

**1. What is your current view of the economic environment in the Gibsons area?**

The current economic environment is fragile. It is too dependent on Tourism. A status quo belief exists that businesses and industry will remain as they are today. My view is that just a small downturn in local economic conditions could have a significant negative impact on our community creating disruptions in many lives on the Coast and put local governments in dire financial straits. We need to be prepared for this eventuality.

**2. What do you believe are the key economic opportunities in the Gibsons area and what would you do to maximize these opportunities?**

We live in a very desirable part of BC close to a major center. Our access to this large market and business centre, gives us both a regional and global reach. This, combined with the life style we can offer, makes this area a prime location for small industrial operations, similar to Sandfire Scientific Ltd, Coastal Craft and Western Log Homes. Another possibility is the home based business whose success depends upon highly specialized skills that can be applied through telecommunications and occasional travel. We have a number of examples of these types of businesses doing well, such as, Tours of Exploration, and Max Flex Digital Media. Our access to deep water on the West Coast also begs for development of Short Sea Shipping center, since the Lower Mainland is becoming very expensive for land and more restrictive due to the squeezing of the industrial lands by urban development.

**3. What do you believe are the key economic challenges in the Gibsons area and what would you do to overcome these challenges?**

We have a number of challenges that when taken together makes it necessary to implement a proactive economic development strategy that deals with these challenges. Some that come to mind are:

- limited access to cheap transportation,
- limited amounts of skilled labour
- limited and high cost housing
- a business community that has no clear vision for growth
- a loss of youth from the community that continues to grow older through an influx of retirees
- leakage of consumer dollars to the Lower Mainland

These are not all the challenges but certainly they define the issue. The issue is that we on the Coast have not successfully adopted an effective plan to counteract these deficiencies. To be effective in making progress in solving these and other challenges will require, I believe, a collaborative effort of the entire Sunshine Coast, through a single Economic Development Office that is sufficiently funded to be proactive in achieving measurable results.

**4. How should government support the economic development function?**

I do not have a definitive answer, except to say that it would be a lot easier if the whole Sunshine Coast were financially involved. I also feel that there may be ways to create funds that are not entirely local government dependent. There are examples of this approach throughout Canada. It is only necessary to look at the various models and see which would work best here.

**5. How would you support the GCIA financially and philosophically?**

I would continue to support the GCIA at the level we are at now. Any additional funding would be found through broader Sunshine Coast involvement, project grants with

management fees attached, and possible income producing activities. Philosophically I see the GCIA evolving to meet a broader and more basic need. I see the evolution being to address a more diversified economy anywhere on the Sunshine Coast. That economy would be one that creates decent paying jobs and likely would be an economy based upon small business of between 2 and 30 employees.

**6. What role do you believe business should play in economic development in the Gibsons area?**

Business needs to be involved in some way since they are a key stakeholders and benefactors in getting positive results. The difficult question is how business can be effectively engaged. Financial support is difficult under the present scheme since not all businesses participate and those that do are not all equal contributors. Also, there is too much time spent on knocking on doors looking for funding instead of doing economic development work. Businesses need to be asked to find an equitable way for all business to be financially involved and to organize themselves into an effective voice for business so that they can have a say in the setting of goals for the EDO.

**7. It appears taxpayers are not agreed on how to develop the Gibsons area. How would you manage this issue?**

I don't believe that Gibsons is any different than most places in BC. It's not so much that taxpayers are divided in their views of how development should occur, but that differing ideas are allowed to become battle lines that ultimately prevent our community from achieving positive results. I feel the issue is how we go about the planning for development. I do not know the total answer, but I truly believe there is a process that we can use that will overcome this problem. I would look for that process, try it and modify it until we can say we have something that works for our community.