

# Pensions make ¢ents



Shop owner Katja Marek with customer Marie Allen.



## Municipal Pension Plan

*"Some of my customers clearly have limited incomes ... and to me, it is a compliment that they choose to spend it here"*

– Katja Marek, business owner

## Okanagan community benefits from energetic retiree quilter

**KAMLOOPS, BC** – A quilt shop is a community, and retired health care support worker Marie Allen has found hers in a small Kamloops store that is a hive of creative female energy.

Katja's Quilt Shoppe is located in an unassuming shopping complex with a view of passing freight trains, but inside, the store is an intoxicating blend of colours and patterns, stuffed floor to ceiling with bolts of cotton, muslin and flannels.

"It's the best little quilt shop," says Marie, who expected to hate quilting but fell in love with the art 14 years ago. "When I am asked what my favourite quilting tool is, I often answer 'my credit card,'" she laughs, noting that she is a regular at the sale table.

Marie has an economic impact on the Kamloops economy by spending the pension she saved for locally. Her retirement income supports local jobs and businesses, and also has a positive impact on the 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 direct 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.

Store owner Katja Marek says at least half her customers are retired. "Some of my customers clearly have limited incomes, but they come in and carefully consider how to spend their money, and to me, it is a compliment that they choose to spend it here."

Marie says she's lost track of how many quilts she has made and gives most away. "It's a quilting town. There isn't a baby in this town who hasn't been given a quilt."

That's in part because the Kamloops quilters donate to families in need and regularly raise funds for community organizations. In 2012, Katja created a fundraiser for hospice where quilters signed up for a commitment fee and were charged 50 cents if they didn't pick up their weekly quilting instruction sheets on time. "Over the years we've raised over \$10,000."

Katja is a strong advocate of supporting her community and local business. She plans to make a quilted wall hanging that will read: *Buy local or bye bye local*. "I've learned if you don't support your neighbours, they won't be there for you."

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.