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For Immediate Release - June 28, 2007
Comox Valley – Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Cultural Capital Award Designation 'Significant' for Comox Valley
July 1 Celebrations to Kick-off Award Year

From renowned events to a dynamic regional Art Galley, to unique Francophone activities to inspiring First Nation culture, the Comox Valley is known as a hub for rich artistic and cultural activities. Thanks to the designation as a 2007 Cultural Capitals of Canada, Comox Valley arts and culture is taking a major step forward in its development.

"This designation recognizes the Comox Valley's leadership on a National level as an incredible arts and culture region," said Mayor Starr Winchester, City of Courtenay, "The municipalities and K'omoks First Nation brought together some of the best initiatives in the area and the impact will be significant to our diverse arts and culture groups."

The Comox Valley Land of Plenty Cultural Capital application was given the nod for \$750,000 by Heritage Canada and then matched by the grant stakeholders, municipalities and First Nations to 1.5 million worth of activity.

The award will assist 21 Comox Valley arts and cultural initiatives to add new components to existing events or create new cultural activity in the region.

Although 21 initiatives were included, the amount of activity in the sector goes well beyond that number, and the grant will enable a wide range of arts and cultural groups to take advantage of the

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award year. "The year is very much driven around creating legacy and building capacity for groups in the community. One important component will be a series of workshops that stakeholder and non-stakeholder groups will be invited to participate in which will help them build capacity in a variety of areas," explained Winchester.

The Comox Valley Cultural Capitals Steering Committee is comprised of Patti Fletcher, Town of Comox, Leslie Baird, Village of Cumberland, Randy Wiwchar, City of Courtenay, Melinda Knox, K'omoks First Nation, and Erik Eriksson, Director with Comox Valley Economic Development, the organization overseeing the grant administration.

"As Courtenay's July 1st Celebrations are themed Cultural Capitals – the event is the perfect place to formally launch the year," said Winchester adding, "The designation is something the Comox Valley can be really proud of and we will see some incredible activity and development as a result."

Inset Stories:

Dynamic Group Form Comox Valley Cultural Capitals Stakeholders

The list of Cultural Capitals award stakeholders reaches throughout the communities and K'omoks First Nation:

May 2007

19-21 Empire Days Celebration (Village of Cumberland)

June 2007

4-10 Seafest Shellfish Festival (K'omoks First Nation)

22-23 Miners' Memorial Days (Cumberland Museum & Archives)

July 2007

July 1-August 5 Symphony By the Sea (Courtenay Youth Music Camp)

6-8 Vancouver Island MusicFest

July 24 – August 5 'Waiting for the Parade' (Showcase Theatre Festival)

28 I-Hos Arts Festival (K'omoks First Nation)

August 2007

3-6 Filberg Festival (Filberg Park Association)
4 LobsterFest (CV Francophone Association)
4-6 Nautical Days (Comox Nautical Days)
11-12 Obon Tour (Village of Cumberland)
17-19 Big Time Out – Village of Talent (Village of Cumberland)

September 2007

7-9 Local Colours Festival (CV Arts Council)
15 Multicultural Celebration (K'omoks First Nation)

February 2008

16-24 Taiwanese Lantern Festival (Village of Cumberland)
Heritage Week (Cumberland Museum & Archives)
Lunar New Year Dinner (Village of Cumberland)

March 2008

Cabane a Sucre (CV Francophone Association)

Other Award Year Initiatives

Artist in Residence (CV Art Gallery)
Ginger Project (Showcase Theatre Festival)
Greenways to Galleries (CV Economic Development)
Cultural Development Coordinator (CV Economic Development)

In Good 'Cultural Capitals' Company

In addition to the Comox Valley, the prestigious 2007 Cultural Capitals of Canada designation was given to only four other communities across Canada, including:

- Edmonton, Alberta
- Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
- Baie-Saint-Paul, Quebec
- Huron-Wendat Nation of Wendake, Quebec

Winning the Cultural Capitals Award

A massive joint effort was waged in compiling the Comox Valley Land of Plenty Cultural Capitals grant application in 2006. Valley municipalities, K'omoks First Nations, arts and cultural groups and

community organizations jointly developed the submission outlining a vision for the new or expanded arts and cultural product as follows:

"Comox Valley, Land of Plenty is a celebration of creative abundance. Taking its name from the First Nations word k'omoks which means "land of plenty," the municipalities and First Nations that make up the Comox Valley have collaborated in developing an ambitious year-long program of cultural initiatives that will have a lasting legacy on the Valley's cultural sector. From the creation of an original musical theatre production that immortalises local legends, to the restoration of aboriginal cultural traditions, to work class public art installations and performance, Land of Plenty 2007 engages residents and visitors in exploring and celebrating the interrelationships between the community's fertile landscape, its heritage industries and its prolific creative sector.

- 30 -

For questions and comments:

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