



PRESS RELEASE

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Vancouver Island Green Business Certification Launches Pilot Phase

The Vancouver Island Green Business Certification (VIGBC) is a program that will help businesses become more sustainable and consumers shop accordingly. Two years in the making, the VIGBC is currently in its pilot phase with a full launch expected in early 2014.

The VIGBC was developed by the Synergy Sustainability Institute (SSI), a Victoria based non-profit with a mission to catalyze the green economy on Vancouver Island. "From our research, we found that a successful and meaningful certification would have to be affordable, completely transparent, third-party verified, resourceful and hosted by a non-profit organization," says Jill Doucette, Executive Director of SSI. "This is the only green business certification in Canada that meets all of these criteria".

The VIGBC offers three levels of certification: Silver, Gold and Green, and will begin by certifying restaurant, retail and office based businesses. Certified businesses receive marketing benefits and opportunities to engage with a roster of businesses that share similar values. Local partners have been essential to the development of the certification. "Our partners saw the need for an affordable certification that has high value, especially for smaller businesses", says Jill Doucette. Funders of the program include Vancity Credit Union, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, BC Hydro, Impact Cooperators, the Westshore Chamber of Commerce and the Capital Regional District. "Local partners have been essential to the development of the certification, and an Advisory Board provided valuable guidance."

The pilot phase is taking place from Nov 15-Dec 15, 2013 and will certify 18 businesses across three sectors. Pilot businesses include The Tartan Group, Habit Coffee, Stephen Whipp Financial, Growlies Pet Food, Bitez Cafe, The Condo Group, Forester's Bistro & Bar, The Good Planet Company, Colwood City Hall, Bill Harltley Insurance and more.

"The team at Olympic View is very proud of sustainability initiatives we have enacted to date in areas such as water and energy conservation, recycling and composting. Forester's Bistro and Bar at Olympic View looks forward partnering with the VIGBC,



combining their expertise and our passion to take those initiatives to the next level.”

- Ken Langdon, Sales and Events Coordinator, Olympic View Golf Club

After a 6-week evaluation of the pilot, the program is expected to launch in March 2014. Businesses can join the waiting list at www.VIGBC.ca.

The program plans to expand into other sectors and regional districts. "Already we have received interest from other cities from northern regional districts", says Lee Johnson, Program Manager for the VIGBC.

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