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Military millions to be spent here

□ Aging base facilities getting major upgrades

By Marshall Jones
Echo Staff

Aging 19 Wing Comox facilities will require \$50 to \$80 million in improvements in the next five to ten years, adding a much-needed cash injection to the local economy, the Comox Valley Economic Development Society was told recently.

Lt. Col. Terry Leversedge said May 5 those figures do not include the millions of dollars already spent on the Search and Rescue training school, the \$6.5 million central tower, the \$13.5 million recreation and community centre and completion of a wash hangar.

The work is needed to repair facilities built when the base first opened between 1943 and 1952.

But these much-needed improvements come at a time when the military and 19 Wing Comox are feeling the brunt of huge budget cuts. Times have changed in Canada's military and to cope, the air force base has been forced to act more like a busi-

ness. "There have been more changes in the last three years than there has been in the 20 years previous to that," Leversedge said.

It now has a five-year business plan and is looking for partnership and co-operation with the surrounding community.

Part of that new relationship is making it known the base is not a cash-cow, ready to be milked at will by litigation, by those who might remember fatter times.

"We remain a large target," he said. "People don't realize that we have concerns, problems and challenges ahead like everyone else."

To better make people aware of those concerns, we can expect to hear more presentations like Leversedge's on the base's economic role in the community.

19 Wing Comox has a payroll of about \$60 million which translates into 1,700 years worth of employment, he said.

That is almost ten per cent of the Comox Valley's working population and the figures do not include the hundreds of retired military personnel or the costs of their pensions.

Leversedge said the base should also be considered a factor in the tourism industry here.

(Cont. on page 2)

COVER STORY

Here comes the sun ...

□ Valley's health unit gets word out on the dangers

By Kirsten Jones
Echo Staff

This week is sun awareness week and Comox Valley residents are asked to put on

Valley, says the Health Unit is teaching SunSense.

"It's tough though, because the sun is so pleasant, especially after the winter of rain we get here," says Chambers. "We tell people a little sun is good but to get the vitamin D our bodies need we only need about 10 minutes in the sun."

The rest of the time, Chambers says Valley residents have to guard themselves against the rays.

"In the Valley, most of our recreational activities are outside," referring to the golfing, boating and hiking amenities. "We tell people



slop on the sunscreen.

Chambers said its important to stay out of the sun between the peak hours, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. If that's not possible take precautions, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat - baseball caps don't protect the ears or neck.

Sun screens help if they are 15 SPF or higher, but Chambers has a few rules. Apply it 15 to 30 minutes before exposure to let the skin absorb as much as possible and to prevent

The recent designation of the Tsolum River as the most endangered river in B.C. comes as no surprise to many landowners living in the watershed.

Recently landowners and streamkeepers have been working with an ex-fishers crew to map Tsolum tributaries as part of a community effort to restore and protect the river system.

The mapping crew, jointly sponsored by the Tsolum River Task Force and Community Fisheries Development Centre, has identified several coho and steelhead streams that have been missing on maps that government agencies are using for planning and management.

The new mapping information will be included in the 'Sensitive Habitats Atlas' that the Regional District and other government agencies use to enable better protection of streams. The information will also be used by the Tsolum River Task Force to plan stream restoration work where landowners grant permission.

"Most streams downstream of the Dove Creek confluence are now accurately on the map" says Don Chamberlain, mapping crew supervisor.

CFB Comox strong Valley supporter

(Cont. from page 1)

Not only does the base bring people to its museum and to see the military planes, there is also a lot of word-of-mouth advertising amongst the military about the virtues of the Comox Valley.

Cadets also add a lot to the economy here, he said. Every year, \$2 million is spent training 1,200 Royal Canadian Air Cadets and other special operations at HMCS Quadra.

Base representatives sit on many local societies and provide help for local charities. The base is also available to help through partnership with fire and police organizations.

visor. "We estimate that we've covered half of the lower watershed. The Task Force says a big 'thank-you' to the concerned landowners who provided assistance to the mapping project."

The rural residential and agricultural areas of the watershed are where the most important and endangered habitat areas for coho and steelhead salmon are located.

"Not only did landowners offer support and provide easy access to most properties for surveying," says technician and ex-fisher Gord

Bainbridge, "they were eager to offer lots of information about historical land uses and salmon stocks."

Seasonal copper contamination of river water from the abandoned

mine site at Mt. W ocean survival rem problems for Tsolum

Landowners or wishing to learn m Tsolum River wate to join the efforts t restore its endange stocks, may call th Task Force office



BC FERRY SCHEDULE

NANAIMO - VANCOUVER (Tsu)

Lv. Duke Point		Lv. Tsawwas
*5:15 am	3:15 pm	*5:1
*7:45 am	5:45 pm	*7:4
10:15 am	8:15 pm	10:1
12:45 pm	10:45 pm	12:4

*Daily except Sunday April 14 - J

NANAIMO - VANCOUVER (Hors)

Lv. Horseshoe Bay		Lv. Depart
6:30 am	3:00 pm	6:30
8:30 am	5:00 pm	8:30
10:30 am	7:00 pm	10:30
12:30 pm	9:00 pm	12:30

VANCOUVER ISLAND - POW

Year-Round Schedule

Lv. Comox		Lv. Pow
7:30 am	3:15 pm	9:1
11:15 am	7:15 pm	1:1

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