



British Columbia Community Profile...

Cumberland

Overview

Located in the Comox Valley on north central Vancouver Island, the village of Cumberland was once a bustling coal mining community that attracted workers from Europe, China and Japan. From heritage buildings to museums to special events, the sights and sounds of Cumberland today honour its colourful past. Only a stone's throw from glacier-fed Comox Lake, the community enjoys a wide range of recreational activities including hiking, biking and fishing. The Mount Washington Ski Resort is located 31 km west of the town offering excellent skiing in the winter and hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding in the summer.

Accessibility

Cumberland is accessible by highway and bus service. In addition, the Comox Airport, located nearby, offers regularly scheduled flights to Vancouver and other major centres. The nearest major centre is Nanaimo, which is 107 km (approx. 75 minutes) away. Cumberland is 220 km (2 ½ hours) north of the capital city of Victoria. Both cities offer ferry service to the British Columbia mainland.

History

Once Canada's westernmost city, Cumberland had its beginnings in 1853 when a bustling coal mining industry brought workers from Europe, China and Japan to the area. Originally known as Union, the town's name was changed to Cumberland in 1898, after a famous English coal-mining district. Cumberland remained an active coal-mining town until 1966, enduring a series of devastating mining explosions and bitter labour disputes. As the coal industry declined the population decreased, until Cumberland began to reclaim its history and transform into a "historical tourism" centre.





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Economy

The economy of Cumberland is linked to that of the entire Comox Valley with the majority of employment opportunities coming from the public sector and retail. Residents commute to the nearby (CFB) Canadian Forces Base Comox and to sawmills in Campbell River. Forestry, agriculture and construction are important to the area as is tourism.

Population Profile

The population of Cumberland is 2,762, with a median age of 38.4, which is the same as for the province as a whole. The population of the entire Comox Valley, including the municipalities of Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland is approximately 58,000.

Climate

Cumberland experiences a moderate climate with short, mild winters and warm, dry summers. The average maximum temperature is 14 degrees Celsius, while the average minimum temperature is 3.4 degrees. Cumberland receives 1,393 mm of rainfall and 171 mm of snowfall each year.

Housing

Living accommodations in Cumberland include rental apartments, as well as duplexes and single-family homes (including some with acreages and views) for sale and for rent.

The average cost of a three-bedroom house in the Cumberland area is \$250,000. A two-bedroom apartment rents for approximately \$600 per month.

Education/Daycare

There is an elementary (Kindergarten – Grade 6) and a middle school (Grades 7-9) in Cumberland. Students attend secondary school (Grades 10-12) in nearby Courtenay, travelling by bus. Post-secondary education is available at a campus of North Island College, also located in Courtenay. Some daycare services are available for small children.



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Recreation

The main recreational facility in Cumberland is the Cumberland Recreation Institute, which offers a universal gym, squash courts, indoor climbing and much more. In addition, there are seven golf courses (four 18-hole and three 9-hole) in the surrounding area.

A variety of service and special interest clubs and organizations are active in the community. Because of its proximity, residents are also able to access a broad range of recreational facilities in nearby Courtenay, one of Canada's fastest growing urban communities, with a population of almost 20,000.

The Village of Cumberland is located in the foothills of the Beaufort Mountains, bordered by the incredible wilderness of Strathcona Park, and in view of the beauty of snow-capped mountains and the Comox Glacier. Surrounding the community are beautiful trails for the novice or experienced hiker, as well as lakes for swimming, boating, camping or picnicking. Mount Washington Ski Resort, the second busiest winter-recreation destination in British Columbia is a 40-minute drive away. Other recreational opportunities in the area include camping, canoeing, fishing and mountain biking.

Culture

There is a lively arts community in the Comox Valley and the local arts council, comprised of thirty member groups, co-ordinates art shows and workshops, literary projects, performing arts events and children's programs including Art in the Park and Kids Fest.

Special events in Cumberland include Miner's Memorial Day, the Cumberland Arts & Crafts Fair, the Christmas Lighting Contest, and Empire Days, a lively week long celebration that includes everything from horse shoe tournaments to float plane demonstrations

Services & Amenities

Cumberland is home to a number of small retail stores as well as a bank and its residents enjoy a local transit system. Veterinary and accounting services are also available. The community of Courtenay, 9 km to the east, is much larger centre and features grocery stores, banks, clothing stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, restaurants, postal services and more. High-speed Internet service is available here.

There are over 30 places of worship in the Comox Valley, including a multi-denominational and a United church in the Village of Cumberland itself.



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Health Authority

Cumberland is located within the North Island Health Region of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) provides healthcare services that include acute care facilities, mental health & addictions, environmental and public health, home, and community care. For comprehensive information on Vancouver Island Health Authority, visit their website (see Internet References below).

Internet References

BritishColumbia.com

<http://www.britishcolumbia.com/regions>

Cumberland Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.cumberlandbc.org>

Village of Cumberland

<http://www.cumberlandbc.net>

Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.comoxvalleychamber.com>

Statistics Canada (Community demographic information)

<http://www.statcan.ca>

Vancouver Island Health

<http://www.viha.ca>

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