

Report from 2025 SILGA convention

Councillor Guy and Mayor Cumming

Location: Merritt

Dates: April 29-May 2, 2025

Tuesday April 29, 2025 (pre-conference sessions):

"Bridging Climate and Economic Resilience"

- Cllr. Guy presented a summary of some of the climate-driven initiatives underway in Vernon, and the related community benefits.

Wednesday April 30, 2025:

Breakout sessions:

Community Forests (Cllr. Guy)

- Challenges and opportunities related to establishing and running a Community Forest.

Statistics Canada (Mayor Cumming)

- New website layout and drop-down tabs with detailed census information

Plenary session:

Regional Districts legislation reform

- Don Lidstone is tasked with reforming the Local Government Act. Input requested by May 31.

Keynote presentation on "Strong Towns" by Norm Van Eeden Petersman

- Local municipal economics – municipal value of commercial space in core vs outskirts.
- Recommended resources: "You will pay for this" (book) and Community Life cycle Infrastructure Costing (CLIC) Tool and User guide from Gov't of BC – December 2018.

Resolutions (38):

- Vernon's UBCM resolution session motion was carried

Thursday May 1, 2025:

Plenary Session:

UBCM presentation

- Potential impact of US tariffs on the BC economy – Urban skewed results

Culture Counts

- Using social and economic impact assessment tools for calculating the impact of sport and cultural activities in our communities.

Community-led development in Rural B.C.

- Trends and needs e.g. broadband internet and regional transit, and the need for a national rural strategy.

Authenticity in Local Government

- Ken Matheson (Councillor from Clearwater) spoke on balancing the need for formality, communication protocols, and information control with the need to engage and communicate with the public.

Ruling the Unruly

- balancing the rights of free speech and workplace safety.

Asset Management Planning

- Revitalization examples for downtown Quesnel and North Kamloops highlighting the significance of community participation in project planning, as well as staged implementation.

Tour of Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

- Much improved college buildings with innovations in adult education. A lesson for designing spaces for the Kin Race Track Park lands.

Friday May 2, 2025:

Breakout sessions:

Agricultural perspectives: Emergency preparedness and response

- Best practices for involving farmers and ranchers in emergency preparedness and response to fire.

Plenary session:

Developmental Partnerships

- Focused on the Gateway 286 project in Merritt – re-imaging the former Visitors Centre

Mining in the Southern Interior

- Economic and other benefits of mining to southern interior communities.
- Continuing need to mine and process critical minerals in B.C.
- Specific examples (e.g. Copper Mountain, Highland Valley Copper)

Trade Show Highlights

Expanded vs. previous years

- BCLC – sponsoring a celebration for Phase II of Vernon Creek naturalization in Polson Park in June
- B.C. Road Builders – commended CoV on its capital planning and transparency
- Barkman Concrete – local manufacturer (Merritt) could support COV projects.
- Fink Machine – relevant for future wildfire mitigation processes
- Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions – great resource for Climate Action Plan implementation
- StructureCraft – designs and builds full timber and wood structural buildings (e.g Kelowna Flight Craft) and bridges