

Pensions make ¢ents



Store owner Ken Lee with customers Gordon and Sandy Hartney.

"We spend a high percentage of our Municipal Pension Plan retirement income in the community"

– Gordon Hartney, plan member

Fraser Valley retirees keep coming back for fresh produce and friendly service

SURREY, BC – Ken Lee's deli counter cooler is broken, and he's been scrambling for the past week to get it repaired, but in spite of this, he's smiling.

"Ken always has that great smile," says Municipal Pension Plan retiree Sandy Hartney.

Sandy, a former payroll clerk, and her husband Gordon, a retired Vancouver firefighter, have been Superior Produce customers for 19 years. Now receiving the pension they saved for during their working lives, the Hartneys are deliberate about where they shop. "We search out quality products for their value within our budget."

They also make a point of supporting local business. "We spend a high percentage of our Municipal Pension Plan retirement income in the community," Gordon says, and they appreciate that Ken sells local seasonal produce and products.

The Hartneys are contributors to the BC economy because, when they spend their pension in the community, they support local businesses and local jobs. Their pension income also has a positive effect on the province's gross domestic product (GDP), a measurement of how well the economy's doing.

In 2014, BC public sector pension plans made in excess of \$3 billion in payments to beneficiaries, and 97 per cent of those beneficiaries were BC residents. The payments supported \$1.66 billion in provincial GDP and 31,000 jobs in the province, according to Assessing the Economic Impacts of Pension-Income Spending in British Columbia, a report prepared by Urban Futures.

For Ken Lee, retirees like the Hartneys are vital to his business's continued success. Located in a strip mall across from an Indian-style Chinese restaurant, Superior Produce is a microcosm of the community. There are mounds of gleaming, sweet-smelling fruit and vegetables alongside neatly arranged rows of Italian, German, Japanese, Korean and Indian delicacies.

"We just try to be a little different," says Ken as he arranges one pile of his five apple varieties. He opened the store in 1994 and still starts his day by putting out the produce with the help of his staff. "It gives me a chance to look over everything."

He estimates about 30 per cent of his customers are retired and sees the direct economic impact of the pension dollars spent in his store. He employs four people full time, some of whom have worked in the store for 15 years. "We have become a family."

2014

Economic impacts of BC public sector pension plans

In excess of
\$3 billion

BC public sector pension plans made in payments to beneficiaries.

Economic impact of pension income spending from BC public sector pension plans on provincial GDP.

\$1.66 billion

\$310 million

Total government tax revenue from BC public sector pension income spending.

BC public sector pension recipients who were residents of BC.

97%

Pension income spending from the BC public sector pension plans had as **strong** an economic impact on provincial **GDP** as the **forestry** and **logging** industry.

31,000

Number of jobs supported by pension income spending from BC public sector pensions.

All findings from *Assessing the Economic Impacts of Pension-Income Spending in British Columbia*, prepared by Urban Futures, July 2015. Click [HERE](#) for the full report.