



ABBOTSFORD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*THE VOICE OF
ABBOTSFORD
BUSINESS.*

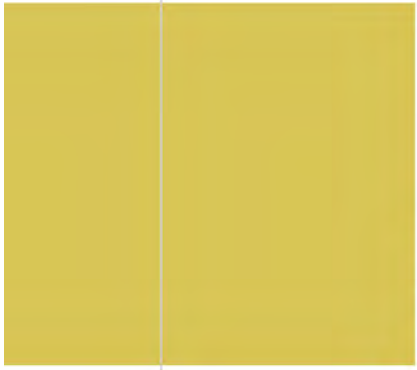


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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As my time as President of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce comes to a close, I recognize what an honour and a privilege it has been to serve this dynamic and resilient business community; one that continues to inspire with its innovation, collaboration, and drive for progress. The Chamber of Commerce and its network of members provides ample opportunity for individuals in the community to connect, knocking down barriers and allowing for cohesion across sectors. By investing time into the Chamber, you are promoting personal and professional development; any one interaction could spark a new, meaningful connection.

When I stepped into this role last March, I did so with a vision: to strengthen relationships, create opportunities, and support businesses in navigating the challenges of an evolving economy. Over the past year, I have watched the Chamber grow, not just in numbers, but in impact, influence, and its ability to create meaningful change.

The groundwork we have laid this year will continue to support businesses, drive economic development, and create opportunities for years to come. I have no doubt that under the leadership of our Board of Directors, CEO Alex Mitchell, and the entire Chamber team, this organization will continue to champion progress and strengthen our business ecosystem.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our Chamber team, board members, partners, and, most importantly, our members. Your dedication, resilience, and passion for this community are what make the Abbotsford Chamber a driving force for economic growth and innovation.

To those I have had the privilege of working alongside—thank you for your trust, your collaboration, and your unwavering commitment to making Abbotsford a place where businesses and entrepreneurs thrive. I look forward to seeing the Chamber continue to flourish, and I remain committed to supporting its ongoing success moving forward.

Thank you for having me as your President.



Kevin Mierau

President, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is situated in the traditional territory of the Stó:lō peoples, with our closest neighbours being the Máthełwi, Semá:th, and Kwantlen First Nations.

The Stó:lō have an intrinsic relationship with what they refer to as S'olh Temexw (Our Sacred Land); therefore, we express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living and working in this territory.



INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAMBER

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic, non-partisan organization that has been championing the local business community for over 110 years. Established in 1913 and nationally accredited for organizational excellence, the Chamber represents nearly 800 businesses and organizations from across Abbotsford, ranging from small and family-run operations to large employers and institutions.

The Abbotsford Chamber is deeply engaged in building a resilient and inclusive business community, working alongside local leaders, government, and industry partners to build a robust and thriving business community.

Supporting businesses of all sizes and years of establishment, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is a valuable partner for **success, advocacy, benefits, and connection** in the heart of the Fraser Valley.

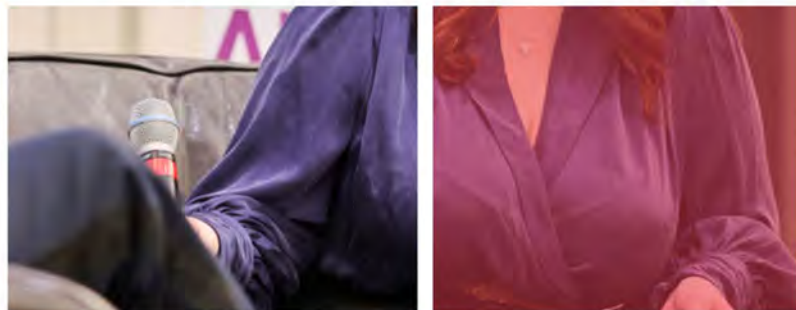
Our Vision

To be known as the most vibrant and relevant business association in B.C.



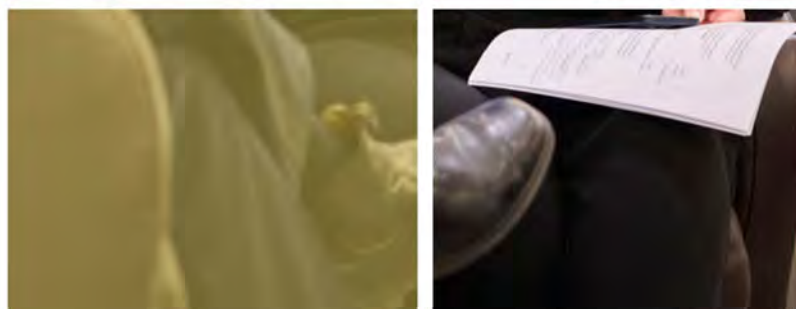
Our Mission

To build and sustain a thriving business community.



Our Core Values

Genuine relationships, vibrant culture and growth orientation.





WHAT WE DO

*THE VOICE OF
ABBOTSFORD BUSINESS.*



ADVOCATE.

Moving the needle on policy and ensuring that the challenges facing businesses are heard at every level of government in Canada. The Chamber is delivering a bold economic vision for the future of the Fraser Valley.

BENEFIT.

Providing access to business resources, workshops, entrepreneurship programs, the Chambers Plan and Member Perks, to engaging the network on advocacy, networking, and business-to-business connections and marketing opportunities.

CONNECT.

Delivering high-impact events that add value and create opportunities for new and meaningful B2B connections across the community.

2024 PILLAR PARTNERS



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



KEVIN MIERAU
PRESIDENT



PAUL PENNER
VICE PRESIDENT



KATIE YU
TREASURER



SAM VARING
SECRETARY



LOREN TAVES
DIRECTOR



JOSH REYNOLDS
DIRECTOR



RAVI SIDHU
DIRECTOR



**BRITTANY
TUCKER**
DIRECTOR



KAMNA SURI
DIRECTOR



LEE KITSON
DIRECTOR



**KHYATI
SHETTY**
DIRECTOR



STEVE CZECK
DIRECTOR

STAFF



**ALEX
MITCHELL**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



**NATHALIE
DARWIN**
ADMINISTRATION &
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER



**SAMANTHA
PALMER**
BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT
SPECIALIST



**TAYLOR
CARLSON**
PR & MARKETING
COORDINATOR

2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR WORK AS A CHAMBER

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY & EFFICIENCY

- Increased team efficiency and automation of administrative tasks
- Improvement opportunities for member engagement with InfoHub
- Encouraging Board engagement with business community



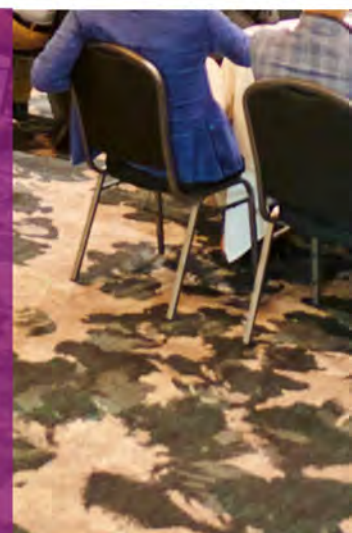
MEANINGFUL VALUE PROPOSITION

- Member retention goal of 85% nearly met, business are being challenged with rising costs of operation
- 10% growth in overall membership for 2024
- Development in defining the Chamber's value proposition and communication strategy



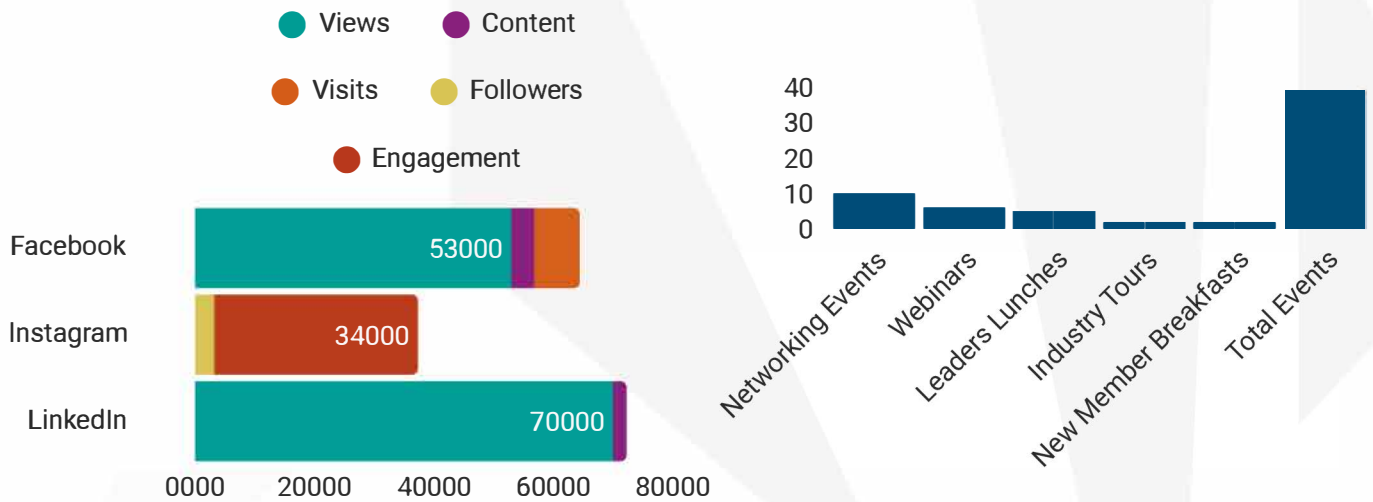
RELATIONSHIPS, ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP

- Created at least one meaningful touchpoint with every member
- Developed high impact programming to increase community presence, addressing regional issues, regional leadership, developing concerns, networking, and building meaningful relationships



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce has celebrated a membership growth of nearly 10% over the past year, realizing an increase to just over 630 members in 2023 to 730 members in 2024. This growth reflects the Chamber’s focused efforts to foster deeper member engagement, expand networking opportunities, and strengthen relationship within the community.



39 Events,
Over 2366 Attendees

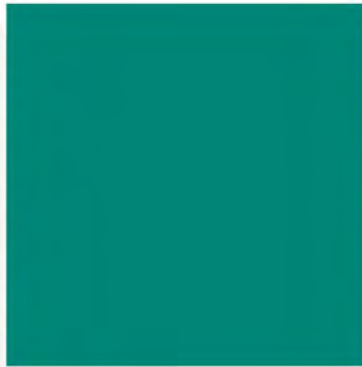
143 New Members

16 New Member Benefits



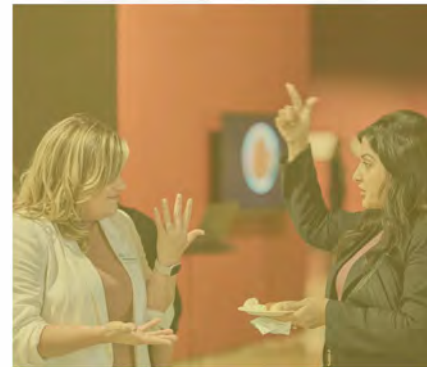
CHAMBER PROGRAMS & NEW EVENTS

2024 proved to be a year of transformation for the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, with the introduction of a new team of staff, new events and opportunities underscored by accessibility, and new initiatives focused on driving engagement to underrepresented groups in the Abbotsford Community.



2024 brought with it the launch of the Women’s Leadership Council (WLC), a milestone that marked a new chapter in empowering female professionals and fostering leadership excellence in Abbotsford.

Their inaugural event, “Empowering Excellence: Lessons in Leadership” focused on exploring the challenges that women face in business and leadership settings. With the combined involvement and participation of a panel of women leaders and all those in the audience, the WLC drove meaningful conversations about equity, mentorship, and change-making within the business community.



2024 - 2025 Women’s Leadership Council

Kim Tamminga, Chair
Lisa Huppée
Stephanie Singh
Carli Williams
Sarah De Klein
Yovini Moodley

Carla Johnson
Erin Bettger
Jasmine Bhambra
Harpreet Khangura
Sara Albert
Naomi Pisiso

To recognize the economic output generated by Abbotsford's manufacturing sector, the Chamber of Commerce hosted its first-ever Manufacturing Industry Tour, stopping at facilities like BARR Plastics, RAD Torque, Reimer Hardwoods, and StructureCraft. This was in addition to the 2024 Annual Agricultural Industry Tour that the Chamber executed, visiting important agriculture hubs such as Fraser Valley Gleaners, Campbell's Gold Honey Farm & Meadery, Fraser Valley Biogas, and Maan Farms.



In 2024, the Company of Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs (CYPE) experienced significant growth and momentum, hosting a diverse range of networking events and learning opportunities. Highlights included multiple Sip Series events, the Summer and Winter Socials, and, most notably, the inaugural mentorship event in partnership with the Esposito Family Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (EFCIE) at the University of the Fraser Valley. The "Meet the Mentors" event saw renowned leaders in Abbotsford engage with students and CYPE members as Mentors, facilitating engaging conversations on professional growth while sharing valuable insights drawn from their experiences and expertise. The event signified a pivotal moment for CYPE in defining the formation of future leaders in Abbotsford, leaving both mentors and mentees feeling inspired and reflective.

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2024 - 2025 Company of Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs Council

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Sam Varing, Chair | Gurnoor Sidhu |
| Lauren Olynick, Vice Chair | James Kehler |
| Whitney Fordham | Peter Stauffer |
| Khurram Javed | Harman Rathore |
| Taylor Carlson | Jasmit Singh Phulka |



ADVOCACY

DELIVERING A BOLD ECONOMIC VISION FOR THE FRASER VALLEY.



In 2024, Chambers of Commerce of the Fraser Valley came together as a unified voice addressing critical issues facing the business community in our region. The Fraser Valley Business Coalition (FVBC) was formed to leverage the collective strength and expertise of the Chambers of Commerce in the Fraser Valley, bringing about positive change and advocating for the betterment of business in the region.

In May, the FVBC hosted the inaugural Fraser Valley Economic Summit, an event to deliver a bold economic vision for the region. The summit brought together policymakers like municipal leaders, Premier David Eby, and industry leaders to discuss pressing economic issues in the Fraser Valley and chart a course for sustainable growth. With thought-provoking panels and actionable insights, the summit emphasized the importance of unified regional strategies to address evolving challenges.

The Coalition continues to convene for high level meetings with government representatives, develop regional policy recommendations, and ensure a pro-business agenda is front of mind for candidates of all parties during election times.



ADVOCACY

TAKING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

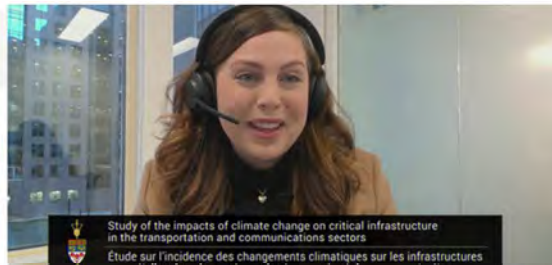
The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is amplifying the voice of local businesses and taking a leadership role on regional and national issues. Through strategic advocacy, high-profile media contributions, and direct engagement with policymakers, the Chamber is shaping the conversation on key challenges impacting the region's economy and infrastructure.

A key focus has been advocating for resilient infrastructure in the wake of climate change. The Chamber provided testimony to the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications and the Standing Committee on Finance, highlighting the devastating impact of the 2021 Sumas Prairie Flood Disaster. The flood halted the movement of people and goods, leading to an estimated \$7 billion in economic losses. By bringing attention to the region's critical infrastructure needs, the Chamber is pushing for investments that protect businesses and communities from future disasters.

The Chamber has also elevated its influence through opinion pieces in major publications such as *The Globe and Mail* and *Business in Vancouver*, ensuring that the challenges and opportunities facing Abbotsford's business community are recognized on a national scale.

Beyond advocacy, the Chamber has prioritized direct engagement between its members and decision-makers. Over the past year, it created 12 opportunities for business leaders to connect with elected officials through workshops and leaders' lunches, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

Bringing local issues to a provincial platform, the Abbotsford Chamber championed 2 policy resolutions that were passed by the BC Chamber in May. These policies advocate for an increase in post-secondary funding for student seats based on regional population growth and for modernization of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to create a new 'Agri-Industrial' land use. These policies have become key priorities in meetings with the Provincial Government.



2024 AT A GLANCE

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

MAY 2024 FV ECONOMIC SUMMIT



THE SUMMIT SHOWCASED EXAMPLES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM ACROSS B.C.

JUNE 2024 AGRICULTURE BUS TOUR

FOCUSED ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, THE BUS MADE STOPS AT FRASER VALLEY GLEANERS, CAMPBELL'S GOLD HONEY FARM & MEADERY, FRASER VALLEY BIOGAS, AND MAAN FARMS.

SEPTEMBER 2024 ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

THE ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT BROUGHT MEMBERS TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND ENJOY AN AFTERNOON OF FUN NETWORKING WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR BUSINESSES.

SEPTEMBER 2024 EMPOWERING EXCELLENCE



THE WLC'S FIRST EVENT FOCUSED ON EMPOWERING WOMEN AND UNPACKING LEADERSHIP.

OCTOBER 2024 ALL CANDIDATES MEETINGS

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTED ALL CANDIDATES FORUMS FOR BC MLA CANDIDATES.



OCTOBER 2024 CYPE X EFCIE | MEET THE MENTORS

CYPE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ESPOSITO FAMILY CENTRE FOR INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP, HOSTED THEIR FIRST EVER MENTORSHIP EVENT FOCUSED ON BUILDING CONNECTIONS.

NOVEMBER 2024 28TH ANNUAL BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS



A NIGHT SPENT CELEBRATING STELLAR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY.

DECEMBER 2024 LEADERS LUNCH WITH MAYOR SEIMENS

THE MAYOR'S LUNCH PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW OF ABBOTSFORD'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE, WITH UPDATES TO THE BUSINESS OF DOING GOOD REPORT



2024 AT A GLANCE

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



MOVING INTO 2025 WITH INTENTION: A PURPOSE FOCUSED CHAMBER

For 2025, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is committed to moving into the new year with clear intention and purpose, realizing the strategic objectives set out by the Chamber Board. Informed by member feedback and the evolving needs of our business community, the Chamber is focusing on three key priorities that will drive value, relevance, and impact for our members and the broader region.

Here's how we are moving forward with intention:

1. Programming that Helps Businesses Succeed

In 2025, the Chamber will focus on delivering practical, impactful programming that helps businesses improve profitability, strengthen financial literacy, access capital, and grow a skilled workforce. We are committed to offering education and tools that businesses can immediately apply to improve outcomes.

Key initiatives include:

- Workshops and leadership series designed to address real business challenges – from accessing grants and funding to growing revenues.
- 2-3 targeted workshops annually focused on improving profitability, including opportunities around grants, increasing efficiency, and revenue growth.
- Educational sessions on workforce development, helping businesses find, train, and retain talent in a competitive market.

Our goal is simple: help members succeed and thrive by providing them with the knowledge and connections they need to grow stronger businesses.



A blue banner with white text that reads "2024 FRASER VALLEY ECONOMIC SUMMIT".

2. Deepening the Membership Network

We recognize that community and connection are at the heart of a strong Chamber. Every business – whether a startup or a long-standing organization – benefits from meaningful relationships and peer support. The Chamber is committed to exploring the wants and needs of our members, and connecting them to each other, resources, and opportunities.

In 2025, we will intentionally deepen our membership network by:

- Hosting strategic networking events that go beyond handshakes to foster real, valuable connections.
- Exploring and considering alternatives to traditional platforms and methods for engagement amongst members.



3. Showing Up for the Abbotsford Business Community

Our members have made it clear: they want a Chamber that shows up – in the community, at the table, and in key conversations. In 2025, we are committed to being visible, vocal, and active champions for business in Abbotsford.

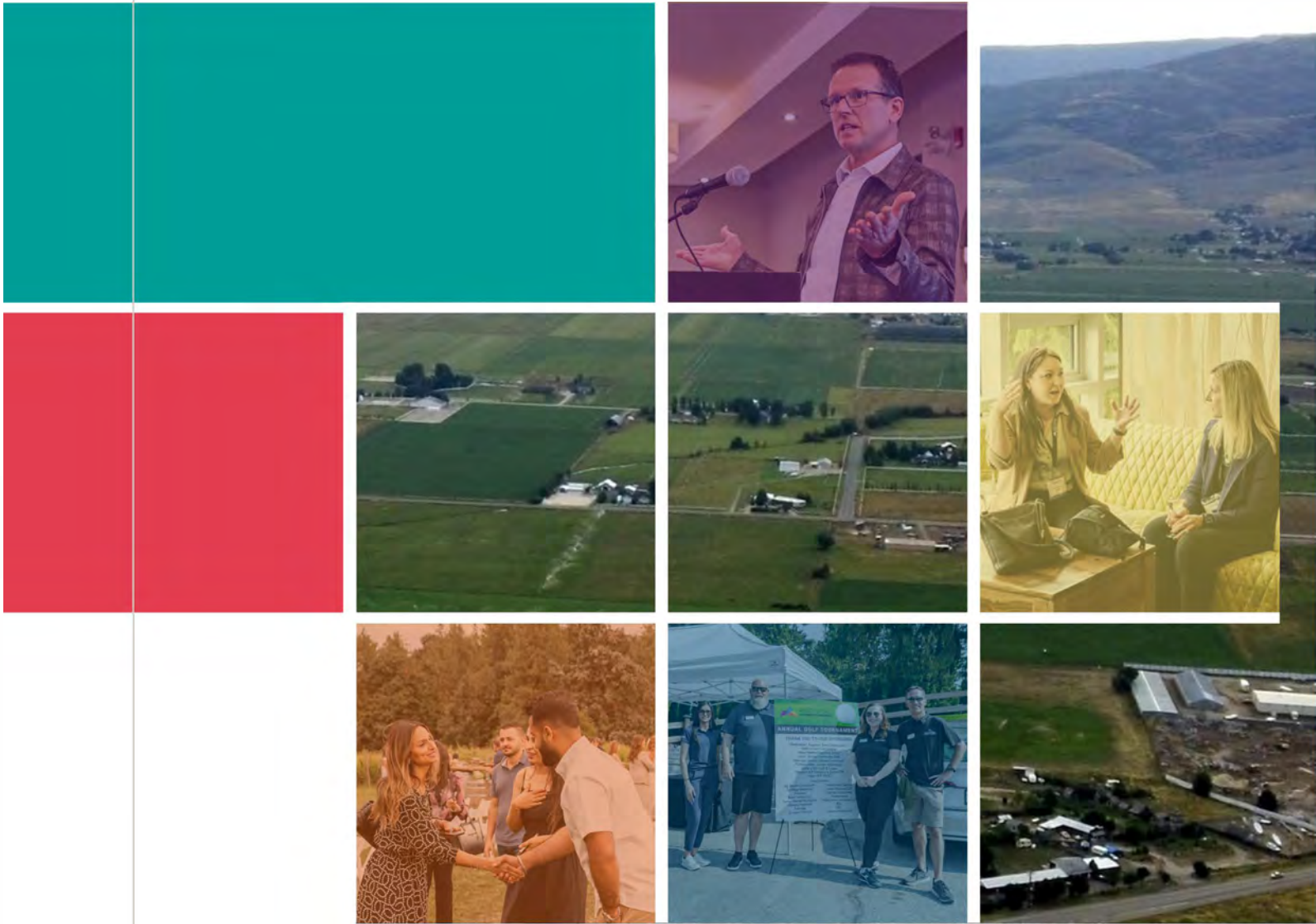
This means:

- Increasing our presence in the community to build meaningful relationships and ensure the Chamber remains relevant and responsive.
- Addressing regional issues and emerging concerns that affect businesses, from workforce gaps to infrastructure needs.
- Championing business-friendly policies, advocating for reduced red tape, and pushing for infrastructure investments that support business growth and resilience.
- Strengthening our communications and marketing, so members know what we're doing – and how we're working for them.

By showing up consistently and intentionally, we will ensure the Chamber remains a trusted voice and essential partner for Abbotsford's business community.

Together, let's move into 2025 with intention and impact.





THANK YOU!



**ABBOTSFORD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



+1 604 859 9651



207-32900 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford BC V2S 5A1



www.abbotsfordchamber.com