

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOOD HUB WILL HELP GROW NEW BUSINESS ON TEXADA

COURTENAY – Gardeners, farmers, cooks, bakers, and other ‘home-based’ food producers on Texada Island will now have an opportunity to grow a business, thanks to an investment of \$22,100 from the Island Coastal Economic Trust. The funding will support the Texada Agriculture Group Society with the creation of a licensed commercial kitchen space called the Texada Food Hub.

The community kitchen incubator responds to small business and local entrepreneurship potential by providing licensed kitchen facilities, required for commercial sales, on a user-pay basis. Along with the expected equipment and materials, the site will also provide training and business development opportunities for users.

“Many of our larger food based businesses start as small business,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “The experience around BC with farmers markets and food processing incubator spaces has demonstrated that, given an opportunity to develop and market their products, many of these small and specialty food processors are able to grow and thrive.”

In recent years, the province of BC has seen a number of its niche food product companies succeed and reach new markets beyond their communities, including lucrative export markets.

“Many of our members are small enterprises without enough capital to invest in their own commercial kitchen, but they have great products with huge potential for local and regional commercial sales,” explains Linda Bruhn of the Texada Agriculture Group Society. “This type of business development is well aligned with our local values and enables us to build on our existing agriculture production.”

The Food Hub is expected to generate incremental economic activity through Island-based entrepreneurs selling products into local retailers, restaurants, and via internet-based retail and wholesale opportunities. The facility is expected to be fully operational by fall of 2015.

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 \$48 million for over 125 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have leveraged more than \$270 million in incremental funding into the region.

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

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