



**ABBOTSFORD  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

*THE VOICE OF  
ABBOTSFORD  
BUSINESS.*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	<b>3</b>
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO	<b>4</b>
ABOUT THE CHAMBER	<b>5</b>
2025 STRATEGIC PLAN	<b>7</b>
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & ENGAGEMENT	<b>8</b>
CHAMBER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS	<b>9</b>
ADVOCACY	<b>11</b>
2025 AT A GLANCE	<b>15</b>

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Adversity Is a Test. Recent trade disruptions between Canada and the United States have created real adversity for Canadian businesses. Long-standing assumptions about seamless cross-border movement of goods, predictable supply chains, and stable input costs have been shaken. For many, this moment feels uncertain. But adversity is not just a setback – it is a test. And like any test, it forces choices. Do we pursue win-win solutions with partners and customers, or retreat into zero-sum thinking? Do we innovate and challenge entrenched norms, or cling to the familiar? Have we, in some corners, lost the entrepreneurial edge that built this country's prosperity?

In challenging times, the instinct to cut costs and reduce exposure is understandable. But there is a profound difference between improving and simply saving. Improvement strengthens long-term competitiveness. Pure cost-cutting can hollow it out. Similarly, businesses can compete by adding value – or by reducing price. This is the test Canadian business now faces: grit or surrender. Across the country, we see examples of grit. At the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, we have been encouraged – and inspired – by our members in the local business community. Rather than retreat, they have leaned in.

We have advocated for more efficient and reliable transportation corridors, including critical upgrades to Highway 1 and meaningful flood mitigation efforts that protect our economic lifelines. We have pushed all levels of government to remove unnecessary barriers for builders and developers who are ready to bring much-needed housing to market. When businesses are prepared to invest, hire, and grow, government's role should be to enable – not obstruct.

We have also focused on connection. In uncertain times, strong networks matter more than ever. By creating opportunities for our members to engage, collaborate, and share ideas, we strengthen not just individual companies but the broader regional economy. Our CEO Alex Mitchell has been involved in trade missions nationally and internationally in order to increase trade opportunities for local manufacturers. Resilience is rarely built alone.

I am proud to have been part of this Chamber. I am proud of Alex and her team – their relentless commitment to members continues to impress. I am equally proud of the dedicated board members who have supported me in leading the organization. I especially want to recognize Sam Varing, who has been exceptional as Vice President and will be even more impressive as next year's President.

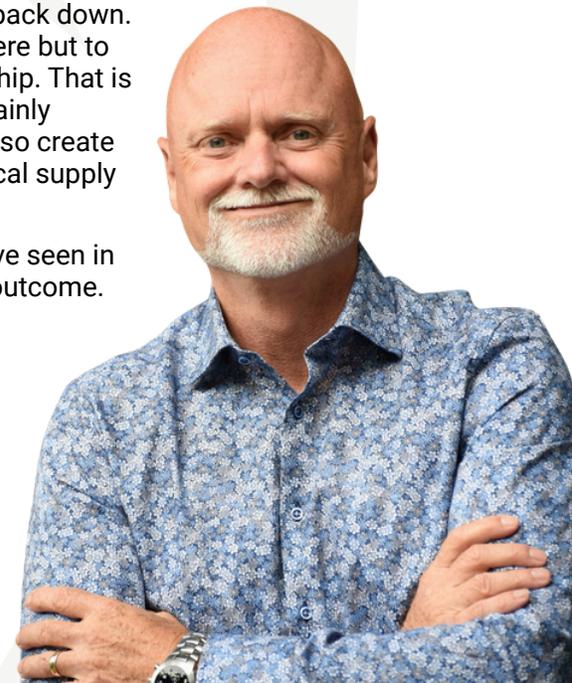
Most of all, I am proud of our members. You face adversity and do not back down. You adapt. You reimagine. You invest. You find ways not only to persevere but to thrive in a changing environment. That is the essence of entrepreneurship. That is our advantage. Trade disruptions may test our assumptions. They certainly challenge our patience. They may even expose weaknesses. But they also create opportunity – to diversify markets, to innovate processes, to deepen local supply chains, and to reaffirm our commitment to value creation.

This moment will define us. Adversity is a test. And based on what I have seen in Abbotsford and across our business community, I am confident in the outcome.

You will choose grit over surrender.  
You will choose innovation over status quo.  
You will pass this test.

## Paul Penner

President, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

This past year has been difficult for business, and I want to acknowledge that directly. I understand what it takes to build and sustain an organization, and how much harder it becomes when conditions are constantly shifting.

The year has been defined by volatility. Global trade uncertainty, tariff pressures, currency fluctuations, and supply chain disruptions created challenges that few could have anticipated. Early in the year, data from the Canadian Chamber identified Abbotsford as the most tariff-exposed city in B.C., underscoring the urgency of the moment. In response, the Chamber acted decisively - providing guidance, resources, and advocacy to ensure local businesses could respond and adapt.

Advocacy is where the Chamber's role is both most critical and often the least visible. It takes place in ongoing meetings with government, detailed policy submissions, and sustained engagement on issues that affect every business of every size. This work ensures that no business faces challenges alone, and it reflects a broader truth: businesses of all sizes are essential to jobs, community, and the local economy.

For more than 113 years, the Chamber has been a consistent advocate for Abbotsford, representing your interests and ensuring your voice is heard.

Even in a challenging year, the strength of our community was evident. The Chamber convened more than 55 events, engaging over 3,000 business leaders across the region. We delivered targeted programming on trade compliance, workforce development, and regulatory change, providing members with the insight and tools needed to make informed decisions. Our communications platform also expanded significantly, strengthening our ability to advocate, inform, and position Abbotsford within the regional and national conversation.

Leadership development continued to be a strategic priority. Through the Company of Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs program, more than 120 emerging leaders accessed mentorship, professional development, and meaningful connections within the local business community. The Women's Leadership Community, guided by its Council, further strengthened networks across sectors, creating space for experienced and emerging leaders to share expertise and support one another's growth.

Canada's strength has always been its ability to work collectively through periods of uncertainty. That principle applies here in Abbotsford. When businesses are supported, when barriers are overcome, and when there is confidence for the private sector to invest, the broader economy succeeds to create shared prosperity. This is the mission and this is the future we're building towards.

It is a privilege to do this work on your behalf. Representing Abbotsford's businesses, advocating for your interests, and ensuring your voice is heard is a responsibility we take seriously.

Thank you to every one of our 800+ members, our Board of Directors, and our staff team for your resilience, leadership, and engagement. Together our Abbotsford Chamber network will continue to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, keeping Abbotsford's economy strong and competitive.

## Alex Mitchell

CEO, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce



# 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 over 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.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**PAUL PENNER**  
PRESIDENT



**SAM VARING**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**JOSH REYNOLDS**  
SECRETARY



**JIMMY SEVERN**  
TREASURER



**JENNIFER MENCE EWART**  
DIRECTOR



**KAMNA SURI**  
DIRECTOR



**LOREN TAVES**  
DIRECTOR



**STEVE COUPER**  
DIRECTOR



**STEVE CZECK**  
DIRECTOR



**VINEET VERGHESE**  
DIRECTOR



**KHYATI SHETTY**  
DIRECTOR



**JOVE LOEWEN**  
DIRECTOR

## WHAT WE DO

*THE VOICE OF ABBOTSFORD BUSINESS.*

### ADVOCATE.

As an accredited Chamber of Commerce, we represent the business community and advocate at the provincial and national levels to support growth, competitiveness, and a strong economy in Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley.

### BENEFIT.

Membership with the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce provides businesses with networking opportunities, professional development, Member-to-Member Perks, and access to affordable group benefits that support growth and success.

### CONNECT.

Connection is at the heart of the Abbotsford Chamber experience. Our events and programs bring together business leaders and entrepreneurs to connect, learn, and grow.

## 2025 PILLAR PARTNERS



# 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

## OUR WORK AS A CHAMBER

### OPERATIONAL CAPACITY & EFFICIENCY

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

### MEANINGFUL VALUE PROPOSITION

- 10% growth in overall membership for 2025
- Development in defining the Chamber's value proposition and communication strategy

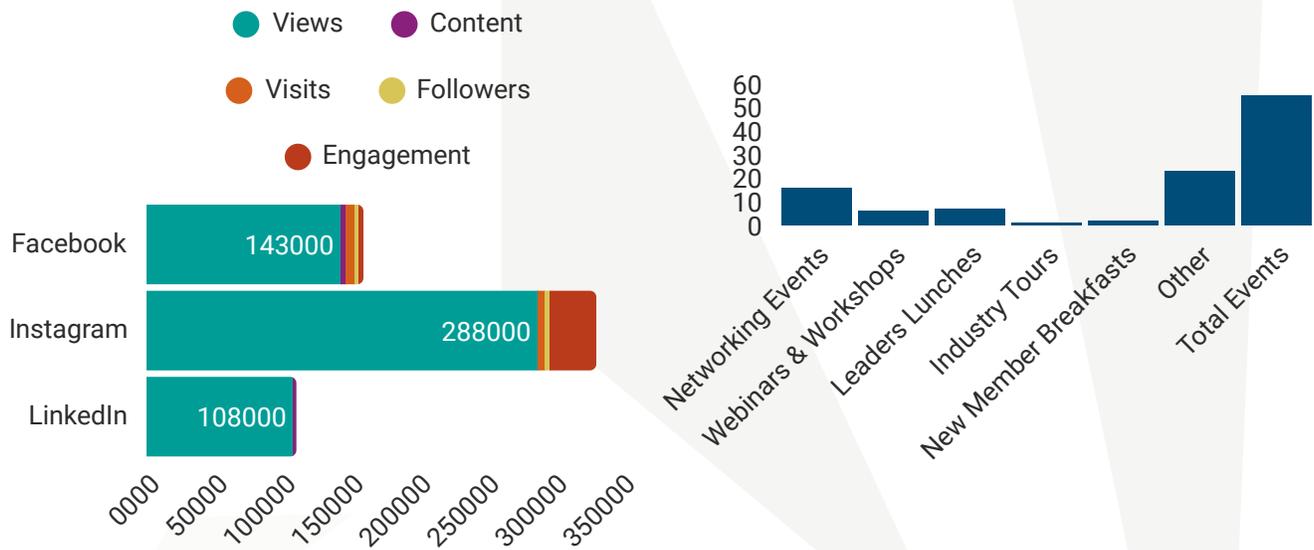
### RELATIONSHIPS, ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP

- 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 experienced strong membership growth of nearly 10% over the past year, increasing from just over 730 members in 2024 to more than 800 in 2025. This positive momentum highlights the Chamber’s continued commitment to enhancing member engagement, creating meaningful networking opportunities, and building stronger connections across the local business community.



**55 Events,**  
Over 3,098 Attendees

**195 New Members**



# CHAMBER PROGRAMS

## Company of Young Professionals

CYPE is a cutting-edge program comprised of the next generation of leaders work to address business-related challenges that are in the Fraser Valley. With the support of program sponsors the CYPE Program has grown to over 100+ in 2025! In addition, CYPE now has a full council with 10 members, a communication committee, and an events committee. They also began an Elevate your Edge series in partnership with the University of the Fraser Valley to build leadership & entrepreneurship skills.

**Take a look at some photos from this year's CYPE Events...**

### 2025/26 CYPE Council

- Lauren Olynick, Chair
- Whitney Fordham, Vice Chair
- Amanda Mango
- Benjamin Mehrer
- Connor Kidd
- Gurnoor Sidhu
- Harman Rathore
- James Kehler
- Sean Lung
- Taylor Carlson



March 10, 2025 - CYPE - EFCIE Elevate Your Edge



July 23, 2025 - CYPE Summer Social



September 5, 2025 - CYPE at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament



December 2, 2025 - CYPE Holiday Mingler

## Women's Leadership Community

The Women's Leadership Community (WLC), now in its third year, has established itself as a core program of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce. WLC has built a community of empowerment and support for women in business.

This dynamic network is dedicated to fostering leadership, providing mentorship, and creating opportunities for professional growth among women in the business community. The community has now grown into a volunteer council of thirteen women, all from diverse business backgrounds.



### 2025/26 WLC Council

- Carli Williams, Chair
- Carla Johnson
- Dr. Funmilola Iyiola
- Erica Coleman
- Erin Bettger
- Heather Branscombe
- Kim Tamminga
- Lacy Donald
- Megan Faber
- Naomi Pisis
- Sara Albert
- Sarah De Klein
- Yovini Moodley



# ADVOCACY

## CHAMPIONING ABBOTSFORD BUSINESS

The past year presented significant challenges for businesses across Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley. Economic uncertainty, global trade tensions, tariff pressures, flooding risks, and rising operating costs created real-time impacts for many in our business community. Through it all, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce remained focused on its core role: ensuring the voice of business is heard where decisions are made. Representing more than 800 members, the largest membership in the Chamber's 110+ year history - the Chamber continued to advocate for policies that support economic growth, strengthen business resilience, and position Abbotsford for long-term prosperity.

In September 2025, the Chamber achieved a renewal of National Accreditation through 2030 from the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada (CACC) - the highest standard of Chamber excellence in Canada. Abbotsford is one of only eight Chambers in B.C. to receive this recognition.

Accreditation is a formal acknowledgment that the Chamber meets rigorous national standards in leadership, governance, and operations. It affirms the Chamber's alignment with best practices, strategic focus for long-term sustainability, dependable governance, and strong financial controls. This prestigious designation strengthens our platform for advocacy, enhances credibility with members, corporate sponsors, and funders, and underscores our capacity to deliver results for the Abbotsford business community.

Our advocacy work spans local, provincial, and national levels. Through engagement with government officials, collaboration with regional and national Chamber networks, and strategic media engagement, we brought the priorities of Abbotsford businesses directly to decision-makers in Ottawa, Victoria, and across the Fraser Valley. These efforts ensure that local perspectives are represented in policies that shape the economy, infrastructure investment, and the future of key industries.

At its core, the Chamber's advocacy is grounded in listening to our members. Through consultations, roundtables, and ongoing dialogue with the business community, we work to ensure that our policy positions reflect the real experiences and priorities of Abbotsford employers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders.



# KEY ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

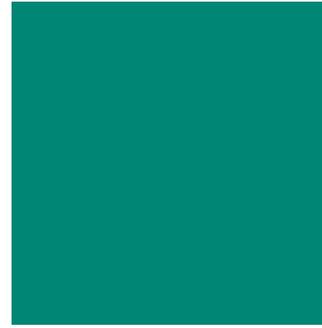
Throughout the year, the Chamber focused its advocacy efforts on several critical priorities that directly affect Abbotsford's business environment and economic future.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

Reliable infrastructure is essential to the movement of goods, services, and people. As a key gateway community in the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford relies on strong transportation networks to support trade and regional growth.

The Chamber continued to advocate for the completion of Highway 1 expansion and broader regional transportation improvements, recognizing the importance of efficient corridors for businesses that rely on the movement of goods across the Lower Mainland and beyond.

In June 2025, Chamber CEO Alex Mitchell authored an op-ed in Business in Vancouver underscoring that Canada's economy cannot grow if the Fraser Valley is left behind - highlighting how critical infrastructure, flood mitigation, and supply chain reliability in this corridor underpin national competitiveness and access to global markets.



## FLOOD MITIGATION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Flooding remains one of the most significant risks facing Abbotsford's businesses and agricultural sector. The Chamber actively pushed for long-term flood mitigation infrastructure and funding at the local, provincial, and national levels.

At the provincial level, the Chamber secured key policy wins at the BC Chamber AGM, including:

- **Floods: An Emerging Economic Threat Requiring Action** - establishing a funding contribution protocol to invest in critical infrastructure in areas at risk of flooding, and
- **Increasing Industrial Land Supply** - conducting a review of agriculturally zoned land to address the need for industrial land to enable economic activity.

Both policies received strong support and demonstrate Abbotsford's leadership in shaping provincial business advocacy. At the national level, the Chamber's advocacy resulted in a policy win recognizing floods as an economic threat requiring coordinated federal action, reinforcing infrastructure, insurance, and emergency planning needs.



## TRADE, TARIFFS, AND COMPETITIVENESS

Global trade dynamics and tariff pressures created new challenges for many businesses, particularly those involved in manufacturing, agriculture, and cross-border trade. The Chamber raised concerns about the impact of tariffs and trade uncertainty on local companies and emphasized the importance of policies that support competitive exporters, reduce cost pressures on small businesses, and strengthen Canada's position in global markets.

In response to heightened trade tensions with the U.S., Abbotsford Chamber staff participated in a major cross-border mission to Washington, D.C., joining more than 30 national and industry associations to reinforce Canada-U.S. trade ties amid rising protectionism. To help members navigate these challenges, we also relaunched the U.S. Tariff Resource Hub, providing timely information and guidance for businesses impacted by evolving trade policies.

Further supporting trade readiness, the Chamber, in partnership with the World Trade Centre Vancouver, hosted "Exploring Trade: A Joint Initiative to Open Doors Beyond B.C." on June 20th. The event offered Fraser Valley businesses the opportunity to deepen their understanding of export markets and compliance with international trade agreements, with a focus on CUSMA. Featuring local success stories and expert insights, the event empowered businesses to compete in a volatile global marketplace and reinforced Abbotsford's position as a resilient manufacturing and export hub.



## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Abbotsford plays a vital role in Canada's agricultural economy and food system. This year, the Chamber achieved a national policy win at the Canadian Chamber AGM calling for food security to be recognized as a national security issue, along with the establishment of a coordinated National Food Security Strategy. As Canada's agricultural capital, generating over \$3.8 billion in annual agricultural activity, Abbotsford is uniquely positioned to lead advocacy for a stronger, more resilient national food framework that supports domestic production and emergency preparedness.

Locally, the Chamber continues to engage on ALR modernization, ensuring policies reflect the realities of modern agriculture while safeguarding farmland that underpins the region's food and economic systems.

The Chamber continues to create programs that directly support local businesses. In September 2025, we launched **Campus to Commerce**, a partnership with the University of the Fraser Valley's Centre for Experiential and Career Education (CECE). This initiative connects Abbotsford businesses with UFV student teams and faculty to tackle real business challenges at no cost. The program strengthens business capacity, unlocks innovation, and builds deeper connections with the next generation of Fraser Valley talent.



## PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

A safe and welcoming business environment is essential to vibrant commercial districts and strong local economies. The Chamber facilitated dialogue between business leaders and local public safety partners - including Fire, Police, and Emergency Health Services - to address concerns affecting businesses and strengthen collaboration across sectors. When the community faced renewed flooding pressures, the Chamber worked alongside partners to reactivate the Abbotsford Disaster Relief Fund, supporting businesses and residents impacted by the event. Ensuring that businesses have access to support during times of crisis is a critical component of economic resilience.

## LOOKING AHEAD

While the Chamber's policy, advocacy, and member support efforts have remained active and impactful over the past year, we recognize that it has been a difficult period for many businesses. Economic pressures, uncertainty, and changing global dynamics have created real challenges for our members.

Despite these headwinds, the Abbotsford Chamber remains committed to advancing policies and programs that unlock economic opportunity, reduce barriers for entrepreneurs, and support long-term investment, innovation, and workforce development. By working collaboratively with our members, partners, and governments at all levels, the Chamber continues to build a stronger, more resilient local economy. Through leadership, collaboration, and a shared commitment to progress, Abbotsford's business community is heard, supported, and positioned for a prosperous future.



# 2025 AT A GLANCE

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



CHAMBER EVENTS  
HOSTED IN 2025: **55**





+1 604 859 9651



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



[www.abbotsfordchamber.com](http://www.abbotsfordchamber.com)