
One Valley, and soon just one business licence

Courtenay, Cumberland
and Comox are signing up
for OneStop Registry

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All three Valley municipalities have agreed to join the OneStop Business Registry to allow easier and quicker service, over the Internet, for Valley businesses.

Using OneStop, businesses can apply for municipal business licences online, voiding multiple trips to different municipal offices to obtain the necessary documents.

"Our partnership with OneStop is helping us achieve our common goal—to save local businesses time and money," said Courtenay director of regulatory and property services Dave Slobodan.

The move to use OneStop comes on the heels of a recent decision to create a joint municipal business licence for Comox and Courtenay.

Until recently, businesses operating Valley-wide were required to obtain three separate business licences in order to operate in each of the three Valley municipalities.

While businesses have indicated that the long-awaited move is appreciated, those that operate Valley-wide must still get a separate business licence for

Cumberland.

"Cumberland had expressed an interest before this was done that a Comox Valley business licence would be a good idea," said Cumberland Mayor Fred Bates. "We weren't invited to the meeting with Courtenay and Comox when they decided to do it.

"Not that we balked at it or said we wouldn't be there. We were very keen on the idea way back. It would be up to those two communities to decide if they want to invite Cumberland to be part of that, and then I would take it to Cumberland council."

Courtenay Mayor Starr Winchester said that she was unaware that Cumberland was interested.

"Isn't that something," said

Winchester. "This is something that Courtenay and Comox have been talking about for years and had we known Cumberland was interested, I'm sure there's absolutely no reason why Cumberland couldn't be (included).

"That's good news. I'm glad to hear that. I'll make sure our staff gets in touch with Cumberland."

Business licences are handled differently in the regional district, where if somebody wants to open a business at an address in a rural area it is treated more as a zoning issue. A business licence is not required to simply do business in the regional district areas.

"It's not a business licence, it's an approval within the planning function," said regional district general manager of

corporate communications Leigh Carter. "We're not in the business licence business."

OneStop also allows businesses in participating municipalities to register their business with the provincial government, obtain approval for a business name, change an address or obtain a business number all in one place: www.bcbusinessregistry.ca.

"That makes it a lot faster and easier to conduct routine transactions," said Cumberland business licensing manager Georgina McDowell. "Local entrepreneurs can now interact with several levels of government through a single website."

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