



PRESS RELEASE

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Vancouver Island Green Business Certification Announces Pilot Results

The Vancouver Island Green Business Certification (VIGBC) is a program that has already begun helping businesses become more sustainable and raise consumer awareness. The VIGBC has completed the pilot phase with 18 businesses in the restaurant, retail and office sectors participating from around the Capital Region.

With the VIGBC pilot phase now complete and program evaluation underway, the next step is for the full program to be launched in March 2014. 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. "This certification has gone through extensive research and development over the two years it has been in the works," says Jill Doucette, Executive Director of SSI. "We want to thank the 18 businesses that participated in the pilot over the past three months. Most importantly we want to recognize the leadership shown by the funding organizations that stepped forward to help launch this great initiative and support local businesses throughout the region".

Partnerships have been integral to the development and success of the certification program. "Our partners have provided the foundation for an affordable certification that is easy to execute while providing a high value for small businesses that are taking action as environmental and social stewards", 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. "As a funder of this program the District of Saanich has been able to help build a local certification program that supports local businesses that are taking action to reduce their environmental impact while promoting social responsibility in our communities," says Mark Boysen, Sustainability Manager at the District of Saanich.

The pilot phase took place from Nov 15-Dec 15, 2013 and certified 18 businesses in the Capital Region. Five businesses accomplished Green Certification: Habit Coffee (Atrium), Big Wheel Burger, Oughtred Coffee and Tea, Bill Hartley Insurance, and the City of Colwood – City Hall; 12 achieved Gold Certification: Habit Coffee (China Town), Stephen Whipp Financial at Manulife Securities, Growlies for Pets, Oak Bay



Bicycles, The Good Planet Company, Caring for First Nations Children Society, Farley Martin Notaries Public, The Condo Group, Hale Hughesman Accountants, Bobby's Kitchen, Forester's Bistro & Bar at Olympic View, Royal Bay Bakery; and 1 earned Silver Certification: Tartan Group.

The VIGBC is currently certifying restaurants, retail, and office based businesses as Silver, Gold and Green, depending on the number of actions they are taking to improve the performance of their operations. "This is a great program to participate in for businesses that want to learn how to become more environmentally responsible and as well as those that are leading change in our communities," says Lee Johnson, Program Manager for the VIGBC. "We hope, as awareness of the certification grows, that consumers will support certified businesses while motivating other businesses to participate in this program."

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