



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROJECT AIMS TO BOOST 'GROWN ON VANCOUVER ISLAND' SALES

COURTENAY – A new branding and marketing initiative will help increase awareness and demand for 'Made / Grown on Vancouver Island' food products.

Led by the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance, the project includes several partners including major grocery chains and Island region food producers. The Island Coastal Economic Trust is supporting the project with a \$30,000 funding contribution.

Aimed at promoting Island food products and obtaining baseline data from grocery chains, the project will strengthen and support the agri-foods sector, value-added processing and local supply chain growth.

“Our region has a large number of small agricultural producers and food processors who haven’t been able to get representation on the shelves of major grocers or other distribution outlets,” explained Phil Kent, ICET Board Chair. “This multi-phase project aims to serve as a proof-of-concept that targeted and coordinated marketing can significantly increase sales, creating the business case for grocers to carry more locally produced food and for smaller producers to invest in the certifications and business growth required to access larger markets.”

Working with Quality Foods, Country Grocer, Thrifty’s and Parallel 49 Grocers, the project features a point-of-sale promotional campaign along with broader multi-media campaigns across the region, with a target of at least 20 stores across the Island and Sunshine Coast region.

Island products in these grocery chains will be identified with the *Island Good* wordmark, on stickers, tags, posters and in advertising materials, making it easier for consumers to choose local products.

“Branding works best when it builds on an already-held sentiment amongst consumers,” said George Hanson, VIEA Executive Director. “People in the region have an appreciation for locally-grown and produced food products; this project will capitalize on that appreciation by rolling out a promotional campaign this spring and summer.”

The Island Good campaign was officially launched at Natural Pastures Cheese in Courtenay on March 19, the first of four launch events held at local production facilities throughout the Island. The campaign will run in participating grocers through to the end of summer.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC, the Island Coastal Economic Trust has been at the forefront of economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization for the past eleven years.

ICET is independently governed by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials, MLAs and appointees from the Island and Coast. This exceptional team of leaders collaborate to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community centered decision-making process, ICET has approved almost \$50 million in funding for over 180 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2500 construction phase jobs and 2600 long term permanent jobs.

A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

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