

PLAN TO ATTRACT HOME-BASED KNOWLEDGE WORKERS TO NORTH ISLAND SET IN MOTION

Regional District of Mount Waddington to capitalize on improvements to broadband and rise in remote work

COURTENAY, 17 November 2020 – New opportunities for economic development and diversification will be explored through a new Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW) attraction campaign targeting home-based knowledge workers, thanks to funding support through the Island Coastal Economic Trust's (ICET) *Economic Development Readiness Program* (EDRP).

Over the last few decades, the North Island has experienced several long-term macro trends, creating disruption and change in the region's traditional resource sector employment base. As improvements in technology and connectivity emerge, and the more recent COVID related workplace adjustments have evolved, economic diversification opportunities for rural communities have been gaining new momentum.

To capitalize on these growing trends, the RDMW has partnered with the Vancouver Island North Training and Attraction Society (VINTAS) to develop a strategy encouraging remote workers, independent agents or other professionals who have the opportunity to work anywhere, to relocate to the North Island.

"Attracting a new workforce to the MWRD will provide a stabilizing diversification to the local economy which has been subject to the cyclical fluctuations of resource-based employment," says ICET Board Chair Aaron Stone. "Offering diverse career options for graduating youth, is also an important way of motivating them to remain or return to the region once their post-secondary studies are complete."

The attraction of a new home-based workforce to the MWRD will target a high value sector of the labour force, with relative high incomes and consequential spending. The project will include the definition of primary and secondary market segments and key motivators; the identification of barriers; a brand review of the myvancouverislandnorth.ca website; a portfolio of messages, including text, graphics, video and social media; a detailed workplan; and an integration into an ambassador program.

"We've been witnessing in recent years an increase in the number of knowledge workers, in the areas of computer graphics, software development, engineering and general business consulting, establish their home-based businesses here," says Andrew Hory, Chairman, Regional District of Mount Waddington. "It is clear there is an opportunity to capitalize and build on this sector as a key driver of economic growth in our region."

The project is supported through ICET's Economic Development Readiness Program's Investment Attraction funding stream, which provides up to \$30,000 in matching funds.

The project is expected to get underway shortly.

For more information about the Economic Development Readiness Program, please see our guidelines and application form: www.islandcoastaltrust.ca/economic-development-readiness



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

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About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) mission is to create a more diverse and globally competitive Island and Coastal economy. In partnership with local and regional government, non-profits and indigenous communities, ICET serves nearly half a million residents. Funding and support for economic infrastructure and other economic diversification initiatives is delivered through a unique community centered decision-making process. Since inception, ICET has approved more than \$53.8 million in funding for over 230 initiatives. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2550 construction phase jobs and 2700 long term permanent jobs. To learn more, visit www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

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