



Construction Season is Upon Us

While spring brings blooming gardens and countless shades of new green growth, we also begin to hear the sounds of construction. Construction season is upon us, and a review of some important data tells a story about building in the Columbia Basin-Boundary.

Building permits are a strong economic indicator, and [data](#) shows that, overall, BC saw a 17.5% increase in the value of building permits from 2016 to 2017. In our region, the total value of building permits issued last year had yet to fully recover from pre-recession (2007) levels, but the Columbia-Shuswap and East Kootenay regions beat the provincial average for the relative increase from 2016. The Central Kootenay saw little change from 2016 to 2017, and the Kootenay Boundary and Fraser Fort George saw moderate decreases (-10.8% and -6.7% respectively). In 2017, at least \$346-million in building permits were issued in our region, with the East Kootenay accounting for almost half of that, at \$157.5-million in total building permits.

Residential building permits are of particular interest in a region where housing is a top concern. Data indicates that permits for at least 816 residential units were issued in 2017 for the Columbia Basin-Boundary. All the regional districts show an increase in the number of residential building permits over the last 6 to 8 years. The greatest increase from 2016 to 2017 was in the Kootenay Boundary (97.6%). Communities with a large increase in the number of units for residential building permits include Golden, Revelstoke, Nelson, Elkford, Midway, Montrose, Trail, Warfield, and Valemount.

Another indicator of construction is the number and value of major projects taking place. The [BC Major Projects Inventory](#) publishes information on public and private projects valued at \$15-million or more. In the Kootenay Development Region, there are 30 projects listed with a total estimated cost of over \$9-billion. Fifteen of these have started construction, another nine are proposed, and six are on hold. Many of the active projects are resort development or expansion projects, as well as infrastructure such as an electricity substation and water treatment facility, and the renewal of a college campus. Proposed projects include coal mine developments, as well as a wind and hydropower project, hospital upgrades, and one resort development. Projects on hold include the controversial Jumbo Glacier Resort, as well as an expansion of another resort, and two coal mine developments.

These economic indicators provide some indication of investment in our region's built environment. While the season of construction can be annoying for some, improvements to housing and infrastructure are essential to our economic well-being.

State of the Basin

The **State of the Basin Initiative** is a signature program of the RDI. Check out the latest trends in economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being across the Columbia Basin-Boundary region with the recent release of the **Snapshot Report**. Also see the latest **Subjective Well-being report** which provides information about what residents think and feel about a variety of topics.

Wildfire & Climate Change in the Kootenays Conference

Wildfires and climate change are realities in our region and they can have dramatic impacts on our lives and communities. Addressing these issues requires a multi-level approach. This [upcoming conference](#), June 26 – 28 in Nelson, will share the latest research and initiatives, including community emergency preparedness and steps that we all can take towards a more resilient ecosystem.



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