

Let the sparks fly!

Igniting connections between the past and future of Powell River's economy

Dave Bowes and Patty O'Neill, owners of the Laughing Oyster restaurant, recently spoke with Groundswell leadership to further the community conversation about the future of Powell River's economy, environment and social well-being.

Tell us about your family businesses.

The economy is not a mystical force or a deity, just people doing business with people. I grew up in our family hardware and music education business; I recall seeing my folks interacting with our customers with fun, wit, laughter, hardware pondering, problem solving, philosophy, joy and sincere caring. Early on I learned that, "people will forget what you said before what you did, but they'll never forget how you made them feel".



Q&A WITH: Dave Bowes and Patty O'Neill, owners of the Laughing Oyster restaurant in Okeover Arm.

What is Groundswell?

Groundswell, the January 2014 conference at VIU, brought 160 community members together for a day of inspiration, creativity, ideas, and relationships that focused on a positive future for our region.

Participants expressed a strong interest in creating a better understanding of the dynamic links between economic, social, and environmental wellbeing.

They were also eager for the conversations that started at Groundswell to make their way into the community, and to see these efforts result in concrete actions. This series is part of that effort.

To learn more: read the full Groundswell conference report: wordpress.viu.ca/ddcc/groundswell-conference/.

Please join the conversation on Facebook: [facebook.com/ddccPR](https://www.facebook.com/ddccPR)

Groundswell integrates economic, environmental and social sustainability principles. How are these important to you?

I chose tourism as a career; it's BC's largest industry. You don't think of a collection of small business as an industry, but it delivers fresh dollars to the local economy with a high multiplier effect. The dollars go into small grocers, gas stations, local shops, hardware, automotive supply, restaurants, lodging, transportation, building, entertainment, gardening, and these are owned by small business owners and staffed by people who live here, raise families here and they all turn that money back into our economy more than once. Tourism can be a clean industry providing a wide range of employment.

What are your ideas to cultivate a thriving community?

Help small business entrepreneurs find and define the magic of what make their operation unique, and how to perpetuate it. People visit and live where there are magical people actualizing their pinnacles of performance. Remove obstacles and assist entrepreneurs with business concepts that create fun activities for the region. It really is a case of "Build it and they will come"!

What is your definition of a sustainable, healthy economy?

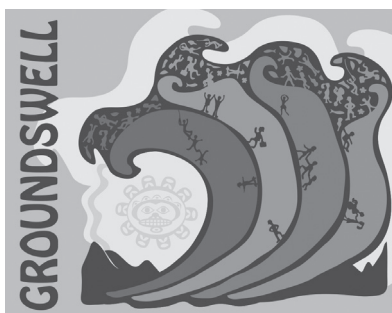
Every economy and community has money leaving to buy goods and services that aren't produced within, like food and fuel. To be sustainable, this money has to be balanced by money coming into the community. Every new industry or activity that brings new money into our economy is important. Although the region's hydro power production is owned outside our community and has almost no economic contribution to Powell River (how did that happen?); let's set a green trend and get behind the Electric Car!

What advice would you share with Powell River of the future?

Don't try to be someplace else. Learn from others but keep Powell River unique. Get behind fresh ideas that make the community a better and more interesting place to live. Embrace big ideas and eliminate rules and constraints that grind them to a halt.

What is it about Powell River that makes you proud?

In Powell River, time stands still without being out of touch. The best parts of earlier days in Canada still exist. Oh yea, and we live in the most beautiful place on earth!



GROUNDSWELL:

inspiring creativity, ideas, and relationships that advance the wellbeing of our community



Get involved in the Groundswell community audio walk project, recording soundscapes that share our region's history. Contact Megan Dulcie Dill at megandulcie@shaw.ca for more information.