



Kristi Patton/Western News

**TAP THAT CASK** — Cannery Brewing staff Ian Dyck (front) and Ross Thompson set up to pour traditional cask-conditioned Porter at the Cannery Brewing 10th anniversary party held on Sunday. The invite-only event featured music, prizes and food made using Cannery Brewing beers for flavouring.

## City cracks top 10 for investment

**Kristi Patton**  
Western News Staff

Out of all the cities and towns throughout the province, Penticton has been ranked ninth for real estate investment.

The Real Estate Investment Network released its latest report this week identifying the top regions that are likely to perform amongst the best over the coming years.

"The groundwork by economic development and the city is turning the ship around a bit here," said Peter Byrnes, real estate agent at Coldwell Banker Okanagan Realty in Penticton.

Byrnes said commercial real estate has been slow, but movement in the past six months shows investors are looking for solid investment properties. Most recently the Liquidation World site was sold to Landmark Cinemas and land on Eckhardt Avenue has been purchased by a developer to build a dormitory for Okanagan Hockey School.

"These mean construction jobs at these solid investments and positive economic spinoffs for the community long term," said Byrnes, adding the economic investment zones created by the city are also an attractant to investors. "I think that is a really strong consideration when anybody is taking a look at investing or developing is the long term tax issue and giving people that positive inducement to invest and develop in Penticton is really strong for us."

The REIN report takes information on the latest statistics, economic and social trends. It also looked at such factors as: is the area's population growing faster than the provincial average, are new infrastructures being built to handle the growth, is the area creating new jobs and taking steps to maintain current employ-

ment levels, will Penticton benefit from an economic or real estate ripple effect, has political leadership created an economic growth atmosphere and are there major transportation improvements in the works.

Don Campbell, president of REIN, said Penticton has long attracted vacation goers and retirees, but it is the new residents that is making the city appealing.

"In recent years, the city has also become one key city in the Okanagan region that has benefitted from the sanctuary trend. People who want that small town feel with the amenities of a major city like Kelowna less than an hour away have seen the benefits of Penticton and moved to the city," said Campbell.

Penticton economic development officer, David Arsenault said the city still has low manufacturing costs comparable to the Pacific North American region and local businesses are utilizing that for continuous growth.

"It's great to see all of these independent reports, reviews and best practice studies all coming back with the same denominator — Penticton is a great place to live and invest," said Arsenault.

Ranked in the top 10 towns in order are; Surrey, Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, Kamloops, Abbotsford, Fort. St. John, Dawson Creek, Kelowna and Comox Valley. Behind Penticton are Prince George and Vancouver.

"Penticton offers its businesses a competitive advantage and we are starting to see signs of a rebound from a difficult economic period. We are not out of the woods, as like most communities, we rely on the economics of a global economy," said Arsenault. "This is just another sign that what we are doing as a community has been noticed and makes business sense."

Arsenault said 2012, in regards to construction, looks promising with several new projects underway.

## Tourism campaign receives TOTA award

Western News Staff

A marketing campaign to win a dream vacation by Penticton and Wine Country Tourism has earned an award.

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association gave out the award for a marketing campaign over \$15,000 at its annual tourism summit last week in Sun Peaks. The award recognizes "a creative, comprehensive and innovative marketing campaign that

has resulted in increased tourism revenue."

The win a dream vacation campaign, promoted on Global BC TV through Penticton and Wine Country Tourism's website and social media avenues as well as other online marketing efforts, invited contest entrants to design their own perfect Penticton vacation.

"We knew this campaign was special when we launched it and the results were pretty sensational," said Jessie Campbell, tourism

marketing manager for Penticton.

Campbell said the campaign drew the highest number of entries of any contest the organization has administered to date and was in the top percentile of all contests ever run on Global BC. It also resulted in a major spike of interest in Penticton, according to data from the [www.tourismpenticton.com](http://www.tourismpenticton.com) website. This helped Penticton reach its targeted growth for tourism in 2011, despite a challenging economy.