

Re-Elect John Alan Jack for Huu-ay-aht First Nations Council

Greetings!

I thought I would take the time to give out a bit more information regarding certain parts of my platform. In this document, I'll talk about my experience and accomplishments in both relationship-building and in economic development. The reason I'm writing about these items is that I was assigned to work on them as a part of my portfolio. Every Councillor, when they are elected, is generally assigned various duties and they usually lead the discussions on those topics with the rest of their colleagues on Huu-ay-aht First Nations Council.

In this letter, I'll speak to the work being done in these areas, the things we've achieved and why I think they're important. I'll also write about what I think we need to do in the future to be successful in those areas.

Thanks for reading!



Economic Development

The Huu-ay-aht First Nations owns and operates several businesses: an active forestry company, various commercial fishing licences, a gravel operation, the Pachena Bay Campground and the Restaurant & Store in Bamfield. In this past term of office, we have consolidated them all under an arms-length business wing called the Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses, and have used corporations and limited partnerships to ensure that our investments are protected from any liabilities. Our business wing is operated at "arms-length" from our government because there often arises a conflict between political interests and business interests. In order to have the best opportunity for a well-run set of businesses, we have a structure that separates business decision-making from much political interference. Council retains overall strategic direction of our businesses, and chooses whether to invest in them or a new business as a part of that, but day-to-day and quarter-to-quarter decisions are made by dedicated business managers and a business-minded board of directors.

When I was re-elected in 2011, our main business of forestry was suffering significant losses. Due in most part to the financial crisis of 2008 in the United States, we were losing upwards of \$1.2 million. In the four years I have worked with our business team and have focused on turning this around. I am proud to say that our forestry business has made a significant profit in the past two years with has seen a net payout in the form of stumpage taxes and profit-sharing to the Nation of approximately \$1.2 million with more to come. Forestry has been our main driver for revenue, profit and employment opportunities, but we have done more to diversify our options as well.

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Our economic development strategic plan has us actively pursuing service, hospitality and tourism opportunities. For instance, we have expanded and enhanced our campground at beautiful Pachena Bay. We have also acquired the Market and Store at the heart of our neighbouring village, Bamfield. From that central location, we have expanded our interests into operating the government wharf in East Bamfield and are actively looking to acquire more property and businesses in Bamfield. Also, I have just received word that our sustainable, run-of-the-river power project just received a water licence which is the vital step before we can begin to build and generate sustainable energy which we can sell for good revenue to BC Hydro.

It is only by building and creating profitable businesses that we can create long-term, sustainable job opportunities for our people. In business, we have to ensure that we are creating value for our main investors – the Huu-ay-aht First Nations itself. We can do this by making our businesses profitable, and ensure that they are expanding in smart and forward-thinking ways to create reliable job opportunities for our people. It is for this reason that I think it will become very important to continue to actively invest money in our business wing in order to create that income and create those job opportunities. If re-elected, I would work with the team to ensure that we continue to diversify our economy so as to not overly depend on forestry for revenue and jobs.

Relationship-Building

I have also been appointed to be Huu-ay-aht representative to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD). Alongside the Yuuʔuʔiʔaṭh First Nation and the Tsawassen First Nation, we are one of the first in the province to have the distinction of being full, voting members of a regional district. Since April 2012, I have represented our interests to the ACRD as well as the larger associations and organizations to which the ACRD belongs.

At the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC), I gave a presentation about our Nation and our experiences to the entire group to great effect and it was well-received. At the next meeting of the AVICC, the group voted to change their constitution to grant full membership to any First Nation eligible to become a member of a regional district. Not only was I an official delegate of the ACRD there, I was also officially a delegate of my own Nation! At the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the ACRD was central to having the entire group declare that 2013 to be their Year of Reconciliation. I have also given many presentations to local government associations regarding the nature of First Nations and our story in working successfully with the ACRD.

If re-elected, I would like to continue to be the Huu-ay-aht's representative to the ACRD where I can continue to put forward our interests, create opportunities for sharing and cooperation as well as make connections with a part of the province that we did not before have many opportunities with which to interact. Part of a successful Nation in Treaty is to leverage our newfound connections to create opportunities for partnerships and collaboration which we can turn into concrete economic and political benefit for our people. I hope to do that again.

Chuu.

Klecko, klecko!