

<https://www.sookeregionchamber.com/about/#reports>



Photo Credit Philip Hulme

Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce ANNUAL REPORT 2025

We are grateful to live and work on the traditional territory of the T'Sou-ke, Sc'ianew (Cheanuh), and Pacheedaht Peoples of the Coast Salish Land. We give thanks to the original and current custodians and keepers of these unceded territories, its guardians since Time Immemorial.

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LETTER TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

January 22, 2026

Dear Members and Supporters,

This year, the Chamber has deepened its role in the community through a variety of initiatives designed to connect, educate, and support local businesses. Highlights include our ongoing Coffee Chats, Newcomers Happy Hour, Breakfast Brainstorming sessions, Chamber Connections, multi-chamber collaborations, and strengthened partnerships with local organizations such as the Neighbourhood Welcome and the Rotary Club.

Our Newcomers' Club continues to welcome both new residents and long-standing community members, providing a platform for meaningful networking and collaboration. Breakfast Brainstorming has emerged as a popular forum for entrepreneurs to share ideas, spark discussions, and build stronger ties within the business community.

In collaboration with Lifelong Learning, we hosted educational workshops in October and November through the Sooke Region Community Health Network (SRCHN). These sessions were met with positive feedback, and we look forward to expanding this learning partnership in the coming year.

The Business Excellence Awards (BEA) continued its tradition of celebrating local businesses, featuring appetizers and entertainment by comedian Dan Duvall, creating a memorable evening for attendees.

Our monthly newsletter has remained a vital communication tool, achieving an impressive average open rate of 53% and keeping members informed about local business updates, courses, and networking opportunities.

Membership growth has been strong, with 33 new members joining the Chamber, a testament to the value and momentum the Chamber continues to bring to Sooke's business community.

Overall, it has been a dynamic and rewarding year. The Chamber remains committed to fostering strong connections, supporting local businesses, and contributing to the continued economic growth of Sooke.

Sincerely yours,



Deb Schenk – Executive Director



Tracy Snow - President

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CHAMBER HIGHLIGHTS 2025

Board of Directors

President: Tracy Snow

Vice President: Marleen Kiral

Secretary/Treasurer: Barb Dunn

Past President: Mike Menard

Directors at Large

- Tim Ayres
- Les Haddad
- Britt Santowski
- Alexander Kingston
- Karen Stones
- Abbie Morris
- Katherine Strongwind

Staff

Executive Director Deb Schenk

Volunteers

Without our incredible volunteers, we. are. nothing! Deep appreciation is extended to all our volunteers, most notably those who undertook a leadership role in the following undertakings:

Newcomers Club Committee

- Deb Schenk
- Janet Clark

Business Excellence Awards Committee

- Philip Hulme
- Marleen Kiral
- Tracy Snow
- Alex Kingston
- Debora Schenk
- Britt Santowski
- Karen Stones
- Tim Ayres

Bookkeeper: Shelley Godin

Monthly Overview

January



● AGM: The Chamber expanded its Board of Directors. Three new directors joined. Mayor Maja Tait did the swearing-in of the oaths.

● Directors from left to right: Katherine Strongwind, Abbie Morris & Barbara Dunn. (Photo by Deb Schenk)

January

- AGM preparation
- Coffee Chats continue at Café Vosino
- SRBSC meetings in prep for launch, hopeful for end of 1st quarter
- Policy & Advocacy 101 Course
- New Year of Newcomers Club Happy Hour at West Coast Grill
- Pathways Program – Foundational Equity
- Business Breakthrough Course through Westshore Chamber
- 4 new members

- Winner Carol Mallet of 12 Days of Christmas Campaign Announced! Thanks to our contributing businesses! A Sea of Bloom, Carolyn's Boutique, Little Wildlings, Southshore Gallery, Home Hardware, Soul of a Gypsy, B & K, Café Vosino, Artisan's Garden, Bull & Sons and Bosleys.



February

- Attended Coffee with a Cop sponsored by the DOS
- New Networking Event - Breakfast Brainstorming at the West Coast Grill
- Provided Bar Service for Sutcliffe's Performance at EMCS
- Webinar Getting Along in the Age of Tariffs – Canada West Foundation – Speakers Christopher Sands, Jean Charest & Manjit Minhas
- Pathways Program – Steps for Navigating Conflict with self & community
- Launch of Shop Sooke First with DOS
- Attended Focus Group for Destination Canada/Juan de Fuca Corridor
- Presentation to the Rotary Club
- 4 new members

March

- New Nighttime Networking Event - Chamber Connections Begins
- Strategic Plan Revised
- Attended Westshore Chamber 29+ Networking Event
- Attended SRTA AGM
- Attended A Voice for Sooke – New Radio Station
- Planning for The Great Sooke Easter Egg Hunt

- Volunteer Zu starts at the Chamber for Marketing Everything Sooke Magazine
- Volunteered at the West Coast Run Sooke
- Developed Membership Ambassador Program
- Homelessness Business Toolkit submitted to DOS and recommended for the New Economic Committee to follow through
- 3 new members

April

- Newcomer's club meeting hosted at West Coast Grill
- Continued networking with the BC Chamber Executives Group, the BC Chamber of Commerce, and the Westshore Chamber of Commerce
- Attended Victoria AGM
- Successful Sooke Easter Egg Hunt promoting Businesses
- Confirmed Comedian – Dan Duvall for BEA
- Organized Federal All-Candidates Meeting Elections
- Strategic Plan Approved
- Tables at Sookarama - with Neighbourhood Welcome Janet Clarke



May



- Breakfast Brainstorming Networking picks up at West Coast Grill
- BC Chamber Bi-Weekly Meetings
- Bursary awarded to EMCS – Anela Kanealli
- Coffee Chats continue at Café Vosino
- Shopping in Sooke Survey Completed (Sooke Economic)-Emailed to DOS
- Everything Sooke Magazine Revising Begins
- Liberal Win – News Article

www.sooke.newsmirror.com

What a Liberal win means for small businesses in Sooke

Deb Schenk
As CEO of the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce, I want to acknowledge the recent election outcome and reflect on what a continued or renewed Liberal mandate may mean for our small business community.

Small businesses are the backbone of Sooke's local economy, and federal policy plays a key role in shaping the environment in which we operate. With the Liberals returning to power, we anticipate continuity in certain programs that many businesses have come to rely on, such as support for green innovation, access to grants for digital transformation, and funding streams for women and Indigenous entrepreneurs.

We will also be closely watching how the federal government addresses the rising cost of doing business, housing availability for our workforce, and infrastructure needs that affect supply chains and customer access.

These are national issues with very local impacts. The Sooke Chamber will continue to advocate for policies that reduce red tape, ensure fair taxation, and support the resilience and growth of independent businesses.

No matter who is in office, our role remains the same: to be a strong, nonpartisan voice for local business. We encourage our members to stay engaged, ask questions, and bring forward the opportunities or concerns they see ahead under this federal leadership. Together, we can make sure Sooke's voice is heard at all levels of government.

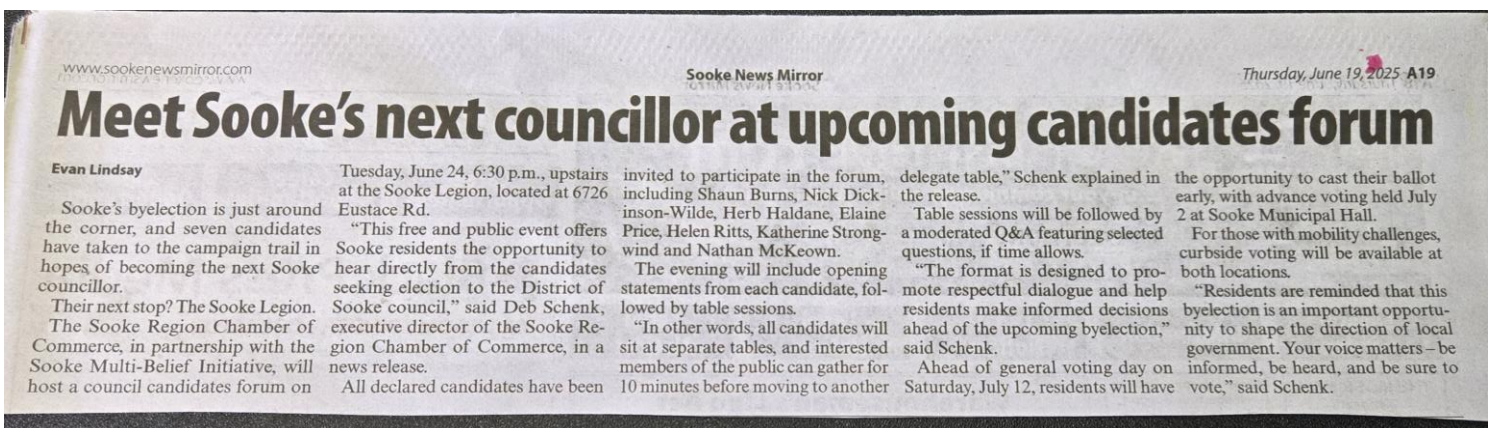
Deb Schenk is the executive director of the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce.



Deb Schenk

June

- Attended the CCEBC & BC Chamber Conference
- Breakfast Brainstorming Networking at the West Coast Grill
- Organizing with SRCHN for Lifelong Learning Seminars to begin in October.
- CCEBC Meetings begin – BOD term 2
- Monthly Newcomers' Club meeting
- Everything Sooke Magazine updates with Business ads continues
- Organization of All Sooke Council Candidates Forum with Multibelief Initiative



All Candidates Forum – Herb Haldane, Nathan Mckeown, Elaine Price, Helen Ritts, Nick Dickinson-Wilde, Katherine Strongwind, Shaun Burns

July

- CCEBC & BC Chamber Bi-weekly meetings
- BEA Planning
- SRBCS Finalizations – Logo/Branding
- Newcomers' monthly Happy Hours Changed Locations
- Everything Sooke Magazine final stages for publication
- Meeting with Federal Liberal MP Stephanie McLean

August

- Zoom meetings with BC Chamber and BC Executive.
- Organizing BEA Event - All sponsors finalized
- New Partnership with Black Press/Sooke News for BEA
- Business Excellence Awards - Voting begins.
- Breakfast Brainstorming Meetings Continue
- Everything Sooke Magazine Printed & Distributed
- Membership Ambassador Meeting

September

- Organizing Lifelong Learning Seminars with SRCHN to begin in October.
- CCEBC – Professional Development Committee Meeting
- Sooke Housing Coalition Meeting
- Naloxone Training with Shannon
- Noel Night Planning
- BEA Planning Continues
- Caucus Meetings for Policy Resolutions
- 5 Chamber Mixer
- CRD Sheltering & Supporting Engagement Meeting
- Chamber News Articles Restart

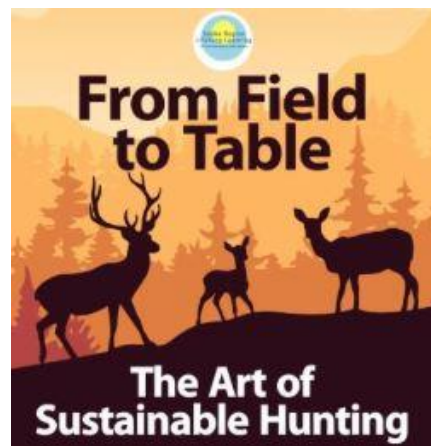


October



- SBSC New Name -1st AGM
- Stripe Payment added to Website
- BEA Tickets go on Sale
- Breakfast Brainstorming Session
- Meet the Experts – Networking Event
- Small Business Walks – Small Business Month -
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QIAKy8gplRapfzWbAhPnNlgliz4skP00/view?usp=sharing>
- Seminars begin with Lifelong Learning

Leader: Deb Schenk, Executive Director of the Sooke Chamber of Commerce and a dedicated community volunteer, has spearheaded this ongoing Community Wellness Series in collaboration with SRL. With courses reintroduced after last year's success, she remains committed to fostering cooperation among local organizations and businesses for the betterment of the community.



November

- 2nd SRL Event at Library
- Breakfast Brainstorming – Networking continues
- Attended SIPP Business Leadership

- Business Excellence Awards Event
- SRBSC – Announced at the BEA



December

- Business Meetups
- 12 Days of Christmas Shopping Passport
- Light up the Town Contest
- Noel Night

Financial Highlights

Membership

The Chamber grew by 34 new members this year!



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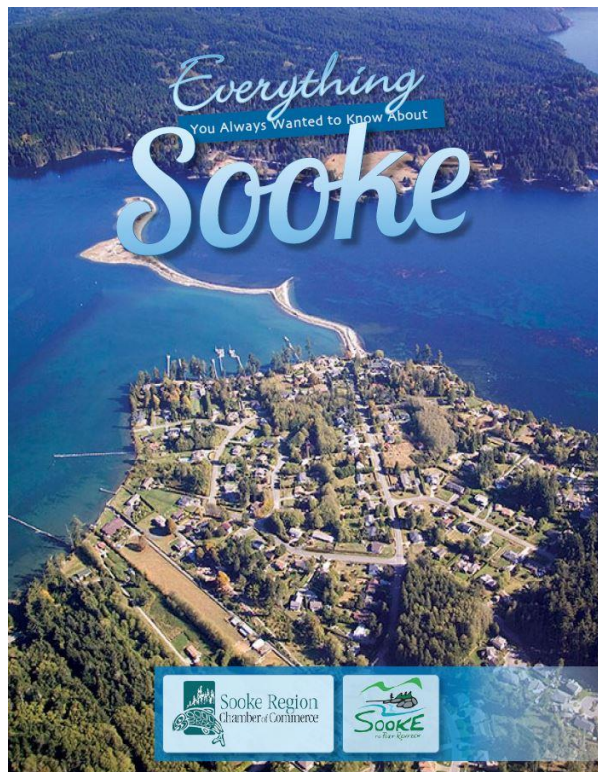
Operating Highlights

Newcomers Club

The Sooke Chamber of Commerce hosted eight Newcomers' gatherings this year, with attendance ranging from four to 15 participants per event. These gatherings were primarily held at the West Coast Grill, with additional events at Route 14 and The Stickleback Oceanfront Cider & Taphouse, providing a welcoming environment for new residents to connect with the community.

Chamber members were encouraged to actively participate by attending the events or sharing promotional materials such as business cards, flyers, brochures, and coupons, helping newcomers discover local services while providing members with the opportunity to showcase their businesses.

In partnership with Sooke Neighbourhood Welcome, the Chamber contributed copies of *Everything Sooke Magazine* to their goodie bags, helping newcomers become familiar with local businesses and community resources.





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NETWORKING HIGHLIGHTS

Multi-Chamber Communications

The Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce remained actively engaged at the provincial and national levels through regular participation in webinars and meetings hosted by the BC Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. This ongoing involvement helped ensure that Sooke businesses were represented in surveys, informed about available benefits, and had a voice in discussions on key economic and policy issues.

In addition, the Executive Director serves on the BC Chamber Executive (CCEBC) Board and contributes to the Membership, Professional Development, and Bursary Committee, further strengthening the Chamber's ability to advocate for and support local businesses.

Sooke Community Collaborations

The Sooke Chamber of Commerce continues to work closely with key community partners to support local engagement and economic development. In collaboration with the EMCS Society and the Sooke Multi-Family Initiative, the Chamber co-hosted the all-candidate election forum, creating a space for informed discussion and community participation.

During the holiday season, the Chamber delivered a successful *12 Days of Christmas* campaign that encouraged residents to shop locally. The addition of the "Search for the Pickle" brought a fun, interactive element that drew participants into local shops, while the *Light Up Your Business* contest added festive energy and helped brighten the community core. The Chamber also participated in the organization of Noel Night, helping to connect and amplify these seasonal initiatives.

We also continue to maintain a strong partnership with the Sooke Branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library. This collaboration includes mutual support of year-round initiatives and the hosting of Lifelong Learning courses, contributing to accessible community programs and services.



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LOOKING AHEAD

In 2026, the Sooke Chamber of Commerce will continue to strengthen connections, advocate for local businesses, and create opportunities for engagement, learning, and celebration within our community.

Planned initiatives include:

- **AGM – Thursday, January 21, 2026**
- **Strategic Planning Session** to guide priorities and initiatives for the year ahead
- Continued growth of the **Newcomers Club**, welcoming new residents and businesses to the Sooke region
- Ongoing **Breakfast Brainstorming** sessions to encourage peer learning, collaboration, and idea-sharing
- The annual **Business Excellence Awards**, celebrating the achievements and contributions of local businesses
- A series of **mini events throughout the year**, including initiatives such as *12 Days of Christmas Passport*, *Light Up Your Business*, *Sooke Spooky Halloween*, and seasonal activations.

Additional opportunities for 2026 may include:

- Expanded **Ask the Expert** and professional development sessions
- Increased **multi-Chamber collaboration** and regional advocacy
- Enhanced **member communications and digital engagement**
- New partnerships that support business resilience, workforce development, and community well-being

Deb Schenk

Executive Director

Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce, January 22, 2026



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FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2025 Expenses Overview

Office Expense	\$18,181.57
Advertising & Marketing	\$5,585.95
Wages	\$56,189.08
BEA	\$8,000.00
Other	\$7,763.92
Total expenses	\$95,720.52

2026 Draft Operating Budget

2026 Income		2026 Expenses	
Membership total:	\$33,381.62	Office	\$18,300.00
Service Agreement DOS	\$32,507.78	Advertising	\$5,700.00
BEA Fundraising	\$9,500.00	Wages	\$58,000.00
Benefits	\$17,993.65	BEA Event	\$8,000.00
		Other	\$2,500.00
Anticipated Income	\$93,383.05	Anticipated Expenses	\$92,500.00

Anticipated 2025

Surplus: \$883.05



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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Debt

None

Future Outlook

This year, the Sooke Chamber of Commerce increased its visibility and presence in the community. Through business visits and walkabouts, and participating in local events, we strengthened relationships with members and reinforced the Chamber's role as an active, accessible partner.

The Chamber's financial outlook remains positive, reflecting the dedicated work of the Chamber to build trust, credibility, and strong community relationships. This progress is mirrored in the continued recovery of local businesses and increased engagement with Chamber programs and initiatives.

We are pleased to report a net gain of 34 new members this year, a clear indicator of renewed confidence and momentum. In recognition of ongoing economic pressures, membership fees will remain unchanged, ensuring businesses can continue to access Chamber benefits without additional financial strain.

Key Takeaways

- **Membership:** Increasing
- **Membership Rates:** No increase planned
- **Service Agreement with the District of Sooke:** Secured through 2028



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Balance Sheet

Statement of Activity

Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

December 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Income	
Chamber Benefits Admin Income	\$1,407.02
Membership Dues	\$2,744.95
Services	\$540.00
Total for Income	\$4,691.97
Gross Profit	\$4,691.97
Expenses	
Advertising & Marketing	\$180.00
Social Media	\$17.01
Total for Advertising & Marketing	\$197.01
Banking Fees	
Merchant Services	\$197.08
Service Fee	\$35.00
Total for Banking Fees	\$232.08
Insurance	\$144.18
Meeting Expenses	\$27.26
Misc. Exp	\$161.12
Office Expense	\$138.78
Office Rent	\$1,312.50
Office Supplies	\$98.19
Utilities	
Telephone/Internet	\$100.80
Total for Utilities	\$100.80
Total for Office Expense	\$1,650.27
Professional Development	\$262.71
Wages	\$3,819.60
Insurance Benefits	\$169.63
Payroll Expenses	\$298.94
Wages	\$400.00
Total for Wages	\$4,688.17
Total for Expenses	\$7,362.80
Profit	-\$2,670.83



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Statement of Comprehensive Income (Profits and Losses)

Statement of Activity
Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce
January-December, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	JANUARY 2025	FEBRUARY 2025	MARCH 2025	APRIL 2025	MAY 2025	JUNE 2025	JULY 2025	AUGUST 2025	SEPTEMBER 2025	OCTOBER 2025	NOVEMBER 2025	DECEMBER 2025	TOTAL
Income													
Advertising & Marketing Income					\$610.00	\$3,445.00	\$220.00			\$135.00			\$4,410.00
Chamber Benefits Admin Income	\$1,460.37	\$1,477.59	\$1,525.77	\$1,592.84	\$1,529.55	\$1,516.01	\$1,512.58	\$1,503.36	\$1,549.62	\$1,489.22	\$1,429.72	\$1,407.02	\$17,993.65
Committee Income								\$600.00		40.00	1,254.00		\$1,294.00
Sponsorship Sales					\$175.00	\$600.00	\$5,000.00	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$2,070.00		\$6,975.00
Ticket Sales										\$2,115.00	\$2,070.00		\$4,185.00
Total for Committee Income					\$175.00	\$600.00	\$5,000.00	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$2,765.00	\$3,324.00		\$12,454.00
Membership Dues	\$6,649.76	\$1,865.00	\$4,645.00	\$2,930.00	\$1,710.00	\$2,550.81	\$1,910.00	\$1,938.34	\$2,160.00	\$1,987.76	\$2,290.00	\$2,744.95	\$33,381.62
Miscellaneous Income						\$0.67							\$0.67
Services					\$32,507.76	\$320.04	\$350.00	\$2,570.00	\$60.88	\$1,720.00	\$655.00	\$540.00	\$38,066.86
Total for Income	\$8,110.13	\$3,342.59	\$6,170.77	\$37,205.62	\$3,529.51	\$8,462.49	\$11,212.58	\$3,980.82	\$5,429.62	\$6,491.98	\$7,698.72	\$4,691.97	\$106,326.80
Gross Profit	\$8,110.13	\$3,342.59	\$6,170.77	\$37,205.62	\$3,529.51	\$8,462.49	\$11,212.58	\$3,980.82	\$5,429.62	\$6,491.98	\$7,698.72	\$4,691.97	\$106,326.80
Expenses													
Advertising & Marketing						37.00	37.00		5,331.96			180.00	\$5,586.96
General	\$76.35	\$682.78	\$682.78		\$368.62				\$478.87	\$1,201.41	\$174.71		\$2,962.74
Social Media											\$188.45	\$17.01	\$205.46
Total for Advertising & Marketing	\$76.35	\$682.78	\$682.78		\$368.62	\$37.00	\$37.00		\$5,810.83	\$1,201.41	\$363.16	\$197.01	\$8,774.16
Banking Fees													
Merchant Services	\$29.48	\$26.26	\$12.46	\$17.00	\$20.30	\$61.25	\$61.50	\$30.33	\$15.56	\$28.09	\$5.06	\$197.08	\$504.37
Service Fee	\$70.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$420.00
Total for Banking Fees	\$99.48	\$26.26	\$47.46	\$52.00	\$55.30	\$96.25	\$96.50	\$65.33	\$50.56	\$63.09	\$40.06	\$232.08	\$924.37
Bursaries											\$500.00		\$500.00
Committee Expenses		639.00		43.69				639.00					\$1,321.69
Entertainment								\$1,000.00					\$2,000.00
Food & Beverage		\$49.86									\$972.11		\$1,021.97
Insurance			\$31.35	\$8.41	\$644.00	\$60.00				\$164.25	\$254.58		\$418.83
Liquor							\$247.66						\$247.66
Other											\$178.25		\$242.72
Supplies							\$152.80						\$331.05
Total for Committee Expenses		\$688.86	\$31.35	\$52.10	\$644.00	\$60.00	\$400.46	\$639.00	\$1,000.00	\$164.25	\$4,083.90		\$7,763.92
Dues	\$1,693.13			\$10.59		\$173.00				\$504.80			\$2,381.52
Insurance	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$137.02	\$144.18	\$144.18	\$144.18	\$1,665.72
Meeting Expenses	\$160.98	\$30.04	\$30.04	\$94.50	\$40.32	\$1,966.93	\$66.32	\$30.04	\$6.75	\$33.76	\$27.26	\$27.26	\$2,456.90
Misc. Exp	\$0.00	\$14.55	\$72.00			\$175.00				\$122.18	\$155.35	\$161.12	\$700.20
Office Expense					\$63.15	\$7.87							\$209.80
Office Rent	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$962.50	\$1,312.50	\$1,312.50	\$15,400.00
Office Supplies	\$102.02	\$65.57	\$250.07	\$204.46	\$102.39	\$97.89	\$97.89	\$97.89	\$133.72	\$98.19	\$156.30	\$98.19	\$1,524.58
Utilities													
Telephone/internet	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$16.80	\$128.80	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$117.60	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$1,030.40
Total for Utilities	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$16.80	\$128.80	\$72.80	\$72.80	\$117.60	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$100.80	\$1,030.40



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APPENDIX 2: SPECIAL REPORT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOOKE, PER “SCHEDULE A”

Number of members: We welcomed 34 new members this year, bringing our Chamber family to 212, up from 189, while navigating a financially challenging year with resilience and continued engagement.

Services to the community within the District of Sooke, include:

1. **Serving all business operators in Sooke.** The chamber has a distinct and exclusive mandate to serve its members. With this Service Agreement, the Sooke Chamber provided networking and support services to all Sooke business operators and entrepreneurs, regardless of membership status. **Measurable:** None. Currently not tracked. Calls include business rental inquiries, tourism inquiries, hearing impairment access, locating old contacts, finding businesses and events, and more.
2. **Continued amplification of District matters,** including public hearings and communication initiatives, impacting the business community in Sooke **Measurable:** Chamber’s monthly newsletter delivered year-round (12 issues), with a subscription of over 735, promoting all news released requested by DOS.

Specific services provided according to this agreement include:

1. **Newcomer’s Club:** The Chamber committed to a minimum of 5 meetings per year and delivered 8. On average, 4-15 people attended each session.
2. **Free and Affordable Business Courses.** As advertised in the Chamber Newsletter, we promoted over 200 courses, see Appendix 4.
3. **Annual Business Survey.** The survey was completed and presented to the Council. See Appendix 5.



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APPENDIX 3: NEWSLETTER REACH AND EFFECTIVENESS

Newsletters remain the Sooke Chamber’s primary way to engage with the business community. Industry averages from Constant Contact show a 32% open rate and 3% click rate. Our 736 subscribers received 14,710 emails in 2025, an increase of 3,224 over the previous year. We continue to see strong engagement, with a **54% open rate** and a **5% click-through rate**.

Overall open rate

+22% vs industry average

Your open rate 54%

vs. previous 365 days -3% ↓

Overall click rate

+4% vs industry average

Your click rate 5%

Your click-to-open rate 9%

vs. previous 365 days 1% ↑



Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

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Sooke, British Columbia
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APPENDIX 4: COURSES, TRAINING, AND VIRTUAL SESSIONS PROMOTED BY CHAMBER

The Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce continued its collaboration with the Sooke Region Lifelong Learning group throughout the year, supporting accessible professional development opportunities for the community.

Sooke Chamber of Commerce Presents

Number of sessions: 2

Session schedule: Tuesdays, 1:30–3:00 pm

Location: Sooke Library Multipurpose Room (in person)

- **October 24:** Abbie Morris & Panel – *Into the Blue*
- **November 14:** Tyson Schenk – *From Field to Table*

In addition to these sessions, the Sooke Chamber’s monthly newsletter consistently promoted free and low-cost learning opportunities for local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. A strong emphasis was placed on Artificial Intelligence (AI), reflecting the significant increase in AI adoption across businesses this year.

The Chamber also highlighted courses covering essential business topics such as financial management, grant writing, human resources, value creation, and strategies for building and growing a sustainable business. All promoted courses were free and aligned with the Chamber’s commitment to continuous learning and business resilience.

Course providers commonly included the Women’s Enterprise Centre, WorkSafeBC, WorkLink, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, among others.



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January 2025

- Jan 02 [Setting Rental Criteria for your applicants](#)
- Jan 07 [How to Become a Successful HR or People Consultant](#)
- Jan 07 [Finding your Niche in a Crowded Market](#)
- Jan 07 [The 7 Secrets of Highly Effective Communication](#)
- Jan 13 [Sales Success for Non-Salespeople](#)
- Jan 15 [Cyber Security Awareness: Protecting your Business](#)
- Jan 16 [Don't Fear AI, Embrace it, or Fall Behind](#)
- Jan 16 [Legal Responsibilities of Boards](#)
- Jan 17 [Warren Buffet's Value Investing Masterclass: The Best Way to Invest](#)
- Jan 20 [Your Guide to Social Media SEO](#)
- Jan 21 [Financial Survival for Entrepreneurs](#)
- Jan 22 [Pricing Intelligently: Strategies for Start-up & Growing Businesses](#)
- Jan 30 [Workplace Happiness: The Key to Employee Engagement](#)

February

- Feb 02 [YouTube for Realtors](#)
- Feb 06 [Key Steps to Creating a Marketing Plan](#)
- Feb 06 [Making the Most of your Presentation](#)
- Feb 06 [Don't let Money Ruin your Relationships](#)
- Feb 06 [3 Step Real Estate Webinar Experience](#)
- Feb 07 [Grants Information Workshop](#)
- Feb 07 [Planning for Customer Success](#)
- Feb 12 [Airbnb 101](#)
- Feb 13 [Designing Content that Empowers/Cares](#)
- Feb 14 [The Science of Getting Grants](#)
- Feb 15 [Transitioning to Retirement](#)
- Feb 20 [The Power of Why](#)
- Feb 22 [Dealing with Difficult People in the Workplace](#)
- Feb 22 [How to Excel in Any Industry](#)
- Feb 27 [Future Homes-The Energy Conundrum](#)
- Feb 29 [Leading through an Inclusive Lens](#)
- Feb 29 [Leap Into Time Management](#)
- Feb 29 [Social Media Updates](#)



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March

- [Mar 03](#) Thrive Financially in 2025
- [Mar 03](#) Amplify Your Influence: Writing for High Visibility Publications
- [Mar 03](#) Conflict Resolutions - Turning Disputes into Opportunities
- [Mar 04](#) Productivity & Wellbeing in a Hybrid World
- [Mar 04](#) Creating your AI Toolkit - Hands-on Demonstration
- [Mar 05](#) Mental Toughness-Building Resilience/HR Success
- [Mar 05](#) Balancing Burnout & Motivation as an Entrepreneur
- [Mar 05](#) Neurodiversity in the Workplace
- [Mar 06](#) How to Drive Value and Build a Successful Business
- [Mar 07](#) Business Law Basics
- [Mar 11](#) Position Zero or Page Zero - 2025 SEO
- [Mar 11](#) Victoria Police - Inside the Recruitment Process
- [Mar 11](#) Wills, Power of Attorneys and Estate Planning
- [Mar 12](#) Using LinkedIn Effectively to Promote Your Business & Yourself
- [Mar 13](#) T1 Tax Seminar for Sole Proprietors and Partnerships
- [Mar 17](#) Understanding the Top 3 Common Problems of Business Failure
- [Mar 19](#) What can we learn about Belonging & Inclusion by Sharing Our Stories
- [Mar 19](#) Planning for the Future - The Importance of making a will
- [Mar 24](#) The Rise of Crypto Currency - Top 3 Predictions Investors Need to Know
- [Mar 25](#) Effective Content Marketing Strategies
- [Mar 26](#) Key Steps for Creating a Marketing Plan

April

- Apr 02 [Ensuring Greater Resilience in Canadian Food Systems during a Trade War](#)
- Apr 02 [AI is Changing the Game, Are You Ready to Win](#)
- Apr 03 [Awareness & Beyond:Tackling Unconscious Bias](#)
- Apr 03 [Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- Apr 08 [How to Build a Second Income Investing](#)
- Apr 08 [Revolutionize your Email Marketing: AI-Powered Strategies for Growth](#)
- Apr 09 [Confidence in the Workplace:Speak with Presence/Lead with Impact](#)
- Apr 10 [How to Save 10 hours a week with AI](#)
- Apr 10 [Business/Marriage & Separation:Protect your Business in case of Divorce](#)
- Apr 10 [Anticipating how AI will change the world in your Market](#)
- Apr 14 [How to have Courageous Conversations in the Workplace](#)
- Apr 15 [Economy Update Series -Identifying emerging trends](#)
- Apr 15 [Planning on Long-term Care](#)
- Apr 15 [What to Expect in your 1st Year of Business](#)
- Apr 22 [Aligning Purpose with Productivity: Work-Life Balance](#)
- Apr 24 [New Rules on Dismissal:What Employers Must Prepare For](#)
- Apr 29 [Addressing Addiction in the Workplace](#)



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May

- May 01 [Intelligence for Business Series: Critical Thinking](#)
- May 01 [How to Create Content Without Feeling Burnt Out](#)
- May 01 [Financial Literacy 101- Foundation](#)
- May 05 [How to Protect Yourself: Privacy Breaches & Misrepresentation](#)
- May 05 [Military to Civilian Transitions- What Career Practitioners Need to Know](#)
- May 05 [Profit Secrets Masterclass Step System to 50% More Profit](#)
- May 06 [90 Day Accelerates - Your Business Foundation](#)
- May 07 [Bookkeeping 101](#)
- May 07 [Systems over Straws- Individual Action in Resource Management](#)
- May 13 [Tax Seminar with the Canada Revenue Agency](#)
- May 13 [ONS: 3 Toolkits to Assess Administrative Data Quality](#)
- May 13 [Discover Mindful Productivity](#)
- May 14 [Mastering Communication: Building Connection & Clarity](#)
- May 16 [The Top 5 Marketing Mistakes to Avoid this Summer](#)
- May 19 [No one Taught Me How to Lead-The Games Industry Blindspot](#)
- May 20 [Recession Prepping Your Finances](#)
- May 20 [The Aqua Book-Guidance on Producing Quality Analysis](#)
- May 22 [Am I on Track to Retire](#)
- May 27 [Victoria Police: Inside the Recruitment Process](#)

June

- June 02 [Foreign Credential Recognition](#)
- June 02 [Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace](#)
- June 02 [Connect Better with Marketing - People buy Emotions not Products](#)
- June 03: [Project Management Essentials- Boosting Small Business Efficiency](#)
- June 04 [Crafting Success through Proposals- Funding Fundamentals](#)
- June 10: [Understanding & Embracing Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- June 10: [Non-Profit Management Certificate- Info Session](#)
- June 10: [Creating an Emergency Action Plan for Your Business](#)
- June 11: [Grant Writing Fundamentals](#)
- June 11: [Your Podcasting Toolkit- Effective Marketing & Networking Secrets](#)
- June 12: [Create Your First Meta Advert](#)
- June 14: [Take the Entrepreneurship Plunge](#)
- June 19 [HR Management Certificate](#)
- June 19 [Protect Your Legacy- Preserving What Matters Most](#)
- June 20: [The Do's & Don'ts of Strategic Partnerships](#)
- June 24 [In-house Content Creation- Making the Most of Your Resources](#)
- June 25: [Finding & Winning Business Grants](#)
- June 26: [The Employment Rights Bill 26](#)
- June 27: [Emerging Farmers](#)



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July

- July 03 [Executive Mastermind Forum](#)
- July 04 [Ready to Sell Your Business](#)
- July 06 [It's Time to Rebrand](#)
- July 08 [Leveraging LinkedIn for Small Business: Driving Leads/Revenue & Growth](#)
- July 08 [6 Steps to Passive Income](#)
- July 09 [Real Estate Insight](#)
- July 9 [Market Positioning Amid Global Instability](#)
- July 9 [Creating Inclusive Workplace Events-Banish the Boozy Culture](#)
- July 10 [Mastering Video Marketing](#)
- July 10 [Will AI Kill Your Brand](#)
- July 14 [Sustainable Marketing-Win Eco-Conscious Consumers](#)
- July 14 [Money Matters: Unlocking Financial Freedom](#)
- July 15 [Making Your Business Bulletproof](#)
- July 15 [Stand & Speak Challenge](#)
- July 17 [Business Co-Lab: Bridging Profitable Partnerships](#)
- July 18 [Websites that Work: Mid-Year Website Review](#)
- July 21 [Organizing & Prioritizing for Professional Success](#)
- July 30 [Job Transition & What it Means for You](#)

August

- Aug 04 [What Makes a Good \(or bad\) Small Business Strategy](#)
- Aug 05 [Small Grants Support](#)
- Aug 05 [The Market has Changed-Now What](#)
- Aug 06 [The Art of Adaptability: Skills for the New & Unknown](#)
- Aug 06 [Innovation Lab Snapshot: Essential AI Tools for Product Management](#)
- Aug 06 [Building an Online Business](#)
- Aug 07 [Power of Coaching/Professional ICF Level 1 Expert Coach](#)
- Aug 07 [Content that Converts - The Realtor's Guide](#)
- Aug 07 [Digital Tools & Budgeting - Session for Newcomers](#)
- Aug 08 [How to Pay Yourself from Your Business](#)
- Aug 11 [Panel Discussion: The Importance of Volunteer Development](#)
- Aug 16 [Principles of Fraud Prevention](#)
- Aug 16 [Conference Event Management](#)
- Aug 19 [Leading Yourself & Your Team Through Tough Times](#)
- Aug 20 [Let's Talk AI & Your Small Business](#)
- Aug 21 [Entrepreneur Business Fundamentals-When to Incorporate](#)
- Aug 21 [Keeping up to speed with the Employment Rights Bill](#)
- Aug 26 [The Art of Clear Communication: Simple Strategies for Small Businesses](#)



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September

- Sept 09 [Unleash the Power of Inclusion: Transform your Workplace Culture](#)
- Sept 09 [Investing for your Kids](#)
- Sept 09 [Neurodiversity Awareness in the Workplace](#)
- Sept 11 [Be the Answer-Make AI see your Website as the Expert](#)
- Sept 11 [Unlocking AI for Small Businesses with Digital Main Street & Google](#)
- Sept 12 [Problem Solving & Decision Making](#)
- Sept 16 [Building Resilience/Mastering Change](#)
- Sept 16 [The Next Decade of Talent-How AI is changing Hiring & Teams](#)
- Sept 17 [From Site to Signature:Legal Must Knows for the Trades](#)
- Sept 18 [Building the Economy we Want:Purpose,Ownership,Impact](#)
- Sept 18 [How to Build a Side Hustle with AI in 1 Weekend](#)
- Sept 18 [Mastering Marketing & Communications](#)
- Sept 23 [Tech for Growth: Digital Accountancy](#)
- Sept 24 [Fraud Prevention in 2025: Audit Risks](#)

October

Entrepreneurs Courses (all are online and free unless otherwise noted)

- Oct 01 [Building and Sustaining Your Business through the Power of Community](#)
- Oct 01 [Attracting & Retaining the Future Generation](#)
- Oct 02 [AI for Operations: Automate Admin & Projects](#)
- Oct 07 [Marketing Research](#)
- Oct 07 [AI For Small Businesses](#)
- Oct 07 [Build Your LinkedIn Profile](#)
- Oct 08 [Leadership for Non-Profit Directors](#)
- Oct 08 [PDA for Realtors: Predictive Data Analysis](#)
- Oct 08 [Self Leadership](#)
- Oct 10 [Office Politics](#)
- Oct 13 [Bringing your Business Story to Life](#)
- Oct 15 [Successful Content Operations in the age of AI](#)
- Oct 15 [Non-Profit Management Certificate](#)
- Oct 15 [The Courage to Connect](#)
- Oct 16 [Inequality in the Workplace-What can be done](#)
- Oct 20 [Unlocking Government Contracts](#)
- Oct 23 [Victoria Police-Inside the Recruitment Process](#)
-

WEBC SMART PROGRAM COURSES <https://webc.thinkific.com/>

CRA FREE WEBINAR [Clean Economy Investment Tax Credits Webinars](#)



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November

- Nov 03 [Demystifying AI: Empowering your dreams in a tech-driven world](#)
- Nov 03 [How to Become a Successful HR or People Consultant](#)
- Nov 04 [Employee Retention](#)
- Nov 04 [5 Black Friday Traps to Avoid](#)
- Nov 05 [Small Business/Big Savings](#)
- Nov 05 [Engaging Consumers](#)
- Nov 05 [Contracts & Currency: Building Businesses that Scale](#)
- Nov 07 [Essential Tax Moves to Make Before 2025 Ends](#)
- Nov 12 [Microsoft 365 CoPilot: The AI Productivity Edge](#)
- Nov 13 [Carbon Credits Explained](#)
- Nov 13 [A Marketing Strategy You Can Set & Forget for 2026](#)
- Nov 13 [Scam Savvy-Recognizing & Avoiding Scams](#)
- Nov 17 [Current Practice: Alcohol & Substance Misuse](#)
- Nov 18 [Reality Check: Marketing & Branding Your Start Up](#)
- Nov 19 [Conversations that matter: Skills that define great leaders](#)
- Nov 19 [Invest in Her, Shape the Future](#)
- Nov 24 [Does Generation Matter: Rethinking Change in a Multigenerational Workplace](#)

December

Entrepreneurs Courses (all are online and free unless otherwise noted)

- Oct 01 [Building and Sustaining Your Business through the Power of Community](#)
- Dec 01 [The Solopreneur Code: Building A Bold Business of One](#)
- Dec 02 [How to Identify where AI can Help Your Business-Dell/Intel](#)
- Dec 02 [How To Build a Brand Story for Your Business](#)
- Dec 03 [Tell Me About Yourself-Storytelling](#)
- Dec 03 [Podcast Guesting for Leaders](#)
- Dec 04 [Hiring Practices & Essential Strategies](#)
- Dec 04 [Startup Hiring-5 Mistakes Stalling Growth & Momentum](#)
- Dec 05 [Emotional Intelligence](#)
- Dec 08 [AI & Estate Planning](#)
- Dec 08 [How to Create & Market Digital Products & Make \\$](#)
- Dec 08 [Tech for Growth: Automating Your Business](#)
- Dec 09 [A New Era for Museums](#)
- Dec 09 [Voice, Video & Virtual Assistants: Easy Wins for Busy Business Owners](#)
- Dec 10 [Trademark Infringement](#)
- Dec 10 [Partnering to Experience Belonging-Coaching/Supervision/Mentorship](#)
- Dec 11 [Beyond Compliance-Drive Change](#)
- Dec 11 [Supporting Innovation: Govt Programs to help your Business Grow](#)
- Dec 17 [Blueprints to Brilliance/A Virtual Professional Development Series](#)

WEBC SMART PROGRAM COURSES <https://webc.thinkific.com/>

On-Demand Courses

- Sooke Library has **FREE** Lifelong learning programs via LinkedIn. Online.
- Employment Equity HR Toolkit Online
- Preventing Musculoskeletal Injury in the workplace. Online PDF download

- **MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses, free university)**
- Female Entrepreneurship, via MOOC List. Courses.



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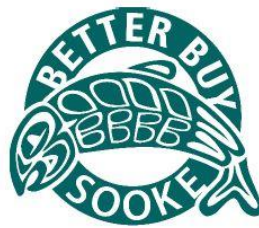
APPENDIX 5: SURVEYS:

Annual Shop in Sooke Survey

The full survey is available [online](https://sookeregionchamber.com/economic-development/) at <https://sookeregionchamber.com/economic-development/>. What follows is the Introduction and the Executive Summary

Shopping In Sooke 2025

Survey Results



Presented by

The Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

May, 2025



Prepared by the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce – May 2025



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Introduction 2025

Sooke, a vibrant coastal community on southern Vancouver Island, is known for its natural beauty, welcoming spirit, and small-town charm. In early 2025, the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce conducted a community-wide survey to better understand where and how residents are spending their money—and what factors influence their decisions to shop locally or elsewhere. The survey aimed to uncover not only economic patterns but also community priorities that could guide future planning, business development, and advocacy efforts.

While the community continues to value Sooke’s proximity to nature, trails, arts, and the friendly feel of a small town, the focus is towards local economic activity—specifically where people are shopping, dining, and accessing services, and why they sometimes choose to spend their dollars outside of Sooke.

With rising interest in strengthening local economies and building community resilience, this initiative set out to identify both the strengths and gaps in Sooke’s retail and service landscape. The survey collected insights from over 280 residents, covering their most recent purchases outside of Sooke, their intentions and satisfaction with local shopping, and broader lifestyle trends such as commuting, work locations, and visitor habits.

Conducted online, the survey captured data to support local business growth, infrastructure planning, and community development initiatives.

The results are intended not only to guide business owners and entrepreneurs but also to inform local government and stakeholders as they make decisions about economic development, transportation, and quality of life in the region.

This report summarizes the key findings and translates them into actionable recommendations for local government, business owners, and community stakeholders. By understanding where dollars are flowing—and why—we can work together to close the gap between community intention and economic reality, ensuring Sooke continues to thrive as a place to live, work, and shop.

Highlights:

The top things that people love most about Sooke are its proximity to the ocean & the small-town feel

The survey was undertaken by the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce to collect consumer data from the people of Sooke, inform politicians of the changing economic development landscape in Sooke, identify future business prospects for budding entrepreneurs, and provide insights for local businesses on what their customers are thinking.



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Executive Summary 2025

The 2025 Sooke Local Spending Survey reveals a strong community interest in supporting local businesses but also highlights persistent gaps in where money is actually being spent.

A significant **73.3% of respondents** expressed a desire to spend more of their money at Sooke businesses. Only **25.2%** felt satisfied with their current level of local spending, and a mere **0.14%** were unsure. This indicates a strong underlying intent to support the local economy.

Based on reported purchases, **groceries, gas, and pharmacy items** were the most common local transactions. **Groceries alone** far exceeded other categories, demonstrating strong local options for essential needs. Restaurants, home goods, personal services (like haircuts), and liquor sales also showed solid local activity.

Conversely, respondents reported purchasing **clothing, household items, restaurant meals, and some groceries** most frequently **outside** of Sooke. Notably, **clothing and dining** saw significant out-of-town spending. This data reveals a compelling opportunity for Sooke businesses and policymakers. While residents are eager to support local enterprises, the availability, variety, or pricing of certain products and services may be driving them elsewhere. By addressing these gaps, especially in sectors like clothing, dining, and household.

Planning efforts should focus on **long-term development, zoning, and support for local businesses**, with tourism as a secondary consideration.

Overall, the survey results suggest that Sooke residents value the town's natural beauty and community feel, but they also recognize the need for infrastructure improvements and economic growth. To capitalize on the town's potential as a tourist destination, it may be necessary for Sooke to prioritize town beautification projects while also finding ways to support local businesses and attract new industries to the area.

Highlights:

- Proximity to the ocean, small-town feel, and people are the top things people love most about Sooke.
- Desire to shop local
- Grocery purchases both in and out of Sooke
- Clothing and Dining Significant out-of-town spending
- Word of mouth and Social Media are the most frequently used sources of information in the community.
- Sooke's primary audience is its residents.
- Sooke has the potential to become a tourist destination, but town beautification is critical for this to happen.



Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

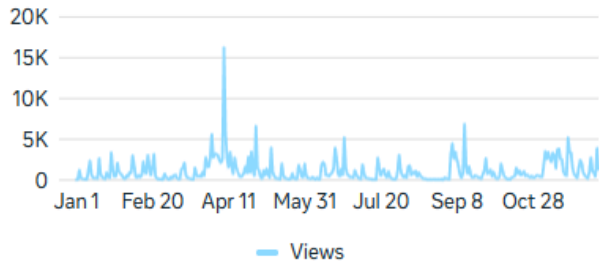
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APPENDIX 6: SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

Facebook, 2025

376.1K



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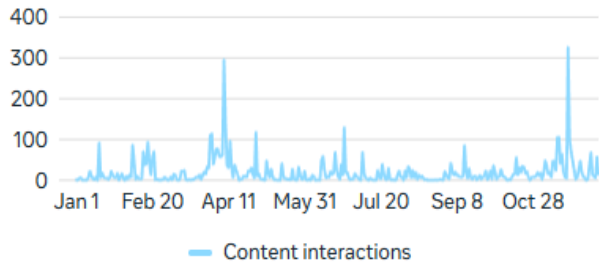


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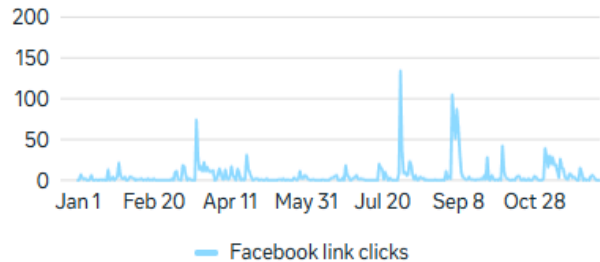
6.6K ↑ 116.5%



Link clicks ⓘ

Export ▾

2K ↑ 10%



Visits ⓘ

Export ▾

7.5K ↑ 30.9%



Follows ⓘ

Export ▾

187 ↑ 35.5%

