



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2015

\$100,000 MARKETING PLAN TO BRING INTERNATIONAL MARINE TOURISTS TO REGION

COURTENAY – An extensive marketing and tourism product-development plan funded by the Island Coastal Economic Trust will leverage recent marine infrastructure investments, leading to an expected \$6.4M boost in regional revenues, and creation of 50 new jobs on the Island and Sunshine Coast.

The BC Ocean Boating Tourism Association received a \$30,000 investment from ICET in their nearly-\$100,000 project. This is the second-phase of the Association’s strategic marketing efforts, and ICET’s funding of both phases builds on their ongoing investments in marine infrastructure across the region.

“The tourist in a boat has very different needs than the tourist in car,” said David Mailloux, Chair of the BCOBTA. “No other place recognizes the marine tourism market like we do, and no other place can offer our mix of amenities and wild nature.”

As part of the first phase of the BCOBTA project, a detailed new website was developed. Launched on April 15, www.ahoybc.com provides a wealth of information for marine tourists.

In recent years more than \$40M has been invested in marine infrastructure - harbours, amenity areas, and other boat-tourism focused projects - and the time is right for developing the marketing programs that will bring those tourists from around the world to the Island and Sunshine Coast.

“One of ICET’s strengths is our ability to identify regional opportunities, and to help communities and organizations leverage the investments from multiple sources,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “This project will bring the tourists to revitalized marine amenities, many of which are also ICET-funded developments.”

As a regional marketing initiative, this project is especially beneficial to smaller and remote communities which may not have capacity on their own for international marketing. Bringing marine tourists to communities around the region creates direct benefits in the hospitality, marine goods and services, recreation, and transportation sectors.

Part of the project includes development of a database of businesses in the marine service industry, further adding to the broad economic benefits that accrue from enhanced tourism numbers and connecting to a valued provincial brand –Super, Natural British Columbia.

“Our greatest asset as coastal communities is our wild but civilized coast,” said Mailloux. “Creating a long-term, strategic plan that capitalizes on the investments and collaborative marketing opportunities along the coast is good business.”

As a high-value tourist population, increased marine traffic is also expected to increase business startup and growth in boat repair, moorage, and other maintenance and technical services.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is a \$50 million endowment established in 2006 by the Government of British Columbia to help diversify the economies of central and northern Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.

ICET is guided by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials and MLAs and five appointees. This exceptional team of leaders collaborates to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community-centred decision-making process, ICET has approved \$49 million for over 130 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have leveraged over \$273 million in incremental funding into the region.

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

-end-

For further information:

Line Robert, CEO
Island Coastal Economic Trust
Tel. 250-871-7797 (Ext. 227)
line.robert@islandcoastaltrust.ca

Mayor Phil Kent, ICET Chair
City of Duncan
Tel. 250-709-0186
mayor@duncan.ca

Michael McLaughlin, Project Manager
BC Ocean Boating Tourism Association
Tel. 604-886-3700
bcobta@ruralfutures.ca