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Where is Abbotsford going, and what can be done to ensure the community is a healthy, happy one in 30 years?



Top: Imagine BC's Joanna Ashworth (centre) directs dialogue on Abbotsford's future. She is flanked by Stacey Corriveau and Kim Hissink. Above: John Vissers reads 'newscast' about the community in 30 years; At left: Corriveau and Cathy Burrell make notes on group discussions.

Those were among the questions pondered by some 21 Abbotsford thought leaders through dialogue directed by Imagine BC's Joanna Ashworth Friday night and all day Saturday at Heritage Valley Resort.

Participants were first asked to share their perceptions and stories about the community to demonstrate the character of Abbotsford, and the next day focused on specific questions to determine what actions are required to steer the community in the right direction. Title of the session was A Dialogue on the Ecological and Economic Well Being of Abbotsford.

A report on the weekend findings is forthcoming and similar Abbotsford sessions with other sets of community leaders are scheduled this year, with two more dialogues in 2007 and 2008. A final dialogue in 2009 will integrate with other regions under Imagine BC's umbrella.

Ideas generated at this session will be made available to the public through the Imagine BC website (www.imaginebc.ca/), a printed report and reports to subsequent sessions.

The program is supported locally by the Abbotsford Community Foundation (Marilyn Hamilton), the United Way



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of the Fraser Valley (Glenn Hope) and the Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise (Stacey Corriveau, Imagine Abbotsford secretariat).

To create a little levity, the final day concluded with four different groups presenting their worst-case, do-nothing, and best-case Abbotsford scenarios through a live "newscast" from the future.

Questions explored were:

- What is unique to Abbotsford in terms of culture, ecosystems, and economies?
- What future do you imagine for Abbotsford? What are your biggest concerns, hopes, and dreams?
- What story or example might you share that illustrates "signs of progress" toward the future you imagine?
- What new collaborations do you envision in Abbotsford that will point us in a positive direction for the future?
- How can we develop new understandings and activities based on these collaborations?

Ashworth said the session is one of several this year under the auspices of Imagine BC, a five-year dialogue series facilitated by Simon Fraser University and its partners. She added that Imagine BC seeks to create a forum for diverse perspectives about the future of the province.

Imagine Abbotsford thought leaders are:

- Peter Andzans, Environment, City of Abbotsford;
- Raj Bathe, Agriculturist;
- Fiona Brett, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce / Globe Printers;
- Cathy Burrell, Abbotsford Arts Council / Cavern Clothing;
- Stacey Corriveau, Community Futures South Fraser;
- Bruce Fatkin, Cedar Business Services;
- Gail Franklin, Fraser Valley Housing Network;
- Sid Gould, VisionWorks Sustainability Group;
- Gary Guthrie, Administration, City of Abbotsford ;
- Marilyn Hamilton, Abbotsford Community Foundation /Integral City ;
- Kim Hissink, Abbotsford Spirit of BC;
- Glenn Hope, United Way of the Fraser Valley;
- Dave Kandal, Abbotsford Airport Authority;

- Des Mckay, School District 34 (Abbotsford);
 - Lynn Ned, Spirit Bear Centre Society, ADBA;
 - Ralph Payne, Rotarian;
 - Rick Rake, Abbotsford News;
 - Marion Robinson, Fraser Basin Council ;
 - Marilyn Hamilton, Abbotsford Community Foundation;
 - Amani Saini, student;
 - John Vissers, Abbotsford Land Trust.
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