



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REMOTE COASTAL REGIONS TO GET MARINE MARKETING BOOST

COURTENAY – Small and remote coastal regions can prepare for a boost in tourism with the development of a collaborative marine tourism marketing and product venture. With funding from the Island Coastal Economic Trust, the BC Ocean Boating Tourism Association (BCOBTA) is entering into the third phase of its multi-year marketing program.

The AhoyBC.com website is a central component of this program. The site is a complete resource for marine tourists, offering everything from self-directed circle tour options to information on charters, west coast Aboriginal culture, marine parks, and more.

The next phase of the BCOBTA's work will enhance marketing for the Broughton Archipelago, Discovery Islands, and Vancouver Island West. These remote sub-regions are less-frequented by marine tourists and boaters, yet account for one-third of all BC ocean boating tourism revenue. Marketing efforts will include more detailed content for trip planning, attendance at boating shows and sending a video crew and travel writer to the Discovery Island region.

"The economic impact of marine tourism is huge, and even more so in remote regions and communities," explained David Mailloux, Chair of the BCOBTA. "Even though most boaters stay in the Salish Sea, those that venture to the remote sub-regions spend more because trip length is longer, party size is larger, and boats are bigger."

The Island Coast Economic Trust is contributing \$14,400 to the jointly-funded \$37,600 project to focus marketing efforts specifically on those remote regions. Enhanced community profiles, regional showcases and a presence at consumer shows are just some of the elements of the overall marketing effort.

"In 2014, marine tourists directly spent \$68 million in those three sub-regions alone, and the forecasts from the BCOBTA show that this project could generate a further \$12 million over the next five years," said ICET Chair Phil Kent. "Those numbers are significant, and that's why we are eager to see this effort get underway."

The Enhanced Marketing Project is expected to be complete by spring 2017.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is a \$50 million fund 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 \$49 million for over 160 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have generated over \$278 million in incremental funding into the region.

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

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