Squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers.

Upon arrival in Italy in November 1943, he served with the squadron, until May 25, 1944. Hugh was tragically killed in action and

would be buried at the Melfa Rivery Cemetery in Italy, before being reburied at the Cassino Military Cemetery, in Cassino, Italy.

The City of Richmond also has a road named Nelson Road, but Hugh has no connection to the Nelson family whatsoever.

File photo by Chung Chow
Hugh John Nelson, was one of 23 young men from Richmond who lost their lives in either World War I, World War II, or in the Korean War, whose names were inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph.



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Supporting B.C.'s food security with new technology, training B.C. companies, research institutions advance food security through smart-farming systems



Supporting B.C.'s food security with smart-farming systems

Photo - news.gov.bc.ca

- Through the B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation, Delta-based Windset Farms is working with experts to develop, test a smart farming system.
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the University of the Fraser Valley are each creating training programs for drought-resistant crops, robotic weeding.
- More than 350 people will be trained to help strengthen B.C.'s food security and economy.



HON. RAVI KAHLON
BC Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth

"With a changing climate and uncertainty from the U.S., it's critical that two of British Columbia's greatest strengths, technology and agriculture, come together to ensure British Columbians can rely on healthy food grown here at home," said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth. "Through our Look West plan, we are connecting innovators with industry partners to turn made-in B.C. ideas into real-world solutions that create jobs and drive our economy forward in a sustainable future."

With support from the B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation (BCCAI), Delta-based Wind-

A new smart-farming project in Delta is helping strengthen food security for British Columbians, while two new training programs will ensure more people have the necessary skills to succeed in the growing agritech sector.

set Farms is developing a new smart-farming system that automates decision-making with sensors that monitor plant stress and efficient greenhouse crop management.

"This partnership helps us develop advanced smart-farming systems that improve real-time greenhouse monitoring, optimize climate and nutrient management, and detect potential plant disease earlier," said Tony Kalf, chief technology officer, Windset Farms. "These innovations allow us to make meaningful impacts through job creation, new business opportunities and by ensuring the security and stability of B.C.'s food supply. By optimizing the growing environment, we can create efficiencies while minimizing resource use, allowing us to consistently grow high-quality produce year round."

These projects are examples of how B.C. is supporting the agritech sector, enabling companies to commercialize their technologies and create cleaner, more resilient and more productive agriculture, food and seafood industries.

It is anticipated the new project and training opportunities will give more than 350 people advanced training in areas such as horticulture, regenerative agriculture, data management and agri-business management, and increase business opportunities through commercialization.

"B.C.-developed technology is helping our farmers increase production and make our food supply more resilient to climate change," said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Food. "Using the latest tech to monitor plant growth and health, as well as maximize water and nutrient efficiency, is resulting in more sustainably grown, local food being produced for B.C. families and a better bottom line for farmers."

This work is part of the Province's **Look West Plan** for jobs and industry, which outlines B.C.'s vision to deliver jobs and opportunities by strengthening the workforce to develop a more independent economy. The investment by Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacificCan) in BCCAI is scaling up homegrown innovation and boosting B.C. business growth, key steps in building a strong Canadian economy.

Gregor Robertson, Federal Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada – "PacificCan investments are driving local innovation and helping B.C. businesses grow. The B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation is advancing ground-breaking technologies and hands-on training opportunities in the agriculture sector, improving food security and building a stronger, more resilient Canadian economy."

Declaring speculation and vacancy tax means more housing available Owners' yearly declarations part of B.C.'s housing solution



- The speculation and vacancy tax curbs market speculation, frees housing for people in British Columbia.

- Homeowners in tax areas must complete their declarations before March 31, 2026 deadline. For declarations completed in 2027, the tax increases to 3% for foreign owners and untaxed worldwide owners, 1% for Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Declaration letters are being mailed out starting this month to all homeowners in speculation and vacancy taxation areas of B.C. The letters include the information people need to complete their declarations by March 31, 2026, and qualify for an exemption.

Funding homes for people

"Every owner who declares their property is part of the solution to ensure that homes aren't sitting empty, but are available for people to rent or buy," said Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance. "By continuing this work, we are delivering affordable housing for renters, not repeating the mistakes that opened our market to speculators."

The speculation and vacancy tax (SVT) raised nearly \$80 million in 2024, all of which helps fund more affordable housing initiatives in regions where it applies. Projects funded with help from speculation and vacancy tax revenue include affordable rental homes for families, seniors and people living with disabilities. Revenue from the tax also helps fund housing for Indigenous families, Elders and individuals with low incomes.

"Renters need good housing they can afford, and our housing initiatives are making that happen. Vacancy rates in Metro Vancouver and Greater Victoria are the highest they've been in decades and rents are going down," said Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs. "The speculation and vacancy tax helps ensure there is more housing for teachers, health-care workers and all the people who keep our province going." More than 99% of B.C. residents are exempt, but all homeowners in taxable areas must declare. Most people who live in their property, rent it out for six months or more, or meet other exemption criteria will not have to pay the tax.

Minister's statement on status of the decriminalization pilot program



Josie Osborne, BC Minister of Health, has released the following statement on the status of the decriminalization pilot program:

The toxic-drug crisis continues to take lives and cause tremendous pain across British Columbia. Families, communities, first responders and service providers are all feeling the impact. This is a deeply complex public-health emergency, and there is no single solution that can fix it. From the beginning, we have been determined to explore every option and use every tool available to save lives and support people who are struggling.

"In 2023, we launched a pilot program to decriminalize people who use drugs. We did this with the support of advocates, service providers, police and members of the legislative assembly. The intention was clear: to make it easier for people struggling with addiction to reach out for help without fear of being criminalized. Despite the hard work and good intentions behind the pilot, it has not delivered the results we hoped for. For that reason, we will not be asking the federal government to renew the exemption."

"This does not mean the work ends here. We remain focused on strengthening the approaches that are helping people get timely, appropriate care. Our priority is, and always has been, to make sure people can get help when and where they need it. We continue to believe that addiction is a health issue, not a criminal justice issue. We are building a more complete and comprehensive system of mental-health and addictions care in B.C., including prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction and after-care. We have opened hundreds of new treatment and recovery beds, significantly reduced wait times for withdrawal management and prevented tens of thousands of overdose deaths through services such as Take Home Naloxone and overdose-prevention sites. At the same time, we are supporting police in focusing their efforts on the people who make and traffic toxic drugs and who bring violence, crime and suffering to our communities.

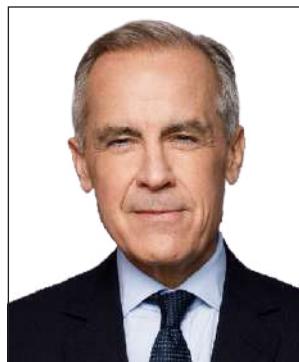
People struggling with addiction are our friends, our family members and our neighbours. As the toxic-drug crisis continues to evolve, our response must evolve with it. We will continue learning, adapting and trying new approaches to turn the tide on this crisis and ensure people can get the care they need without fear, stigma or judgment."

Dwayne McDonald, deputy commissioner and commanding officer, BC RCMP – "The BC RCMP acknowledges that substance use is a health issue. With the end of the exemption, police officers can fully enforce and focus on the most serious offences within the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Police will continue to apply a measured approach to our enforcement efforts, while upholding the safety and security of the communities we live and serve in. We also remain committed to working with our partners to find solutions that ensure those with mental-health and addiction issues receive immediate and ongoing assistance."

Learn More:

To find mental-health and substance-use supports in your area, visit: <https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/>

Prime Minister Carney forges new strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China focused on energy, agri-food, and trade



PM MARK CARNEY

Photo pm.gc.ca

"At its best, the Canada-China relationship has created massive opportunities for both our peoples. By leveraging our strengths and focusing on trade, energy, agri-food, and areas where we can make huge gains, we are forging a new strategic partnership that builds on the best of our past, reflects the world as it is today, and benefits the people of both our nations."

—The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada.

In a more divided and uncertain world, Canada is building a stronger, more independent, and more resilient economy. To

that end, Canada's new government is working with urgency and determination to diversify our trade partnerships and catalyses massive new levels of investment. As the world's second-largest economy, China presents enormous opportunities for Canada in this mission.

To forge a new Canada-China partnership, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, visited Beijing, the People's Republic of China, this week. This marked the first visit to China by a Canadian Prime Minister since 2017. In Beijing, Prime Minister Carney met with the President of China, Xi Jinping, the Premier of China, Li Qiang, and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, Zhao Leji. After their meeting, Prime Minister Carney and President Xi released a joint statement outlining the pillars of Canada and China's new strategic partnership.

Central to this new partnership is an agreement to collaborate in energy, clean technology, and climate competitiveness. Canada and China are both energy superpowers focused on expanding two-way energy cooperation – reducing emissions and scaling up investments in batteries, solar, wind, and energy storage. While in Beijing, the Prime Minister met business leaders in energy and clean technology to identify and accelerate Chinese investment opportunities in Canada.

To help deliver the full potential of these partnerships, and build up our domestic manufacturing sector, Canada will allow up to 49,000 Chinese electric vehicles (EV) into the Canadian market, with the most-favoured-nation tariff rate of 6.1%. This amount corresponds to volumes in the year prior to recent trade frictions on these imports (2023-2024), representing



Photo - The Canadian Press/Sean Kilpatrick

Prime Minister Mark Carney walks past a Chinese flag as he leaves after holding a press conference in Ritan Park in Beijing, China on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.

less than 3% of the Canadian market for new vehicles sold in Canada. It is expected that within three years, this agreement will drive considerable new Chinese joint-venture investment in Canada with trusted partners to protect and create new auto manufacturing careers for Canadian workers, and ensure a robust build-out of Canada's EV supply chain. With this agreement, it is also anticipated that, in five years, more than 50% of these vehicles will be affordable EVs with an import price of less than \$35,000, creating new lower-cost options for Canadian consumers.

Agri-food and trade are foundations of the longstanding relationship between Canada and China – and China continues to be our second-largest export market. To renew and strengthen that relationship, Prime Minister Carney and President Xi secured a preliminary agreement-in-principle with landmark measures to remove trade barriers and reduce tariffs:

By March 1, 2026, Canada expects that China will lower tariffs on Canadian canola seed to a combined rate of approximately 15%. China is a \$4 billion canola seed market for Canadian producers, and this change represents a significant drop from current combined tariff levels of approximately 85%. Canada expects that Canadian canola meal, lobsters, crabs, and peas will not be subject to relevant anti-discrimination tariffs from March 1, 2026, until at least the end of this year. Together, these results will help unlock nearly \$3 billion in export orders for Canadian workers and businesses as they realise the full potential of the massive Chinese market of 1.4 billion people.

Finally, to build on this momentum, Canada has set an ambitious goal to increase exports to China by 50% by 2030. To achieve this outcome, Prime Minister Carney and President Xi discussed increasing two-way investment in clean energy and technology, agri-food, wood products, and other sectors.

Prime Minister Carney secures new partnership with Qatar to increase trade, investment, and defence cooperation

The global landscape is rapidly changing, leaving economies, businesses, and workers in a state of uncertainty. In response, Canada is focused on what we can control: securing new trade and investment partnerships so we are not reliant on a single country, but more resilient to global shocks. We are positioning Canada as a strong, reliable partner to secure new capital, develop new export markets, and create new opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses.

To advance that mission, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, traveled to Doha, Qatar – the first-ever visit by a sitting Canadian Prime Minister to the state. The Prime Minister met with the Amir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, to discuss increasing trade, commerce, investment, and security cooperation. Upon concluding the visit, the leaders announced a commitment from Qatar to make significant strategic investments in Canadian nation-building projects. These investments will get major projects built faster, supercharge our clean energy, health, AI, and defence industries, and create thousands of high-paying careers and sustained prosperity for Canadian workers.

Building on this momentum, the Prime Minister and the Amir issued a joint statement committing to accelerated two-way investment and collaboration across AI, quantum computing, aerospace, defence technologies, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and agri-food.

Prime Minister Carney builds resilient partnerships and attracts new investments at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting



World Economic Forum –
PM Mark Carney addresses over 60 heads of state gathered at Davos Switzerland 2026.

Photo - weforum.org

As the global economy shifts, Canada's new government is focused on what we can control: we are diversifying our trade partnerships and attracting massive new investments to build a stronger, more sustainable, more resilient economy.

As part of this mission, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, participated in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF Annual Meeting brings together nearly 3,000 leaders from government, business, academia, and international organisations, representing more than 130 countries.

On January 20, the Prime Minister delivered a special address in which he outlined Canada's approach of **principled and pragmatic** engagement. He argued that in an era of great power rivalry, middle powers like Canada are not powerless – that we can shape the outcomes we want by acting together.

In Switzerland, Prime Minister Carney met with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Mark Rutte, and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson, to discuss the changes in global trade and security. He focused on maintaining international support for a strong, independent, and sovereign Ukraine, highlighting recent advancements to achieve a just and lasting peace, and outlined Canada's roadmap for strengthening existing relationships and building a web of resilient new trade networks.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that decisions on the future of Greenland are for Greenland and Denmark to make. In meetings with European leaders, the Prime Minister expressed his strong opposition to tariffs over Green-

land, calling for focused talks to achieve the shared objectives of security and prosperity for the Arctic. He outlined ongoing efforts by Canada to increase investments in Arctic defence, security, and infrastructure, and maintained that the most effective way to ensure Arctic security is by working within the NATO Alliance.

At the Annual Meeting, the Prime Minister discussed the Gaza Board of Peace and appreciated President Trump's leadership in bringing the conflict in Gaza to an end, including through the declaration of Phase Two. To catalyse massive investment in Canada, the Prime Minister met with business leaders from companies with a combined market capitalisation of approximately \$10 trillion – representing immense potential for new investments in Canada's infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, and defence sectors. He emphasised Canada's competitive advantages in clean and conventional energy, defence, agriculture, AI, quantum computing, and health technology – and its role as a premier destination for global capital and investment.

He underscored Canada's mission to unleash \$1 trillion in investment over the next five years, while building a stronger, more sustainable, and globally competitive economy. The Prime Minister's participation at the WEF Annual Meeting builds on his latest engagements in the People's Republic of China, where he **launched a new strategic partnership** across energy, agri-food, and financial services, and in Qatar, where he **secured a new partnership** to expand trade, attract investment, and accelerate bilateral defence cooperation. In an increasingly uncertain world, Canada's new government is focused on what we can control. We are leveraging trade, investment, and resilient partnerships that will generate meaningful opportunities at home and build a stronger, more independent Canadian economy.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police - Serving with excellence

Richmond RCMP Road Report: December enforcement and winter safety

January 14, 2026 - Richmond, British Columbia

"Road safety is about protecting everyone: drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Last month we saw quick action prevent a serious incident at a busy intersection. At the same time, we see too many preventable tragedies on our roads, especially this time of year. Whether you are behind the wheel or on foot, we urge you to exercise caution and always make safe choices."

- Staff Sergeant Paula Maan, Richmond RCMP

Richmond RCMP's Road Safety Unit (RSU) closed out December with a focus on impaired driving and pedestrian safety, issuing hundreds of violation tickets and preventing a near miss at one of Richmond's busiest intersections.

December enforcement snapshot

In December, officers issued 832 traffic violation tickets, including:

• Speeding:	136
• Distracted driving:	111
• Impaired drug/alcohol infractions:	27
• Vehicle-related infractions:	203
• Driver Licence infractions:	150

Enforcement highlights

On December 15th, 2025, RSU officers conducted a proactive pedestrian safety outreach at one of Richmond's busiest intersections, Alderbridge Way and No. 3 Rd. Officers distributed ICBC reflectors and spoke with pedestrians about safe crossing practices. During the event, officers intervened to prevent a near collision when an elderly pedestrian attempted to cross against a solid red hand while a vehicle was turning left. Thanks to quick action, the pedestrian waited for the next light cycle and crossed safely.

During the same operation, an officer stopped a black Mercedes sedan after observing the driver holding a cell phone and not wearing a seatbelt. The driver was unable to produce a valid license, and checks revealed all licenses had been cancelled in June. The vehicle was towed and impounded at the owner's expense, and the driver departed on foot after being charged with multiple offences.

On December 16th, an officer stopped a vehicle driving without daytime

running lights during rain and dark conditions. The driver produced a license card, but ICBC records revealed it had been cancelled months earlier. The license was seized, driver charged with the offenses and issued an indefinite driving prohibition, and the vehicle towed and impounded at the owner's expense.

On December 18th, an officer clocked a Honda Civic going 161 km/h in a 90 km/h zone on Highway 99. The vehicle had tinted front windows and a homemade decal license plate glued to the front bumper. The driver received tickets for excessive speed, tinted windows, and failure to display a proper plate. The vehicle was towed and impounded at the owner's expense, and a Notice and Order issued for defects.

Winter impaired driving enforcement

Richmond RCMP continues its winter impaired driving campaign in partnership with BC Highway Patrol. Drivers can expect increased sobriety check stops and Mandatory Alcohol Screening throughout the season.

Winter safety reminders

Drivers are reminded to:

- Clear snow and ice for vehicles
- Use winter tires (M+S or snowflake symbol)
- Slow down and increase following distance
- Keep headlights clean and bright

Collision responsibility reminder

If you are involved in a collision, or witness one, you have a legal and moral obligation to remain at the scene. Leaving before police arrive can result in serious penalties under the Motor Vehicle Act and Criminal Code. Staying on scene ensures accurate reporting helps injured parties, and supports a timely investigation.

RSU in the community

Reserve Constable Peter Sommerville hit a tremendous milestone. On December 1st, representing Richmond RCMP, he completed his 150th whole blood donation, a commitment 40 years in the making. R/Cst. Sommerville retired last year but returned to serve with RSU, continuing to make a difference both on and off the road.



Photo courtesy rcmp.ca



Joe Biz – by Joe Leary

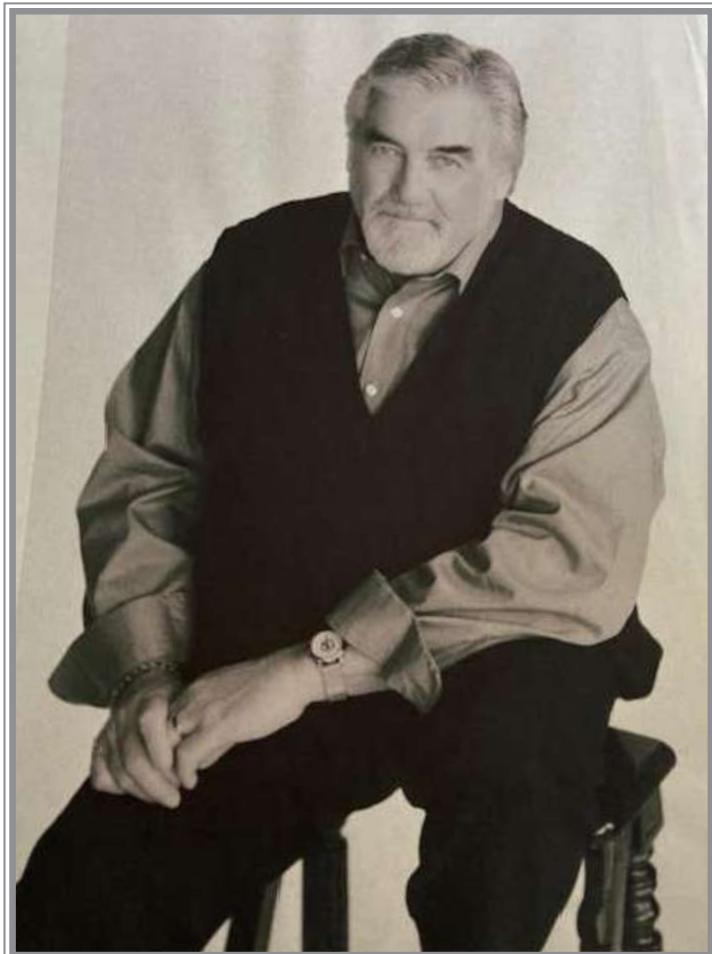
Decades of local horse racing comes to an end

It's a sad commentary when something so ingrained in the fabric of local culture suddenly disappears. Such was the case in early December with word of the immediate closing of Hastings Racecourse, ending 132 years of horseracing in British Columbia.

While the news sent shockwaves through Vancouver's sporting and entertainment community, the deepest impact is felt by those whose livelihoods have long depended on the historic facility. Media relations and Marketing Consultant Greg Douglas has had a long and storied relationship with the track and was quite vocal with his thoughts. "With Great Canadian Entertainment showing no interest in renewing its lease with the City of Vancouver to continue operating Hastings Racecourse and the Provincial Government eliminating slot machine revenues, it leaves the racing community out in the cold. "Little or no thought was given to the hundreds of people at the track," he adds. "Words such as "shock, anger and uncertainty" have been expressed by racing officials in light of the recent developments."

For well over a century, Hastings Park wasn't simply a venue for horse racing — it was an ecosystem. With operations abruptly halted, hundreds of individuals face uncertain futures as victims of collateral damage. At the centre of the fallout: the horsemen: trainers, jockeys, exercise riders, grooms, stable hands and pari-mutuel workers whose lives revolved around the track. A single racing stable might employ anywhere from a handful to a dozen or more workers.

With numerous barns operating during the season, the number of backstretch employees affected reaches well into the hundreds. Many



Media relations and Marketing Consultant Greg Douglas

Photo provided Greg Douglas

of these workers live season-to-season, relying on race purses and stable wages. Without a functioning track, their skills — highly specialized and not easily transferable offer few immediate alternatives. "It was roughly two months ago when I shared with the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of BC a letter to the editor that I was hoping to submit to Postmedia," adds Douglas, who is about to be inducted into the BC Horse Racing Hall of Fame in the Builders Category. "It concerned the future of the thoroughbred horse racing industry in British Columbia at Hastings Racecourse on the PNE grounds, the longest continuously active professional sports facility in Vancouver history."

It was suggested that Douglas hold off on sending the letter. "Their theory (HBPA) was it could ruffle some feathers in Victoria since the horsemen's association was continuing to pursue an in-person plea with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to discuss provincial financial support as in past years. The meeting finally took place August 14 with little being resolved other than both parties suggesting it was "positive", a word we so often hear in political circles".

The Hastings Racecourse closure also places enormous strain on owners, many of whom invest heavily in the sport - not for profit, but for passion. Maintaining a racehorse is expensive and an abrupt halt in the racing program now forces owners to relocate their horses to other

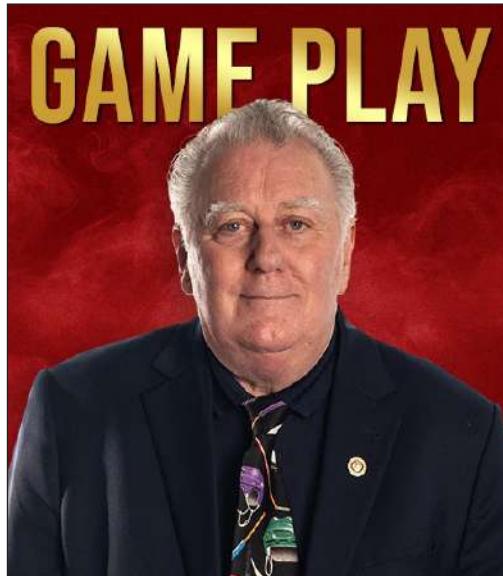
jurisdictions such as Alberta or Washington. This not only adds cost but uproots the entire network of people tied to each horse. Trainers who have spent decades building careers at Hastings must contemplate moving elsewhere to continue working, often leaving families behind. "There was a time when the provincial government's agriculture arm would willingly budget an annual grant to ensure the ongoing survival of the horse racing industry in British Columbia," adds Douglas. "It has been estimated that between Hastings Racecourse and Fraser Downs Racetrack thousands of onsite employees and suppliers have depended on the industry far beyond the barns. Hastings supported an intricate web of businesses and work".

Perhaps the most intangible impact is cultural. Hastings Racecourse was one of Vancouver's longest-running institutions, connecting

the city to its own sporting heritage. Its sudden closure doesn't just disrupt jobs — it marks the end of a tradition that shaped memories, forged careers and built a close-knit community. What remains now are hundreds of workers searching for stability, thousands of fans mourning a lost landmark, and an industry grappling with the disappearance of one of its most enduring homes.

Horse racing's history in British Columbia goes back 132 years to when the first-ever Vancouver City Stakes was staged at a site that would become Howe Street, where a horse named 'Mayflower' won a first-place purse of \$250. Today, unlike the Vancouver Canucks, BC Lions and Vancouver Whitecaps, there are no racing-related revenues from television and radio rights, ticket sales, concessions, souvenir shops and parking fees. There hasn't been an admission fee at Hastings Racecourse or Fraser Downs in Cloverdale for the past two decades. BC's only two racetracks have been basically relying on their adjacent Great Canadian Casinos to keep them afloat financially. "Until recently I worked in a public relations and marketing role at Hastings Racecourse for several years – 20 in total", says Douglas. "I know what government financial support means to the hard-working and enormously dedicated people – male and female – within the horse-racing industry.

"What I do not know is why they are suddenly the forgotten people".



Steve Erickson
Media Relations Richmond Sockeyes

Sockeyes Dominate League Play

Over the past few years one aspect of the Sockeyes game that no one can take away is the scoring productivity which continues to impress everyone from other coaches to scouts at various levels of the game.

The past two seasons we have been privy to watch the Sockeyes finish the season with 32 wins, 11 losses, 3 O/T losses, 2 shootout losses along with one O/T win finishing the 24-25 season with 69 points. This past season saw a coaching change which never deterred the productivity of the Sockeyes who to date, have an impressive record of 35 wins, 5 losses, 1 O/T win managing 213 goals in only 40 league games with nine remaining.

If numbers matter which they do, the home squad is on goal to come close to matching the final season numbers of 45 wins, 1 loss, 2 O/T wins and 1 S/O wins finishing with 92 points which will go down in the record books as a historic season.

As strange as it sounds with the "Tunnel Series" against the Delta Ice Hawks that seems to be their biggest rival which Delta dominate winning three of the six games. Regardless of the split in the six games it's ironic that Richmond has outscored Delta by a 23-16 margin in goal productivity, but the series continues!

The first game of the new year saw Delta get the early jump scoring first on the PP that saw Keegan Dunn giving Delta the early lead at 17:17 only to have the Sockeyes even the game at one at 19:48 with David Yoon sending the teams to the dressing room tied at one after twenty minutes. The second was scoreless while the third period saw the Ice Hawks get their second of the

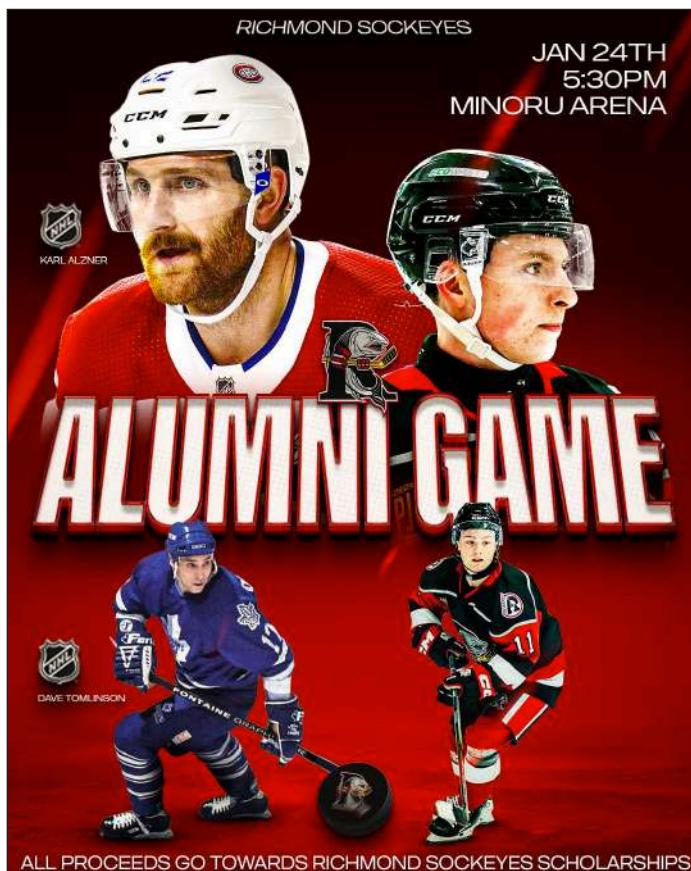
game from Ryan Dunn, Keegan's brother at 2:03 followed by Delta's third of the game at 12:13 with Devun Olfert getting a PP marker that gave Delta a comfortable two goal lead. The Sockeyes continued to press that saw Brody Lindal (21) also on the PP at 14:16 allowing the home squad to pull within one throwing everything at Delta's Armaan Kaila, former Richmond Sockeye who was "pumped" to pull out the win.

Try as they might this contest saw the Ice Hawks pull out the win despite being outshot by the Sockeyes by a commanding 59 shots allowing Delta to finish with 34 shots against Alan Peregram. Regardless of the loss it was Delta's Armaan Kaila (59 SA/57 SV) who was named the game's first star, Keegan Dunn (1G/1A) second while Sockeye's Dylan Nazareth (1G/1A) took home third star.

The Sockeyes next contest was a road trip to Gibsons two short days later that saw them dominate the contest pulling out a 6-3 win despite giving up the first goal a short 24 seconds in the opening period while on the PP with Carter Voll in the sin-bin. We continue to mention how discipline plays such an important role in all games and this game was no different for the Sockeye getting their first of the game at 10:55 with a "blistering" snap shot from one of the newest Sockeyes Brendan Quinn-Lagria who hammered home his first as a Sockeye. The first was more of a tentative contest with Richmond outshooting the Tsunami by a narrow 12-8 margin with newest Sockeye "tender" Haden Heide tested close in for some shots.

Haden was recently acquired from the Lloydminster Bobcats who had played 14 games with a record of 2:36 GAA and a SV% of .921 along with one S/O whose trip saw a long quick drive from Alberta over two days.

His career started with him playing for the Lloydminster Blazers U15 team (2019-2020)



On January 24 today's Sockeyes played their annual Alumni Game

Photo richmondsockeyes.com

markers from David Yoon getting his 33rd on the PP and his 34th goal of the season albeit short-handed for the 6-3 win outshooting the Tsunami 44-33 through sixty minutes. The win saw them return home allowing injuries to heal for the final stretch run of the season as they were playing host to the Burnaby Steelers in a contest that saw them not only pull out a 7-2 win but dominate from the opening face-off. The home squad opened the scoring early in the first at 4:27 off the stick of newly acquired Jayden Shirk who calls Newport Coast California home in the off-season and started the season with the Amarillo Wranglers who started his career with the Anaheim Jr. Ducks U13AAA in 2020-2021 finishing with 17 goals, 12 assists through 34 games.

The Sockeyes managed to grab three goals in both the first and second periods with Dylan Nazareth opening the scoring in the third at 1:54 with a short handed marker only to have the Steelers finish the game with a pair leaving for home with a 7-2 loss. The Sockeyes played a return match against the Steelers three days later that saw them finish the game with the same 7-2 score in a contest that saw no scoring in the first period. The Sockeyes have nine regular season PJHL games remaining this season, four on the road and five at home at the "Fish Tank" in Richmond prior to the start of the playoff run.

The Sockeyes want to "thank" all the sponsors who have come on board this season making it a productive season as well as the Richmond Sentinel for their on-going support!!!

eventually saw him advance his career playing with Team Alberta taking major steps in his career signing with the Sockeyes. The second saw Richmond outscore the Tsunami by a narrow 3-2 margin with goals from Beau-dy Beaudin, Keelan Wyke and Brody Lindal again outshooting the Tsunami by an 18-13 shots. The third was all Sockeye with a pair of



2. Turtleneck Sweater

The turtleneck sweater is the perfect sweater to have because of its versatility as it will go with every type of outfit. From suits to jeans a gentleman in a turtleneck will give off that edgy look that is both classy and retro vibe not to mention it keeps you warm and comfortable. I recommend a navy or a white colored turtleneck, they are classics and will compliment your wardrobe as shown in the photos.

3. Herringbone Fabric Suit

A herringbone suit is the perfect edition to your winter wardrobe because of the wool fabric design that originated from the wet climate in Northern Scotland ... which is so adaptable for those in the greater Vancouver who choose this as part of their wardrobe because of the weather similarities. The herringbone wool fabric will help better repel the moisture from the rain when caught outside without your umbrella... and if worn properly you can dress this herringbone suit up with a tie or dress it down for that casual look pairing the herringbone jacket with a pair of jeans. Either way it will be a versatile purchase and you can wear it in the spring and fall seasons as well.

stood the test of time. Most importantly, this jacket keeps you warm, and is designed for comfort to fit over top of your suit. Choosing a tailored color (navy or black) is a style that has never gone out of fashion. It's a versatile item in your wardrobe that looks great over a formal outfit or matching it as a casual look with a pair of jeans. There are many different overcoat styles from single breasted to double breasted. No matter what style you choose it's a purchase that will serve you well for years.



5. Quality Umbrella

An umbrella is an important accessory for the modern gentleman because it embodies preparedness, style, and chivalry. It is a practical tool for protection from these winter elements and is also a timeless accessory that enhances a man's overall appearance, demonstrating his foresight and an eye for fashion. When it is raining out you want to stay dry keeping your hair and clothing in check. I recommend getting a good quality umbrella that balances durability, wind resistance, coverage, and portability, featuring strong materials like fiberglass ribs, a vented or double canopy to handle gusts of wind, a quality waterproof fabric that repels water, and a comfortable handle, with options like auto-open/close for convenience.



4. Overcoat Jacket

The overcoat jacket is another must and you may recall I previously wrote a story on the history of the classic Navy Pea Jacket that has

Douglas James Scammell

FASHION FOR MEN

5 Winter Essentials

The winter months in Vancouver British Columbia can be long, dark, cool and damp. Over the course of these winter months some of your favorite suits and shoes will get put away until our fair-weather conditions return. To help keep you in your usual happy fashionable self during the winter season when we bundle up to keep warm and dry, I have outlined some essential items to help you look and feel great during this time. Here are 5 essential winter items that every well-dressed modern gentleman can feel good in during the winter months in the greater Vancouver area that will not cost a fortune to obtain.

WINTER ESSENTIALS

1. Chelsea Boots

A great pair of Chelsea boots are a must. They look great whether you pair them with your suit, or with a sweater and a pair of jeans. They are very comfortable and most importantly they will help keep your feet dry. I recommend getting a pair of either black or a dark brown color because these are the most versatile colors to go with your wardrobe. Equally important is to make sure they are leather for the wet days and suede only for the dry winter days because the rain destroys anything suede. They are a great investment



because you can also wear them during the spring and fall months as well.

Photos courtesy DJ Scammell

OUR CITY

tonight

SPOTLIGHT ON
3 FILMS BASED ON
INSPIRING TRUE STORIES

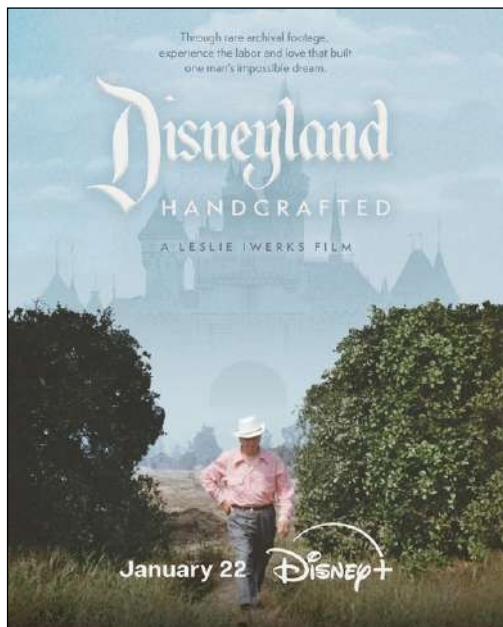


Photo courtesy Walt Disney Studios Canada

equal pay after working in a Goodyear factory for 20 years. Gifted actress, Patricia Clarkson, portrays Ledbetter, who would go all the way to the Supreme Court to have her case heard, a case built on the fact that she was paid half what her male coworkers were paid simply because she was a woman.

First time film director (but a veteran TV director), Rachel Feldman, has delivered a powerful film about one woman's fight to have her voice heard and respected – something then new President, Barack Obama did when he first took office in 2009. *Lilly* – which was selected "Best of the Fest" at the 2025 Palm Springs International Film Festival, and "Best Social Justice Drama" at the 2025 Santa Barbara International Film Festival – is made even more powerful by the supporting cast, including John Benjamin Hickey and Thomas Sadoski. *Lilly* is available for home viewing. www.lillymovie.com

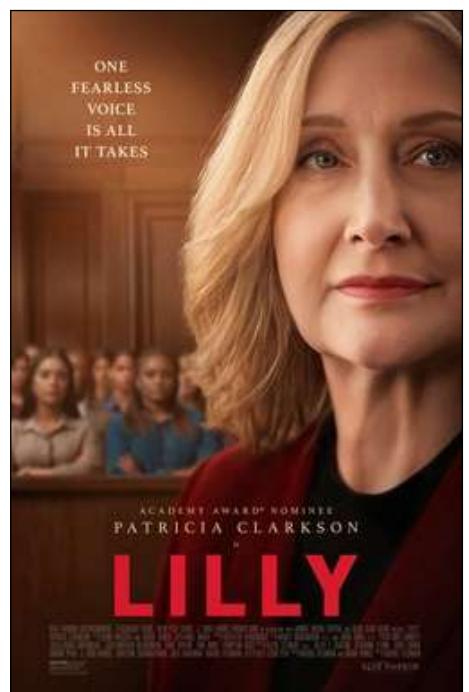


Photo courtesy Lillyfilm.com

THE VIEW #3 – PIKE RIVER

Another film recommendation that involves real life heroes comes to us from New Zealand. It's called *Pike River*, and it tells the story of the 2010 Pike River Mine disaster that killed 29 miners. Through the years long battle to get justice for the family members, two grief-stricken women emerged, Anna Osborne and Sonya Rockhouse, who, along with the rest of the community, were determined to hold the mining company, and the New Zealand government accountable. Like the film *Lilly* (and other films before it like *Norma Rae* and *Erin Brockovich*) *Pike River* is another example of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, sometimes hesitant at first, but finding strength to fight on against an often much stronger foe. Multiple Emmy nominee, Melanie Lynskey (*Yellow Jackets*, *The Last of Us*), and New Zealand's Robyn Malcolm (*After the Party*, *Outrageous Fortune*) both deliver powerful performances in the leads. *Pike River* is available for home viewing. www.vortexpix.com



Photo courtesy Vortex Media

Natasha Burnett is a beloved character in *When Calls the Heart*

Natasha Burnett was born in Surrey, England and she began her stage career starring in the *Magic of Motown* show as Diana Ross. She toured the UK and Europe extensively with this show before moving to Vancouver. Our City Tonight sat down recently with the British actress and singer to talk about her diverse career.

OCT: You were nineteen when you played Diana Ross and that seemed to be a perfect role for you. However, in the same production you were also asked to perform as Michael Jackson. How did you manage to pull off these two different performers?

NB: It all started with Diana Ross, and that was the role I played most of the time. They then discovered that the male lead singer found it difficult to reach those high notes for that role. This was portraying a young Michael when he was part of the Jackson 5 so they enlisted my help because I was the only one that could do the quick changes and be convincing in both roles.

OCT: We grew up with Michael Jackson and Diana Ross so we are big fans of course. Even though the script was laid out for you, how were you tackling such a challenging role portraying Diana Ross?

NB: I watched a lot of footage on YouTube. I remember seeing one of her videos, I believe it was in 1986 when she was performing outdoors in Central Park, and it was raining. I will always remember this video: she was singing in the rain and said she was going to stay out there the whole night if the fans were going to stay with her. That inclusive and warm attitude is what I wanted to try to embody. I wanted to capture her nature and her warmth, and I wanted to portray that, and capture that, for the audience.

OCT: You have lived in other parts of the world, including Sydney, Australia. Then you decided to make the move to Vancouver, and you've been working nonstop from what I've seen so far. You have worked in a lot of different shows, including *iZombie* and you also were on the popular show *Tracker*, which is also shot in Vancouver. We have not seen your film *Legend of the Lost Locket* yet, but not only are you starring in this, but you also produced it. You're obviously looking to build your resume by adding more things to your career. What was it like producing and acting in the same project?



Photo courtesy Shimon Photo
From Britain to Vancouver a talented
actor and singer

NB: I learned quite a lot in a short space of time. and It's one thing to be the lead of a movie when you have all the lines to learn as well as creating your character, but when you are producing as well, I found that there were moments when I had to put out fires before the director arrived on set. Your brain is working at 100,000 miles an hour. I even found myself realizing that when there were a couple scenes in the movie where it was set in the 1800s, I absolutely wanted to be there to ensure that what they were saying sounded as British as I needed it to. Even though I didn't need to be on set, I made sure I went in at that time with everybody else so I could just be there to oversee. For some reason, even though I was working such long hours and was in almost every single scene, I was still attached to everything else that is going on even when it is not involving me specifically as an actor.

OCT: In 2021, you became a regular cast member on the TV series *When Calls the Heart*. This is one of those shows that is a global juggernaut in terms of its massive popularity. It has been on since 2014, and it's aired here in Canada and the United States. No one thought it would become this big, but you've got fans around the world. You

have the role of Minnie. What does it feel like to join a show like this that's already a huge success?

NB: You have to get the lay of the land once you get onto the set because you're not sure of the dynamic that's already there. Coming onto the set they have the same crew as well as cast and they all made me feel comfortable because it was like you were joining a family.

OCT: It's interesting when talking to actors like yourself who have been on a show for a long time as it's always helpful when you have the support of the writers. They can help your character grow each year. Your character had a very important year this year in season 12. Can we talk a little bit about that for your fans?

NB: Before we start a season, we always have a chat with the showrunner and discuss where we think our character can go and where we'd like our character to go. We like to try and find what story we may want to tell for the next year. So, we always have a baseline for where we think we want to go. We have always seen Minnie's character in positions where she was always in charge and always knew what she was doing. Minnie had an answer for everything. She really didn't though, so that's what we wanted to look at this year. We wanted to develop and make her character more complex because the fans did really love that she was that type of character. She seemed to always keep things together and always had her head on right. She was very calm and collected so we wanted to shake things up a bit because we've never really seen her having fun. We had never seen her fall apart, so this was an opportunity that we wanted to use to try and tell a slightly different story for her.

OCT: It is not surprising that a show like this has had such a great response. It is a family show and it's sentimental, set in an old-fashioned setting. I think people really need this kind of storytelling.

NB: It became very popular after Covid and in fact even during Covid when nothing was being produced. The world needed something light and I think we got a burst of fans at that point because people just wanted to watch something light and that felt good. Since then, it has just continued to grow. Season 13 of "When Calls the Heart" is airing & streaming now and you can watch this filmed interview in full at richmond sentinel.ca/videos.



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