



## THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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### **Vernon's compassion shines during these trying times**

As the Mayor of Vernon, I am humbled and deeply moved by the overwhelming outpouring of support our community has offered in these trying times.

The recent BC Interior wildfires have brought with them unprecedented challenges for many people, but they have also unveiled once again the heart and spirit of Vernon.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the residents of Vernon and its surrounding area for your incredible acts of compassion and solidarity. Your response to the plight of those displaced by the wildfires has been nothing short of remarkable, as many of you have volunteered time and resources to help meet the needs of those who have come here for safety. You have shown that in times of crisis, Vernon residents step up.

While the Interior is not out of the woods yet, I want to reaffirm Vernon is open for business.

With strong partnerships in place, we have had the necessary capacity to consistently meet the accommodation needs of those seeking Emergency Support Services (ESS) at our local reception centre. But we're also now seeing hotel vacancies and an impact on business for food and beverage providers and attractions during what should be peak tourism season.

Now that the Provincial travel restriction has been lifted for the Okanagan, our community welcomes visitors with open arms and we look forward to receiving tourists again. Additionally, I encourage you – our residents – to support local businesses. They are the backbone of our economy and it's our turn to help *them* out. When you shop and support local, you're not just making a purchase; you're investing in your neighbours and the recovery and resilience of our region. For inspiration on exploring Vernon, I encourage you to visit [TourismVernon.com](https://www.tourismvernon.com).

Of course, the impacts of the wildfire events are different in every community, so please continue to respect the ongoing emergency response and recovery efforts taking place in areas south of Vernon and in the Shuswap and follow their communities' requests and guidance for being in those areas. As some neighbouring areas remain under Evacuation Order, Vernon's ESS Reception Centre continues to be operational and we will continue to serve. We are now in a place where we can balance emergency response with a more regular summer tourism pace.

So on behalf of all of City Council, thank you again for your outstanding display of support and compassion. We are rising together.

Victor Cumming  
Mayor, City of Vernon