



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Upgrades enhance technology capacity and showcase Penticton's creative community

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PENTICTON — Live-streaming of Council meetings is now available for all digital devices with the City of Penticton Council Chambers upgrades complete.

As part of the 2012 budget, the City undertook an upgrade to the Council Chambers with the aim of facilitating citizen engagement and improved customer service. The City of Penticton has been recording video for Council proceedings for at least 10 years, which also enabled live-streaming online. The former system only functioned on PC platforms and was incompatible with mobile devices or Apple products.

The new streaming system launching tonight is platform agnostic, allowing citizens to view the video stream on all technologies and devices and easily take part in the democratic process. The overall quality of the streaming should also improve with the installation of the Taiden Digital Conference System – a digital microphone system that is more sensitive to sound, allowing those watching Council proceedings to hear discussion better whether in person or online. Penticton is among the early adopters of the Taiden system, which was recently selected by the United Nations for its proceedings.

Council Chambers are also serving a dual purpose, as the City of Penticton is partnering with the Shatford Centre Okanagan School of the Arts and the Penticton Art Gallery to showcase the creative community by displaying artwork by emerging local artists and students on the west wall.

“We were pleased to have been offered this opportunity to display the first exhibit in the Council Chambers. We also appreciate that Margot Stolz has been able to create this exhibit in such a short timeframe,” said Jane Shaak, Executive Director of the Shatford Centre Okanagan School of the Arts. “We look forward to rotating exhibits with the Penticton Art Gallery in the future, providing Mayor and Council with a creative backdrop for their deliberations.”

Margot Stolz is the first artist to have her work displayed in this inaugural exhibit arranged by the Shatford Centre Okanagan School of the Arts. Margot's work consists of original encaustic designs on birch wood panels and includes images of the historic Shatford Centre and other heritage buildings in Penticton. The title of this exhibit is “Encaustic Nostalgia.”

Artwork will be rotated on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The work is available for purchase, but the space will also serve as a promotional tool for the Shatford Centre Okanagan School of the Arts and Penticton Art Gallery with pamphlets available.

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Backgrounder: Council Chamber upgrades

Creative community partnership

- Margot Stolz is an emerging encaustic mixed media artist. She creates her encaustic (beeswax paintings) in her studio/gallery space at Eric's Photography. The Okanagan Valley has been her home since 1992, when she took drawing classes at Okanagan College. Her full bio is available by emailing margotstudio2012@yahoo.com.
- Artist statement on the exhibit: "My 2012 'Encaustic Nostalgia' series is a celebration of the historical buildings and pioneer life of Penticton. I've featured the Shatford building several times, and am grateful to the Shatford Centre Okanagan School of the Arts for this wonderful opportunity to be the first artist to showcase my solo exhibition at the Penticton City Hall. I would also like to thank the Penticton Museum for their knowledge, time and historical photographs. This summer, I was awarded a bursary from the Cattani Family Foundation to attend an artist in residency at the Toni Onley Artist project in Wells. During my residency, I photographed many of the historical buildings of Wells and Barkerville. My experience inspired me to continue exploring this historical theme. I incorporate my own digital photographs as well as historical photographs into my encaustic work, by painting and transferring the photo based images into melted beeswax. By encapsulating and preserving a part of history in beeswax, I hope to honour the souls of yesterday with these hauntingly nostalgic images of places and times past."

Audio-visual enhancements

- Live-streaming online is now platform agnostic, meaning all devices can access the video. Citizens can go to www.penticton.ca/live-video to access the stream.
- Sightlines for the Council Chambers gallery were improved with screens facing the audience.
- Taiden Digital Conference System microphones not only are more sensitive, but also eliminate background noise. This is coupled with additional speakers wired into the ceiling, to improve the acoustics of the room.
- Sensory Perceptions, a Penticton-based business, conducted all the audio-visual installation, configuration and programming, and has been instrumental to the upgrades.

Room upgrades

- LED fluorescent light fixtures were installed that are more energy efficient. These qualified for a FortisBC rebate to reduce the cost of each fixture by \$60. Energy-efficient LED pot lights were also installed to showcase the new art exhibits.
- Wheelchair accessibility was improved with a new ramp and an open concept design.
- The old carpet was replaced with high-traffic carpet tiles made from recycled products that can be recycled again in the future.
- The heating and ventilation system was rerouted to disperse air evenly through the room.