

STATEMENT FROM MAYOR SHARIE MINIONS

June 7, 2023

Port Alberni rallies together and comes through another challenge

PORT ALBERNI – We are not strangers to adversity in the Alberni Valley. When tough times hit, we rally together and do what must be done to make sure everyone gets through it.

The past two days are another example of our community doing just that. As I share our story with the world through the interviews I do, I am proud of how strong we are and how we handle difficult situations. We do not panic. We dig in and get things done together.

Now that travellers have an alternate route in and out of the Alberni Valley, it's time to be patient and stay calm while fire crews do their best to extinguish the Cameron Bluffs wildfire.

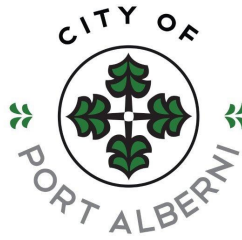
Although travel has become much more difficult because of this fire, we must keep from panicking and worrying. The new route will keep our supply chain flowing, and we are not cut off from the east side of the Island. Although there may be a bit of a delay, our grocery stores will still be able to stock their shelves, our gas stations will not run out of fuel, and our restaurants will continue to get supplies. This is a bump in the road, quite literally, and we will get through this.

Things may not be as smooth as we would like, but the work has been done to make sure our community is ok as we navigate this road closure.

At this time, we don't know how long Highway 4 will be closed. What we do know is that the right people are working hard to open it as soon as it is safe to do so. Other crews are keeping the alternate route safe so that essential travel can continue. For that, we should be thankful.

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District will keep the Emergency Operations Centre open so that if the situation changes, they can react quickly and keep our community and residents safe. The City of Port Alberni will support them in their efforts, as we have for the past two days.

I want to thank everyone who volunteered to help at the reception centre. We had students from Boston helping Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Fighters set up cots. ADSS opened their gym to house students who were trapped, while Emergency Support Services volunteers kept the reception centre operational for two days. The Port Alberni Fire Department stepped up when we needed supplies. When people needed to be fed, the Salvation Army offered to cook and serve them. Volunteers from Kuu-us Crisis Centre helped to operate the reception centre today, along with staff from the City and the ACRD.



On top of that, we had endless offers of volunteer time, places to sleep, meals, donations, and supplies.

It was such a huge community response, and it showed everyone we really are a community with a heart.

If you need more information, go to www.acrd.bc.ca or www.facebook.com/AVEmergencyprogram or www.drivebc.ca , <https://wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/> or www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo

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For more information, please contact:
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