

# Comox Canadasia Society helps forge business links

## Group looks at building relationships, introducing businesses, to Asian market

By Melissa Fryer  
Echo Staff

The Comox Canadasia Society is helping local businesses sell their wares in international markets.

Through the Economic Development Society in the Comox Valley, the Canadasia society helps to form the relationships necessary for local businesses to sell their products overseas, said John Watson, the economic development officer.

"When we talk about trade with that region we need to talk about the building of relationships first," Watson said. "It's a little bit different than doing business in North America."

Most of the trade between North America and Asia is started through a third party. A business brings their product to a trader - like the Comox Canadasia society - who then decides if they have a client overseas that would want the product.

But because of restrictions due to freight and shipping overseas, the society focuses on selling value-added or specialty products.

"We have a ton of small business in the Comox Valley producing value added goods and specialty products," Watson said.

Watson uses a local emu farm, producing essential oils, as an example.

"That's a firm that we can connect into the Asian trading market," Watson said.

The Comox Canadasia society was formed back in 1999. The Economic Development Society hosted 70 Asian business people and five members of the Chinese Consulate General in the Valley, taking the visitors on familiarization tours. At that time, the Canadasia society was launched.

The society has about 200 members

"What we'll do through our membership is send it through into the Asian community in Vancouver," Watson said. "They'll take a look at it and see if they've got a client back in Asia that can utilize that particular product."

"Our job here is to try - as best we can - to introduce the company and it's up to them to do their own business."

Asia is still a huge market to be tapped. Exports to Japan alone accounted for nearly \$4 billion in 2001.

Recently, the Economic Development society and the Comox Canadasia society were in Vancouver for the Showcase of Canadian Exporters: A Link to the Asian Market. The event was a success as the societies were able to foster and strengthen business relationships between the Asian community and the Comox Valley.

For more information about the Canadasia society, contact the Economic Development Society at 334-2427.

Management Society.

Economic development for the Valley include: Promote and generally facilitate economic development; develop and implement strategies; assist in the development of properties and facilities of creating new economic opportunities; expanding existing economic opportunities; information on economic development or coordinate economic development services including a one stop business attraction centres, tourism development community economic activities and other development activities.

The public's invited to see about the work of the society at its next board meeting on Nov. 4 at 4 p.m. at Crow above mentioned organization sent their budgets coming year.

Former Newfoundland Peckford will also meet on the Pacific Offshore (POEG), a non-profit organization whose principal focus is to help people and businesses in the communities obtain possible benefits from Pacific energy development.

## Sales workshop offered locally

Small business owners looking to grow their sales are invited to a seminar Nov. 14.

The first in a series of workshops, the "How to Maximize Your Return on Investment with Effective Customer Relationship Management" seminar, will examine:

- How to qualify, increase and follow up sales leads efficiently;
- How to manage customer relations throughout the buying cycle;
- How to create attention-getting marketing collateral; and,

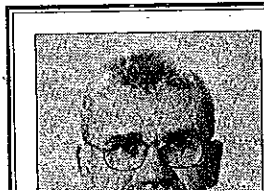
□ How to produce responsive ads that sell and make your marketing budget accountable to sales.

Chris Mapson, a principal with the Response Group, will lead the workshop, sponsored by the Comox Valley Economic Development Society and BC Wood.

The \$15 seminar is open to all small business owners.

Space is limited, and pre-registration is required.

For more information, call Sharon Hambly at 1-877-422-9663 or visit [www.bcwood.com](http://www.bcwood.com)



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