



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROJECT WILL UNCOVER DETAILED DATA ABOUT NORTH ISLAND TOURISTS

COURTENAY – While there are many sources of information at the ‘macro’ level about tourism spending, travel patterns, and more, communities need local visitor data in order to develop targeted tourism and economic development initiatives.

A new regional project, developed in collaboration with Vancouver Island North, Campbell River and Comox Valley tourism destination marketing organizations and supported by Vancouver Island University, will create a Visitor Experience Survey that intercepts visitors while they are in the communities and invites them to complete an online survey when they return home.

The \$17,000 project is receiving 50% of its funding from the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

“This project will provide detailed tourist behaviour and profile information that is directly relevant to individual communities,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “This type of hyper-local tourist intelligence will help communities develop the appropriate products for their target markets.”

The project will compile and analyze information including demographics, travel patterns, daily spending, satisfaction measures, and use of travel-planning resources. The information will serve to develop community and regional visitor profiles, along with a visitor information database.

“This type of data will help us all work better together” said Joli White, Vancouver Island North Tourism Coordinator. “The data will enable us to pinpoint the tourism markets that we share and to develop collaborative marketing products with our regional partners.”

While tourism is the primary sector targeted by this initiative, the data collected will support a wide range of economic development initiatives.

“The project will also enable communities to gain a better understanding of their unique value proposition, and develop complementary products and marketing strategies” stated Pat English, Economic Development Manager with the Regional District of Mount Waddington. “Of course

tourism attraction is the primary objective of the project, but the data will be just as valuable to help us attract new residents and businesses to our communities.”

Starting in May, and with completion expected by mid-October, the project is led by the Regional District of Mt. Waddington in collaboration with Vancouver Island North Tourism, Tourism Campbell River and Region and Comox Valley Economic Development. Surveys will be conducted in Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Port Alice, Alert Bay, Sointula, Telegraph Cove, City of Campbell River, Buckley Bay, Black Creek, Merville, Cumberland, Comox and Courtenay.

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 \$48.5 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

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