

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FASTER, MORE SECURE INTERNET MEANS JOBS FOR LASQUETI ISLAND

COURTENAY – Slow Internet will be a thing of the past for residents and businesses on Lasqueti Island thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the Island Coastal Economic Trust that will see infrastructure upgrades and permanent headquarters for the Lasqueti Internet Access Society.

“Over time, increased demand has created a bandwidth deficit on Lasqueti Island,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “We know that communities need reliable Internet for businesses to remain competitive, to attract residents and tourists, and to promote development.”

Embracing the concept of ‘Live here, work anywhere’, the Lasqueti Internet Access Society (LIAS) proposed the project as a way to help secure the economic future of the Island.

Partnering with the Lasqueti Last Resort Society, LIAS is putting up a new service building adjacent to the new Health Centre Complex. The second floor of this building will provide LIAS with a permanent facility to accommodate its technician and equipment. In addition to this building, LIAS will be increasing the community’s bandwidth, replacing tree mounts with metal towers, and upgrading the backup charging systems.

“With Lasqueti’s off-grid situation and rugged terrain, we had to rely on grant funding and volunteer hours to build our current Internet service,” said LIAS Director Willy Clark. “Like the rest of the world, use of “smart” phones and devices has increased the demand for Internet bandwidth. Our Island attracts a younger demographic of families, small business owners and remote workers, so reliable internet access is essential to retain and attract them in order to sustain and grow our economic opportunities.”

Since 2007, the non-profit Lasqueti Internet Access Society (LIAS) has been providing broadband Internet service on Lasqueti Island with a minimal budget and the support of volunteers.

The project will begin immediately and should be complete by May 2015.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is a \$50 million endowment 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 \$48 million for over 125 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have leveraged more than \$270 million in incremental funding into the region.

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

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