



"The good life by the sea"

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

PRREDS thrilled over Powell River's distinction as a Cultural Capital of Canada

Powell River, BC – The Powell River Regional Economic Development Society is excited to learn that Minister of Canadian Heritage Sheila Copps has named Powell River as one of Canada's Cultural Capitals for 2004. With the award comes a grant for matching funding of up to \$250,000 for cultural projects.

"Arts, Culture and Education is a very important part of the Society's Economic Strategy," says PRREDS President Arlette Drader. "Having this honour bestowed upon the community is going to double the positive momentum that has already been started in this extremely important facet of the local economy. PRREDS is very happy to have worked in partnership with the municipality to prepare the application for this award."

PRREDS Arts, Culture and Education Committee Chair Mike Heron was Co-Project Leader on the Cultural Capitals of Canada Grant application. Working in conjunction with Val McNutt of the Municipality, Don James and Terry Sabine of the Academy of Music and many community volunteers, a 60-page application titled "Qathet" (a Salish word meaning together, in concert) was prepared and submitted to the Canadian Heritage Ministry in March of 2003. The application highlighted the many successful Cultural programs that Powell River has to offer and is working on for the future.

"Powell River has such a strong Arts and Culture community. This award and the matching funding that comes with it will be a great boost to the work that has been undertaken," says ACE Committee Chair Mike Heron. "Powell River is already internationally renowned for many of its programs, but we have always taken pride in the great diversity of cultural organisations within the municipality and region. Being named a Cultural Capital of Canada will help to make many of our future projects successful. We will be able to fund many celebrations this next year in very special ways. Organisations which will receive funding and assistance will be the Festival for the Performing Arts, the Powell River Chorus, the visual and performing arts community, the French cultural and language camp, and Sliammon arts and culture, to name only a few."

The Powell River Regional Economic Development Society's Arts Culture and Education Committee has been working hard with community organizations to increase capacity in the sector. Thanks to the committee's efforts, a number of projects have moved forward including the founding of the Symphony Orchestra Academy of the Pacific, as well as the announcement that the community will be the summer home of the Victoria Symphony in 2004.

The Powell River Regional Economic Development Society was formed in February 2001 to help diversify the area's economy. A majority of the Society's budget is generously provided by NorskeCanada. NorskeCanada operates a paper manufacturing facility in the community that directly employs 700 people. Additional funding for PRREDS is provided by the municipality of Powell River and the Powell River Regional District.

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