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MARKETING STRATEGY FOCUSES ON JOBS, LIFESTYLE TO RECRUIT SKILLED WORKERS TO RDMW REGION

COURTENAY – A project to market the Mount Waddington region to support the attraction of skilled workers will receive a \$30,000 contribution from the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The project is a part of a larger initiative that will enable community partners in the Regional District of Mt. Waddington to deliver an education and training strategy to support forest sector workforce retention and attraction. ICET funding will support the broader initiative with a focused regional marketing plan.

The downturn in traditional resource sectors over the past decades has resulted in an important decline in the available skilled labour force in the region. However, resource jobs - particularly in forestry - still exist, and employers are seeking skilled workers.

“While there have been challenges in the resource industries on the North Island, it’s clear that the forestry sector is alive and well” said Phil Kent, ICET Chair. “Older workers are nearing retirement, and there’s a crucial need for skilled, entry-level workers to choose this region as their home.”

The region-wide initiative began in 2015 with extensive community consultation, where sectoral supporters came forward. The strategy includes eight formal partners including the Regional District of Mount Waddington, Town of Port McNeill, Community Futures Mount Waddington, Western Forest Products, Woss Residents Association, School District 85, North Island College, Strategic Natural Resource Consultants, and the North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society.

“There’s broad community support for this project including First Nations, industry, and education,” said Andrew Hory, Chair, Regional District of Mount Waddington. “This collaborative approach gives us confidence that we’re going to find the creative solutions we need to be successful.”

The successful implementation of this strategy will result in the attraction of the skilled workers required to keep the forest industry vibrant as well as the new families and services that thriving communities need.

“The North Island provides an affordable lifestyle and great quality of life for those who appreciate small communities and outdoor adventure,” said Kent.

The project is currently underway with completion anticipated by January 2018.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust is celebrating its tenth year of investment in economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization.

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-centred decision-making process, ICET has approved more than \$49 million for over 170 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. ICET investments have leveraged over \$270 million in 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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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

Pat English,
Manager, Economic Development,
Regional District of Mount Waddington
250-956-3301
penglish@rdmw.bc.ca