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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and  
Responsible for Labour

### **Funding helps Northern Vancouver Island plan for future**

PORT ALICE – Looking for ways to diversify the economy is a top priority for Port Alice and the North Island Region.

The Village of Port Alice and the North Island Region have received \$30,000 in funds from the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour. The Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) is matching that investment with an additional \$30,000.

The \$60,000 in total funding will support the creation of an economic development and implementation strategy for Port Alice and to the Regional District of Mount Waddington (North Island region). They will work with North Island communities to prioritize regional economic initiatives.

Each project will involve a group of local stakeholders who will guide and inform the work going forward. The regional district will be reaching out to communities and talking with local industry in Port Alice, Port McNeill, Port Hardy and Alert Bay to seek their input for this plan.

Port Alice and the North Island are in the midst of challenging times with the recent announcement that a major employer in the area, Neucel Specialty Cellulose, is on temporary curtailment until 2016.

Port Alice and region has an economic history tied to a small number of industries which mainly includes the forestry sector. Plans are to enhance economic development by attracting investment and supporting new and existing businesses.

A Regional Economic Development Forum will be held to bring together government, business, key organizations and the communities to brainstorm ways to strengthen business development on Northern Vancouver Island.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour –**

"I know the temporary closure of the Neucel Pulp Mill has meant a stressful time for Port Alice residents. Steps need to be taken to diversify the local economy and it is key that a sound economic strategy is in place. Our government is pleased to support a strategic plan that will help grow and strengthen the economy."

#### **Village of Port Alice Mayor Jan Allen –**

"Diversifying our local economy is critical for the Village of Port Alice. We need to create a variety of employment opportunities. Our future lies with a diversified economy which will

support forestry, tourism, marine based ventures and the development of amenities that attract families, new residents, retirees and visitors alike."

**Phil Kent, chair, Island Coastal Economic Trust –**

"The North Island region has an economic history tied to a small number of industries, and preparing for a diversified economic future means investing in planning today. Our mandate is to support economic development across the region. We've seen first-hand that when communities and stakeholders work together like they are in this project, the plans and initiatives they develop are strong, robust, and ready for implementation."

**Dave Rushton, chairman, Regional District of Mount Waddington –**

"The Regional District of Mount Waddington has been working with North Island communities for several years to help diversify our economy. The proposed Regional Economic Development Forum will provide the communities with an opportunity to join Port Alice to identify common themes and objectives and co-ordinate efforts to attract new investment and jobs to the region."

**Quick Facts:**

- To keep British Columbia's economy diverse, strong and growing, since September 2011, the BC Jobs Plan has been building on the strengths of eight of the province's key sectors using B.C.'s educated and skilled workforce.
- The Island Coast Economic Trust (ICET) is also known as the North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust and was established in 2006 under the North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust Act 2006.
- \$50 million dollars in funding was given to ICET from the Province to encourage economic development in North and Central Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.
- Port Alice is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a four-day reunion from July 31 to Aug. 1.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about the ICET program, please visit: <http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca/>

To find out information about Port Alice: <http://portalice.ca/>

BC Jobs Plan: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/>

**Media Contact:**

Media Relations  
Government Communications  
and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training  
and Responsible for Labour  
250 387-2799

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