



**ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST ANNOUNCES \$1.7 MILLION
CONTRIBUTION TO THE TSU-MA-AS TRANSFORMATION CENTRE IN
PORT ALBERNI**

**For Immediate Release
May 2, 2008**

Lake Cowichan, BC - Mayor W.J. (Jack) Peake, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET), today announced a funding commitment of \$1.7 million towards the construction of the Tsu-ma-as Transformation Centre in Port Alberni. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$4.4 million.

Chair Peake explained that the Transformation Centre contemplates the construction of an 11,400 square foot interpretive centre highlighting First Nations history and the stories behind other cultures, peoples and events that have shaped the Alberni Valley. "This project garnered our board's support because its primary objective is to diversify the economy of the Alberni Valley by developing a First Nations based interpretive centre which will create a regional tourist and cultural attraction of global significance," explained Peake.

Judith Sayers, President of the Tsu-ma-as Transformation Society, described the riverfront centre as an 'organic' space blending modern and traditional elements that compliment and enrich the natural setting in which they exist. Through the theme of transformation, the Centre will tell the stories of peoples past and present, and explore their ideas for the future.

"Visitors to the Centre will experience a connection with natural resources through hands-on cultural activities, dialogue with resident artists, film and live performances," added Sayers. A unique and advanced computer based language program will be housed in the Centre to contribute to the preservation and teaching of traditional language – a cornerstone of First Nation's culture. The Centre will also serve as a culturally appropriate and inspired space to host ceremonies and other events.

Construction is expected to begin in the next few months with a completion estimated in late 2009.

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About the Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust was established by Provincial legislation on February 27, 2006. It provides \$50 million that is managed by an independent board of directors made up of 8 locally elected government representatives and 5 provincially appointed members from the community. The board's mandate is to makes strategic investments in regional economic priorities such as forestry, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, economic development, Olympic opportunities, agriculture and aquaculture, and small business. Information about the Trust can be found on www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

-30-

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