

Village can mine history

by Jodie Zuccato

Cumberland can work together to translate history and culture into economic assets, says the new Comox Valley economic development officer.

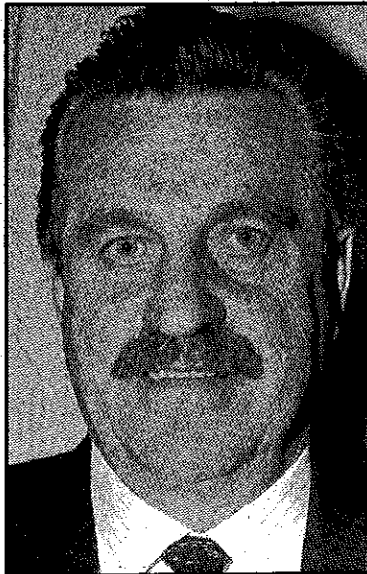
And those economic assets will be for the good of all, Norm McLaren told those attending the Empire Days Chamber of Commerce Dinner on Thursday.

McLaren explained the mission of the Economic Development Society is "to create jobs in a way not too disruptive to the environment and in a way that we, as a Valley, maintain the quality of living that everyone seems to value."

That means working with local people who want to start a business of their own ... and helping the tourism industry in the Valley develop an infrastructure and a marketing plan, McLaren explained.

"And it also means supporting the bid for the 1995 B.C. Winter Games," he said, adding the Comox Valley will win the bid over Campbell River.

"It is critical for all of us to do what is right to ensure that our bid is the winner in this regional battle ... how this new found money is diverted to Cumberland is up to you and me," McLaren stressed.



Norm McLaren

"With the work Cumberland has already done, I visualize an exciting time for development in keeping with the community plan," McLaren reported.

And noting a new Island Highway may only be three kilometers away, McLaren explained ideas for Cumberland's development could include a new Chinatown, thriving stores with staff dressed in period costumes, gas street lanterns, wooden sidewalks and new building facades.

"Can you visualize a new Che-mainus located here in the Comox

Valley, and stores that contribute to the tax base 12 months of the year?" McLaren asked.

"If you believe there is a vision, then lets transform Cumberland's heritage and community plan into economic growth," he concluded.

The evening ended with Harvey Brown, vice-chairman of the heritage advisory committee, presenting plaques for participation in the downtown revitalization program.

Awards went to Dave Stevens for the Cumberland Auction, Gordon Bell for the Cumberland Masonic Temple and Grant Steward for the Cumberland Hotel.