

Richmond Chamber in the News

National Eye on Richmond CBC anchorman Peter Mansbridge addressed about 140 people at a Richmond Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Radisson Hotel

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(by Nelson Bennett-Richmond News)

If you happened to tune into The National last night, you probably noticed the nightly CBC broadcast coming, not from Toronto, but Vancouver.

One of the themes of the broadcast was how communities such as Richmond have been enriched by immigration and ethnic diversity.

"The signal to the rest of the country is just how we can all benefit from this new Canada," Peter Mansbridge, anchor of the The National, told 140 people at a Richmond Chamber of Commerce luncheon Tuesday.

Mansbridge was in Richmond as part of a location broadcast of The National in what has become an annual ritual.

When the CBC asked viewers to recommend stories and locales, Ted Townsend, the city's manager of communications, suggested Richmond and the way it has benefited from immigration.

"He was one of the first people to send in an e-mail to talk about what's happened in this community over the past 20, 25 years, and has shown the rest of the country how a diverse community can benefit from new Canadians," Mansbridge said.

Mansbridge, a 35-year veteran of CBC, talked about the CBC's role in tying the country together, and spoke about some of the more memorable stories and events he has covered - like the plight of the Vietnamese boat people, the 1995 Quebec referendum on separation, and the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S.

"I was on the air for 44 hours," Mansbridge said of September 11. "When you're thrust on the air with a story like that, you're not really sure what happened. "That was a hard night."

Despite the National's efforts to get out occasionally from Toronto, Mansbridge was asked by Richmond Centre MLA Greg Halsey-Brandt why there appears to be such a dearth of B.C. pundits on The National's political panels.

"Is it a problem of timing, or are there no intellectuals out here?" he asked facetiously.

Having lived and worked in western Canada for many years, Mansbridge said he understood that Western Canadians sometimes feel left out of the picture. "When you're dealing with national political affairs, the people who know it best are those who are in Ottawa," Mansbridge said. However, he added The National is looking at a new format for its panel.

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