



RURAL ISLANDS ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY WEBINAR – OUTCOMES – May 7, 2020.

The May 7th RIEP Webinar features updates from Denman, Saturna and Thetis Island followed by:

1. Roundtable dialogue about the *Impact of the Pandemic on Island Food Security*
2. Island COMEBACK – Gift Certificates and Directory
3. Q & A + Additional Updates

Tony Gregson – Denman Island, Denman Works

Challenges

- Not enough data
- Massive cancellations of cultural events
- Many have needed to develop export mechanisms
- Farmers and home care support workers are tired and under a lot of pressure
- Marginal employment doesn't qualify for assistance
- Some businesses too small to qualify for assistance
- Poor internet

Recent Actions

- Formation of a COVID response committee
- Denman Works has contracted for a grant facilitator
- Programs initiated for nutrition coupons, shower coupons, volunteer food delivery, funding for a public laundry, food bank and farm to family programs

Communication

- Two media outlets distributing information
- Zoom meetings for non-government community organizations
- Business and non-profit websites
- FB bulletin boards
- RIEP and other trusted sites

Advocacy

- Islands Trust has responded to crisis
- Comox Valley Regional District has directed funds to specific non profits

Good News

- Good news is that Denman Islander's are resilient and may secretly be enjoying the isolation!



Katie Dentry – Saturna Island Liaison, CRD

Challenges

- Specialized economy
- Cancellation of all Spring/Summer Fundraiser Events, funds are used to support community non-profits which support critical infrastructure, loss could top \$100,000
- How do we go forward?

Recent Actions

- CESC SGI Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan
- CRD Business and Non-profit Survey
- Bi-weekly meetings with emergency program community Co-ordinator, Electoral Area Emergency Program Coordinator and island stakeholders

Communication

- FB page
- COVID 19 hotline
- Tourism Association FB Page
- Emergency Program Community Coordinator sends reports and requests to CRD EOC

Good news

- New Community Gardens
- Food bank support
- Take out meals sold out
- Sourcing PPE

Personal reflections

- Time to think about how to build self-reliance and resiliency within our community
- Time to consider how we diversify our economy, so we are not so dependent on tourism dollars for our survival

Doug Fenton – Thetis Island Trustee

Challenges

- Limited services and supplies, reliant on Chemainus
- Community hall renovation has been impacted by COVID, has restarted with a new contractor
- Farmers' markets will not be taking place this year

Recent Actions

- Cedar Beach Pizza and Pot of Gold Coffee are operational again

Communication

- eSpokes – daily email newsletter
- Some issues with WiFi but new WiFi now available

Advocacy

- Community hall reno has handicapped us
- Local Islands Trust Committee can now meet via Zoom

Good news

- Trincomali channel freighter free
- Real estate is hot!

Roundtable - *Impact of the Pandemic on Island Food Security,*

Elizabeth Zook, Emergency Response Professional and Tine Rossing, Climate Change Technician

- Food security is “the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle.” (World Health Organization)
- Different groups involved in food security on SSI
- How much food is being produced – 2010 only 6% comes from SSI farmers, private gardens could feed 10 people; SSI has 11,000-15,000 residents
- COVID and Food Security
 - a. Food insecurity = increases in both existing and new challenges
 - b. Changing demands, many vulnerable groups
 - c. Affecting food supply
 - d. Affecting food distribution
 - e. Increased need for food storage, only have about 3 days of food on SSI at any given time
- How To Enhance Food Security
 - a. How long is your food chain?
 - b. Need better data including food demand and how people are trying to meet their needs
 - Carry out detailed food security assessment
 - Develop a 2 pronged strategy
 - c. Short term – understand changing food demands, supply and distribution during emergency
 - d. Long term – regional island focus to enhance food self-sufficiency

- e. Question To The Group - *How do we advocate for making regional island food security a priority?*

- f. Emma Davis – Galiano Island Community Food Program
 - 12 years old
 - To build community thru food security, build food security through community
 - Other players in the food security arena on Galiano
 - Frozen meals program, meals for senior and those in need
 - Food bank
 - Hamper delivery
 - Community garden and greenhouse programs
 - Nettle Fest
 - School garden programming
 - Garden mentor program – partnering garden mentors with food gardens
 - FB groups have sprung to life due to COVID
 - Seed bank, more seeds being borrowed, membership up
 - Farmers’ Market opening in June
 - Gulf Islands Food Cooperative on Pender

Island COMEBACK – Gift Certificates and Directory – Live Victoria Day Weekend!

- Focused on people
- Easy to use
- No cost
- Island specific
- Business specific
- Future Plans for ecommerce site.

Q & A + Additional Updates

- INFO HUB – localized- response and recovery news and information updated daily
- Next Webinar is May 21 – Featured – Islands Response and Recovery Survey Findings