

Year in Review: 2017 in **metaltechalley**

2017 was a year of transition and change on many levels. A new US president came into power and politics has dominated our conversation almost every day, fidget spinners arrived to apparently ‘save’ a generation of those who don’t know what to do with their hands, NASA discovered seven earth sized planets 39 light years away, there was a solar eclipse, #metoo arrived with major and immediate impact, a Canadian music icon passed away, the Economist announced the most valuable resource is no longer oil but data, wildfires broke records, and Canada turned 150 years old. Amidst 2017’s major (and not so major) events, **metaltechalley** experienced its own moments of growth, expansion, and promise. From the grand opening last May at Trail’s i4C Innovation Centre where over 150 partners and guests attended the unveiling of the campaign, to the creation of 19 new jobs, the relocation of 5 new companies and investment of \$1M into our economy, **metaltechalley** is already proving to be a game changing strategy. Combined with the region’s lifestyle, location and affordability the **metaltechalley** platform globally positions the region for success and has created quite a stir in the fierce and competitive world of business and workforce attraction.

“Our investment inquiries have doubled since we launched the **metaltechalley** platform, and the queries are more than just feelers, they are legitimate businesses and professionals seriously looking to relocate to the region,” says the region’s Economic Development Officer, Terry Van Horn.

Supported by funding partners Columbia Basin Trust, Southern Interior Development Initiatives Trust and BC Rural Dividend Fund, **metaltechalley**’s aim is to promote the story of the West Kootenay region’s evolution into a highly attractive and competitive location for business and livability, with a major focus on the global business and innovation clusters that are leading economic and business change—not just in the region but from a global perspective. Designed by the regional economic development office, Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation (LCIC), this region-wide approach to the challenges and opportunities of economic development in the Lower Columbia Region is a cluster of great minds and opportunities pioneering the Fourth Industrial Revolution with leadership in metallurgical science, industrial recycling and Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT).

At the core of this new economic development strategy is the i4C Innovation Centre, an international IIoT hub supporting big data with labs, production and testing facilities. With the vision from KAST in establishing the MIDAS “Metallurgical Fab Lab” and partnerships with companies like fortune 500 giant Teck (Trail Operations is the world’s largest fully integrated refining complex for zinc, lead and dozens of other metals) and Fenix Advanced Materials, we

have created the perfect storm of innovation and disruption, changing the way we do things and challenging the status quo.

“These past six months have been exhilarating to see actual measurable, tangible results from the [metaltech](#)alley project, which has already strengthened and diversified the local economy with new jobs, new residents and new opportunities for workers and their families,” says Terry Van Horn, Executive Director, LCIC. “We are excited for what will happen next; 2018 is already looking strong with two new Brazilian companies relocating to our region early this year bringing more economic growth. Build it and they will come couldn’t be truer!”

Interested in learning more about what this area may be able to offer your business? Check out www.metaltechalley.com for information on current business news, regional resources and local initiatives.

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