

An aerial photograph of a vast, forested valley. The foreground shows a lush green field with scattered evergreen trees. The middle ground is dominated by a dense, dark green forest covering rolling hills. In the distance, a wide valley opens up, featuring a winding river and several large, interconnected lakes. The background consists of hazy, blue mountains under a clear sky. The image is framed by decorative diagonal stripes in shades of brown, orange, and yellow in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

**Regional District of  
East Kootenay**

**Banff**

to Calgary, Alberta ▶

**Invermere**

**Elkford**

**Kimberley**

**Sparwood**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
Regional District of East Kootenay

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# East Kootenay

The EAST KOOTENAY, a land where development opportunities are limited only by one's imagination.

This Rocky Mountain haven has enjoyed tremendous growth over the past decade and, with the current activity in mining, forestry and tourism, the outlook for the future is exciting to say the least.

Located in the Southeast corner of British Columbia, home of major coal mining activities, the Region comprises three main areas:

**COLUMBIA VALLEY:** This is the northern part of the Region, encompassing the Columbia River Valley, with Invermere being the service center. It is a recreational paradise, with four-season destination resorts, skiing, warm lakes and hot springs. The area is enjoying extensive development, as many developers are realizing the potential for tourism and industry.

**CENTRAL VALLEY:** The service area for the Regional District with Cranbrook as the main center and largest city. It also enjoys economic activity from mining at Kimberley, forestry, agriculture, cattle ranching and tourism.

**ELK VALLEY:** Known internationally as the home of B.C.'s Southeast coal production. It has four operating mines and several more planned for the future as demand for coal and its by-products increase. Three modern communities, Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford, serve the area and all are growing at record speed.



# Mining

The virtual quadrupling of the value of regional mining output between 1975 and 1981 was attributed to both increased mineral production and rising mineral and coal prices. Employment in this industry sector has been increasing dramatically since 1975, and is now the number one employer in the Region.

The coal mining operations in the Elk Valley have been the major contributor to this rapid growth. Existing mines have been expanded, new mines established and at least two more are in the planning stages.

The iron, lead and zinc mining operations in the Kimberley area have also seen an increase in employment and production. Plans are underway for the development of new processing facilities and with continued exploration, new mines could become a reality.

Gypsum is mined in the Upper Columbia Valley and a large Magnesite deposit is being mined and crushed in the Upper Mitchell Valley near Kootenay National Park.

Under extensive reclamation programs, the mined areas are rehabilitated progressively. To date, the companies have reclaimed thousands of acres of mined land, turning them into rolling slopes of grassland and trees.



# Forestry



Forests have always played a vital role in the lives of the people of British Columbia and such is true for those in the East Kootenay Region.

Forestry, related products and services are the second largest industrial employer. In fact, in excess of 5,000 people are employed in logging, sawmill operations, pulp production and related service industries.

The Region has five major sawmills, with in excess of 40 smaller mills spread throughout the communities. Although

sawmilling has undergone only limited expansion in recent years, capital investment in plant modification has continued. The major mills are now capable of using the smaller diameter logs efficiently.

The main products are finished lumber and pulp for export to the U.S.A. and Japan. However, the forest industry also produces fence posts, shakes, telephone poles, Christmas trees and a variety of other manufactured wood products.

Logging patterns have been changing recently and, consequently, increased attention is being paid to more careful and intensive use of forest resources. Reforestation and forest management will ensure that this industry will continue to be a major contributor to the economic well-being and industrial growth in the East Kootenay Region.



# Industry

The manufacturing sector is dominated by primary forest processing, sawmilling and pulping. However, there is also mineral processing and some secondary forest manufacturing, as well as a growing number of smaller, diverse operations which play a significant local and regional role.

The City of Cranbrook is home to the major portion of manufacturing as it relates to the service aspect of the forest industry and wood by-products.

The coal mining industry is serviced from the Elk Valley communities of Elkford, Fernie and Sparwood, as well as Cranbrook.

Fertilizer production at Kimberley and pulp production at Skookumchuck are examples of other major industries. As well, continued development of the tourism industry in the Region has created new opportunities for the manufacturing and service industries.

Technological advances are continually opening new doors for entrepreneurs. Companies are discovering that the East Kootenay Region, with its moderate climate and stable work force, is an excellent gateway to the northwestern U.S. market.



# Energy and Agriculture

The East Kootenay Region is supplied with electrical power by B.C. Hydro. Hydro has a constant program of line upgrading and substation construction.

Natural gas is available in the Region with competitive rates for industrial users. Natural gas service is being extended to the furthest points of the Region.

Based on supply data and current usage rates, there will be an excellent supply of both electrical power and natural gas well into the future. This is further enhanced by the possibility of a thermal coal generating facility.

Beef cattle production is the dominant source of farm revenue. The second major source comes from forage production. Although irrigation is required in many operations because of the dry hot summers, the Region is well known for its abundant supply of high quality forage.

Due to long hours of sunshine and the moderate climate, commercial greenhouse operations are proving to be another viable agricultural venture. As this production increases, local food and beverage processing is expected to increase to further diversify and stabilize this industry sector.



# Transportation

The strategic location of the East Kootenay Region with respect to a major transmountain highway and railway route through the Crowsnest Pass and its connections to the U.S.A., makes the transportation industry an important component of all regional economic activity.

There are many well established trucking firms in the Region, with C.P. Rail serving the railway needs. Scheduled bus service is provided by Greyhound Lines of Canada, with other companies providing charter services.

The Cranbrook-Kimberley Airport is a major regional airport serviced daily by Pacific Western Airlines. As well, there are two sub-regional airports, one at Invermere and one in the Elk Valley. All industry sectors, including tourism, have created a need for several helicopter and small aircraft charter services.

Custom and clearance service is provided in Cranbrook and at the U.S. border points of entry.



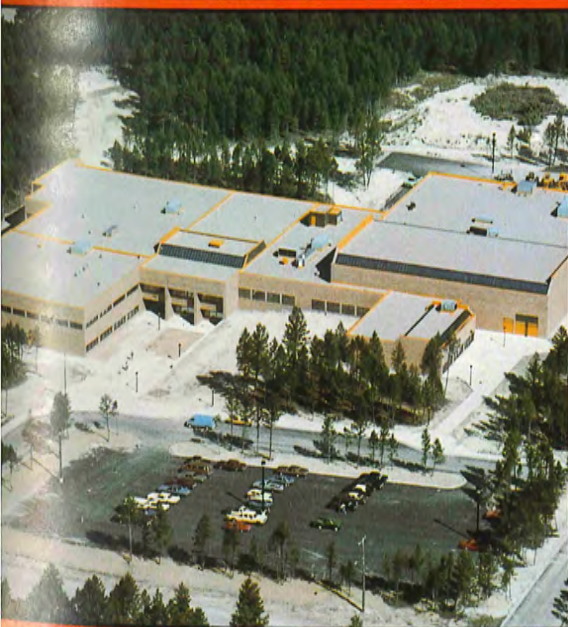


# Education, Housing and Health

The East Kootenay Community College offers academic, technical, vocational and continuing education courses in a wide range of fields on campuses throughout the Region. This college, with its main core campus in Cranbrook, works in close liaison with industry in order to continually update programming as new job skills are identified.

Housing within the Region is growing rapidly with single detached and mobile homes being the most popular. The building statistics for the Region and each community continue to grow dramatically.

As well as offering fine education and housing, this Region has excellent hospital services. The regional hospital, located in Cranbrook, is under constant expansion and offers a full range of care facilities. Hospitals are also located in Kimberley, Fernie, Sparwood and Invermere, with a treatment and diagnostic center in Elkford.



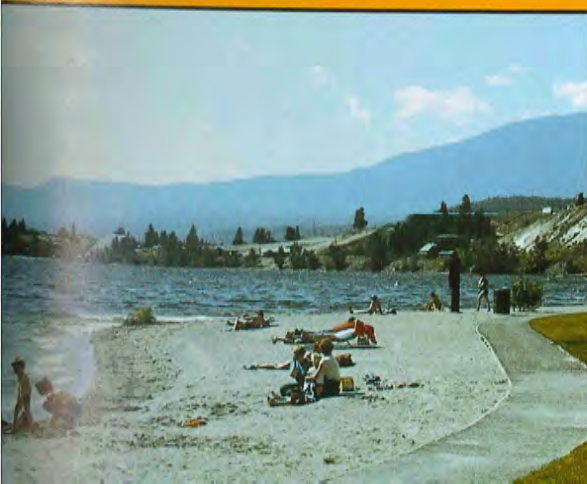
# Tourism and Recreation

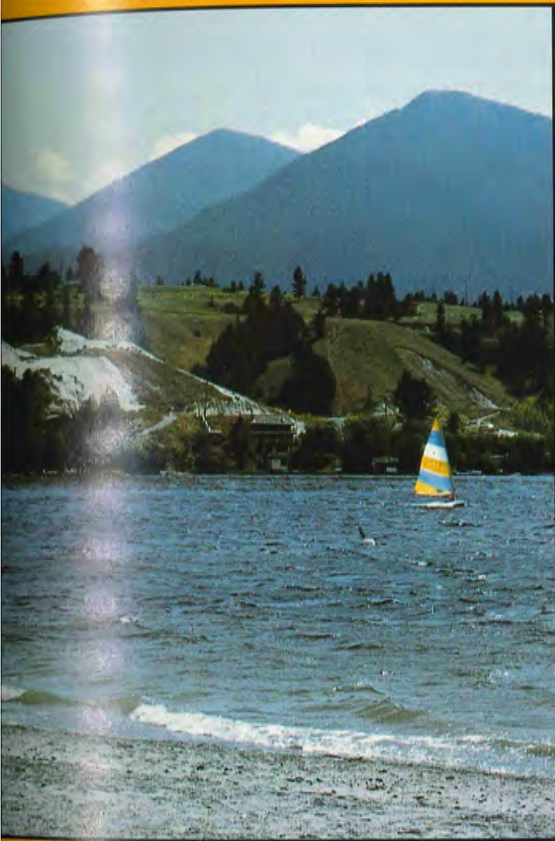
The Region averages 2,200 hours of sunshine annually. The relatively dry warm summers and the consistent high elevation snowfalls have been major factors in the development of the Region's year-round tourism and recreation industry.

The role of the tourist industry in the East Kootenay Regional District has been steadily growing. The spectacular mountain scenery and moderate climate have served to popularize a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities throughout the year for the benefit of both local residents and visitors. The number of visitors increases annually at a steady 8-10%.

Tourist attractions within the Regional District vary with the season. Summer is the peak tourist season and sees a concentration of visitors and recreational activity around the warm water lakes, with the national parks drawing a large number of visitors.

Power boating, sailing, water-skiing, swimming and windsurfing are popular at the large lakes, with fishing also an important attraction for many smaller lakes. White water rafting has become an exciting attraction. Kootenay and Banff National Parks offer wilderness hiking, canoeing and camping. Provincial wilderness parks include Bugaboo Glacier, Top-of-the-World, St. Mary's, Elk Lakes and Mt. Assiniboine, plus the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy offering many of the popular recreational facilities. Close to Cranbrook is Fort Steele Provincial Park, a reconstructed 1880's mining town and fort.





Winter travel generators are related mainly to skiing, which has undergone dramatic growth. Alpine, cross country and heli-skiing are offered at many of the centers. Panorama, Kimberley's North Star, Fernie's Snow Valley, Fairmont and Radium are the major ski centers. North Star Mountain is the longest lit night run in North America, with night skiing also available at Fairmont.

The hot springs at Radium and Fairmont, which are open year-round, serve as important tourist attractions. At present the Region has four-season destination resorts in Kimberley, Panorama, Fairmont and Radium.

The East Kootenay Regional District has a variety of accommodation facilities, including hotels, motels and campgrounds; with a growing trend in the number of condominiums, vacation homes and time share facilities to augment these facilities.



# City of Cranbrook

Nestled in the center valley of this Rocky Mountain haven is the 'Key City', the City of Cranbrook. Positioned uniquely at the junction of East/West Highway 3 and North/South Highway 93/95, the City has the advantage of an abundance of land available for both industrial and residential purposes.

This modern city offers a complete range of professional, financial, medical and commercial services. It also has many of the federal and provincial government offices.

Cranbrook has two fully serviced industrial parks, housing the existing service and manufacturing industries. The City has completed a 35 hectare expansion of the Cranbrook Industrial Park, that should be capable of meeting the needs for at least six years.

The City states as its planning goal the creation of a dynamic and pleasant urban community in which to live, work and play, and one which enhances the physical, social and economic well-being of its citizens.

The 'Key City' of the mineral rich Kootenays is continuing the balanced, orderly growth that is characteristic of Cranbrook.



# District of Elkford

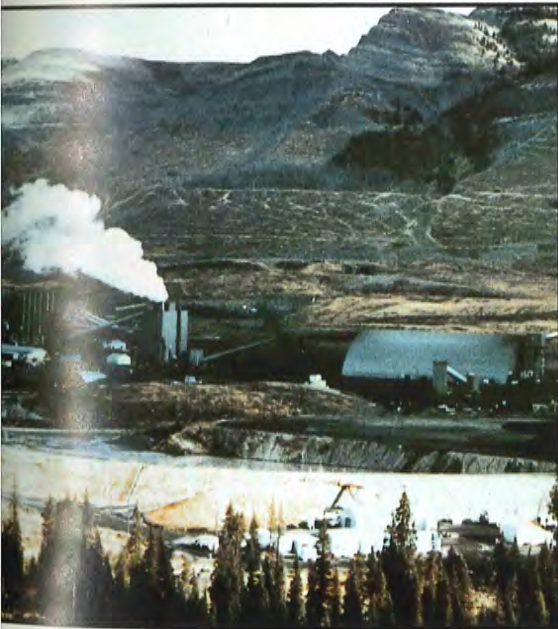
The District of Elkford represents the height of opportunity, as it enjoys an economic boom that is unparalleled in the province. Elkford is a 'boom town with a blue print', and the population is expected to double in the next few years.

The impetus? Coal. The black diamond of British Columbia's future. The coal resources in British Columbia's Southeast region are so vast that, after a century of exploration, they have yet to be fully defined.

The District's serviced industrial park, and its area for expansion, will have no difficulty handling the industrial growth of this decade.

Elkford offers attractive housing and building sites, with a comparable level of property taxation.

In its scenic setting, Elkford offers many recreational facilities with a golf course, local ski hill, tennis courts and many outdoor activities.



# City of Fernie

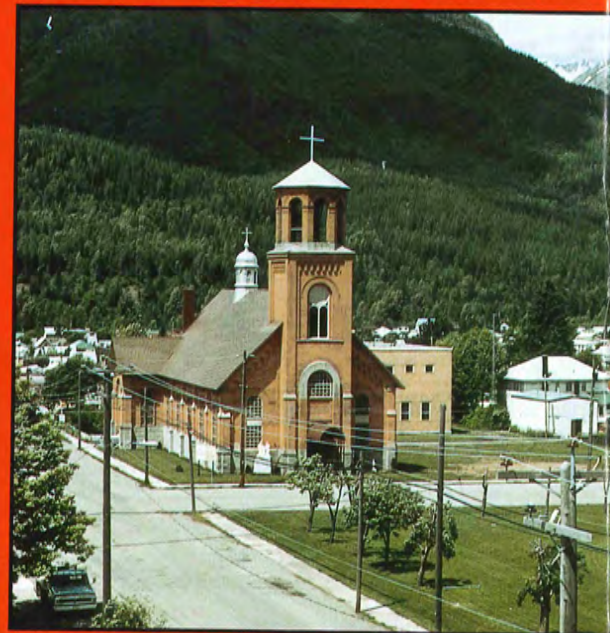
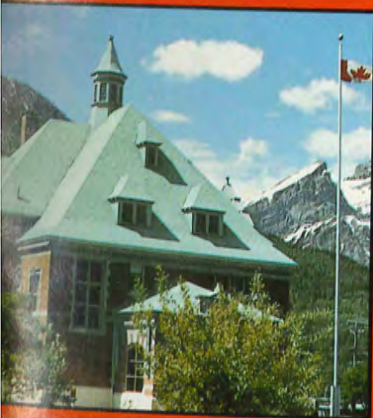
On a clear winter's day from the ski slopes of Snow Valley, you can see — well, perhaps not forever but certainly a long way into the prosperous future that the City of Fernie will inherit from its colourful past and prosperous present.

The continual upgrading of professional and commercial services reinforces the City of Fernie's position as a service center for the coal rich Elk Valley. The possible new mine developments in close proximity to Fernie further enhance its future development.

Not relying totally on coal mining and service, the City is moving ahead with plans to develop into a four-season destination resort. With the abundance of rivers and lakes and Snow Valley Ski Resort nearby, the recreational opportunities are unlimited, both summer and winter.

Fernie presently has a light industrial park, with plans underway to develop a new 40 hectare heavy industrial park with rail. Concurrent with this is the continual upgrading of the City's domestic services.

The City of Fernie, with its picturesque setting, continued growth and development prospects, can only look to the future with enthusiasm.



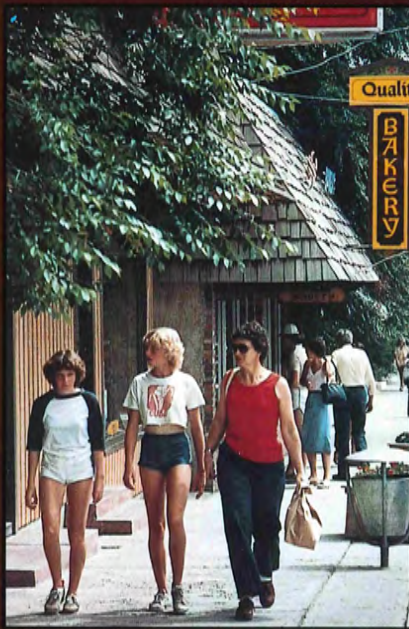
# District of Invermere

Strategically located in the Columbia Valley on North/South Highway 93/95 is the bustling community of Invermere. It began as a fur trading house and served as the focal point of the early development of the Valley. More recently, it has become the tourism center of the East Kootenay Region.

The District of Invermere is the service focal point for the mining and forest industries of the Columbia Valley. Processing of minerals in the area is becoming more feasible, and Invermere is preparing itself with the development of a new serviced industrial park.

It is the immediate service and business center for the four-season destination resorts of Radium, Panorama, Fairmont and Windermere, as well as for the recreational paradise along the Columbia and Windermere Lakes. With its beautiful climate, Invermere is a tourist haven offering a multitude of recreational activities.

The diversified economy of Invermere looks even brighter in the future, with many new developments planned. These new projects will continue to reinforce Invermere's position as the Region's northern service community.



# City of Kimberley

Kimberley is a picturesque city in the heart of the Kootenays that has imaginatively costumed its downtown core in the festive colour and quaint architecture of an older period Bavarian alpine village. The effect is charming, accented by the City's spectacular mountain setting. In this fashion, Kimberley has set itself uniquely apart from the conventional glass-masonry-neon sameness of a thousand urban main streets.

The continued improvements of recreation facilities on North Star Mountain, coupled with new developments for summer recreation, makes Kimberley an excellent four-season destination resort. Kimberley is also home to the delightful Cominco Flower Gardens and many near-by lakes and rivers offering quiet alternative forms of recreation.

Originally a mining town, Kimberley has expanded into other areas, while retaining mining as its major economic base. The production of fertilizer and the potential processing of other minerals guarantees the economic stability of the future.

Kimberley's industrial park houses the City's commercial and service sectors with room for expansion.





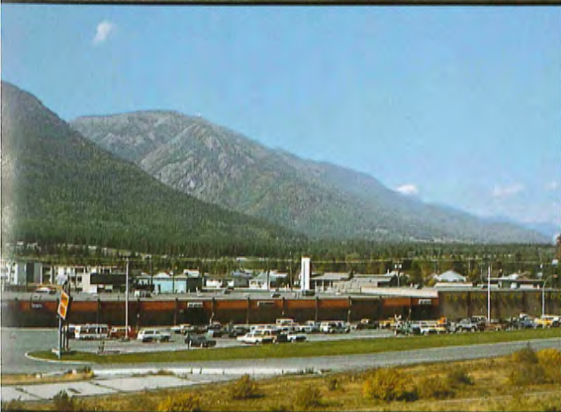
# District of Sparwood

Sparwood, the 'Clean Coal Capital of Canada', is located geographically in the center of the Southeast coal fields. Current mining developments have made the District of Sparwood one of the fastest growing communities in the Province.

It is situated on Highway 3 and is rapidly developing its commercial and recreational facilities to cope with, not only the current record growth, but also the growth projected into the next century.

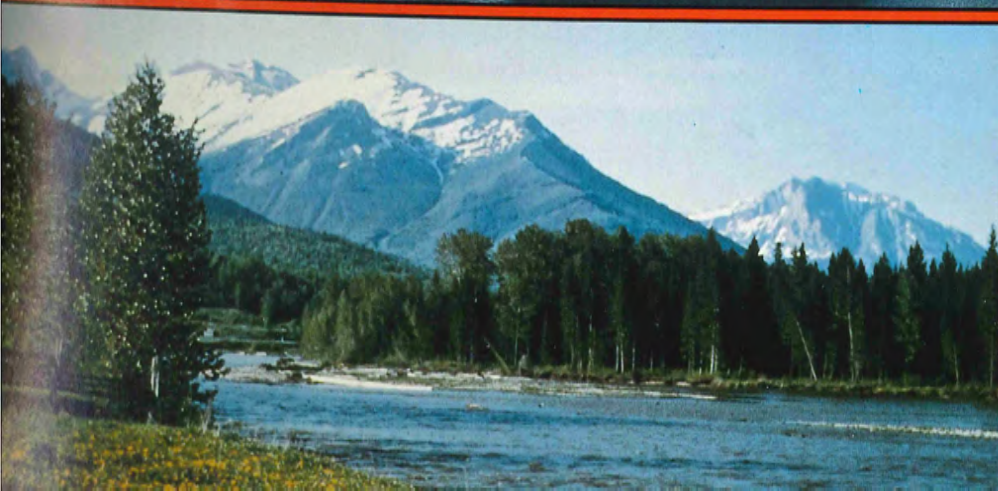
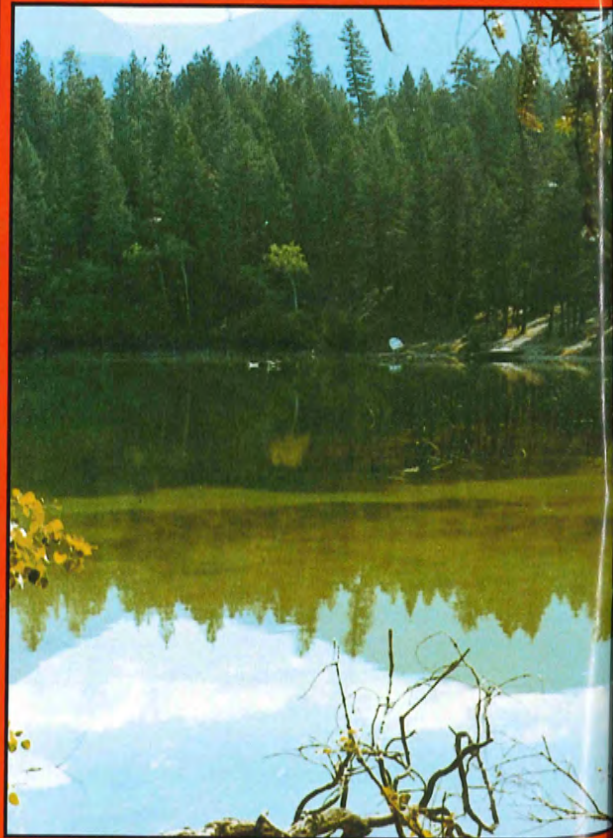
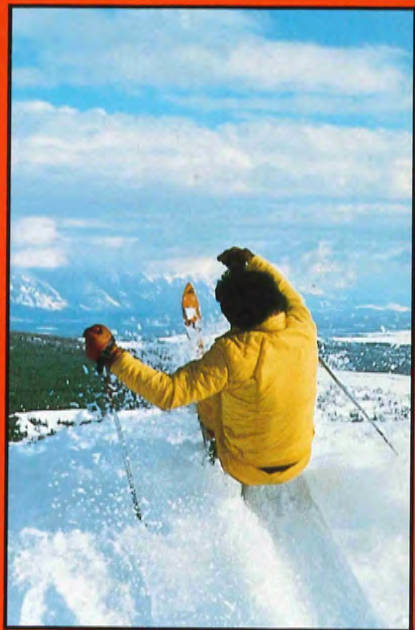
Sparwood has been the heavy industrial service center for the Southeast coal field since its inception as a new community. The development of the new Alpine Estates was necessitated by the constant demand for industrial land.

This active community is constantly upgrading and planning new facilities and, with the development potential of the commercial and service sectors, it will continue to serve as an important focal point for industry in the Elk Valley.



# Regional District of East Kootenay

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