

Finance minister Mike de Jong discusses B.C. budget with Abby chamber



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Published: **March 03, 2015 04:00 PM**

Updated: **March 03, 2015 04:154 PM**

After recently tabling a surplus budget, finance minister MLA Mike de Jong was in Abbotsford on Friday to discuss the province's financial outlook with the chamber of commerce.

And the numbers look pretty good, especially compared to other Canadian provinces.

"All that qualifies us for membership in a fairly exclusive club - and that club is what I call the balanced budget club. Its a pretty unique position we are in," he said.

The B.C. government forecasts a surplus of \$879 million in 2014-15.

De Jong, who has been a member of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce for 20-plus years, went over some key budget highlights, areas for strategic investment and forecast budget surpluses for the next three years.

The finance minister received the biggest cheer from the crowd when showed a PowerPoint slide titled additional

investment areas in the budget, which included two items that will directly impact Abbotsford: aerospace and buy local.

"You heard me talk about aerospace. I'm very proud of this partnership – it is an initiative that was born out of Abbotsford. The people involved are from Abbotsford. The leaders who are taking us and establishing ourselves on the national stage are from this part of British Columbia. So we have taken some of your money and we have made a commitment over the next number of years of several million dollars to promote the aerospace sector both nationally and internationally," said de Jong.

"We think its going to pay rich dividends in the same way that partnering with the forest sector has paid rich dividends going forward. Folks you've got to know that what's taking place at [YXX](#) is going to benefit generations of folks from Abbotsford. It is incredible."

Friday's luncheon drew a large group of business people and community leaders.

"On behalf of the chamber I would like to extend my congratulations to the minister on the third consecutive balanced budget and the province's Triple A credit rating. Within this budget there are some real good news stories for Abbotsford specifically in relation to the promotion of our agriculture products (buy local) and aerospace," said [Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce](#) president Mike Welte.

"It was refreshing to see that this government realizes that they need to keep revenues higher than expenses in order to balance the budget. A practice understood and shared by the business community."

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