

## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

### 2018 British Columbia Economic Development Awards Winners

**Kelowna, June 13, 2018** – The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) and FortisBC announced the winners of the 2018 BC Economic Development Awards at the BC Economic Summit Awards Banquet held Tuesday, June 12, in Kelowna, BC.

This year's award winners are:

1) **Economic Development Marketing Innovation Award:**

The BCEDA Marketing Innovation Award recognizes achievement in marketing initiatives that support economic development:

**Community Less than 20,000 Population:** District of Squamish - *"Website, Tools & Resources"*

**Community More than 20,000 Population:** Venture Kamloops – *"LinkUp 2017"*

2) **Community Project:**

The BCEDA Community Project Award recognizes an organization that has implemented various economic development initiatives that provide economic benefits to a community or region.

**Community Less than 20,000 Population:** Lil'wat Nation and Murphy Construction Corp - *"Bridging the Gap: Building Houses and Capacity in the Lil'wat Nation "*

**Community More than 20,000 Population:** City of Coquitlam – *"Business LinQ"*

3) **BCEDA Chairman's Award: Greg Goodwin, Executive Director, DECO, Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology**

The Chairman's award is presented annually by the Chair of BCEDA to an individual who has made a significant contribution to BCEDA, the profession and economic development throughout British Columbia. Recipients of this prestigious award in the past includes John Furlong, Kevin Poole, Pat Bell, Burns Lake Recovery team members, John Leech of ASTTBC and many other deserving recipients.

The 2018 Chairman's Award winner, Greg Goodwin has been a member of the BCEDA for many years and through his leadership has developed strong partnerships with BCEDA and communities throughout BC. He has led the development of a comprehensive library of economic development resources all designed to help communities be successful in their economic development efforts.

4) **Stan Rogers Memorial Award:**

In recognition for a project (private or public) making the most significant economic impact in a community.

**City of New Westminster – "Front Street Mews"**

“Effective economic development is a shared function of all levels of government, but it is most effective when implementation is lead at the local and regional level,” said BCEDA Chair Sue Kenny. “Communities across the province that make business readiness a priority and create opportunities for investment in their local economies have long been credited as being one of the main engines of economic growth and diversification.”

This marks the 28<sup>th</sup> year that BCEDA has presented these awards. The awards are presented to association members working on community-based economic development projects in BC and are an excellent way to recognize individuals and groups that produce outstanding work in economic development that has helped to make a difference in supporting and expanding local economies.

“It continues to amaze me the incredible efforts put forward by communities and economic development professionals to ensure strong local economies. This awards program continues to generate keen interest amongst economic developers and communities across the province.” said Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO, BCEDA. “It is very evident that many communities, regions and partners are implementing creative and bold strategies to encourage economic growth. Narrowing it down to a few winners is becoming increasingly difficult for our judges. Our thanks goes out to all who submitted projects for consideration this year. Their efforts to build stronger communities, and thereby a stronger provincial economy are to be commended and congratulated.”

The awards are presented and sponsored by FortisBC.

“FortisBC invests in a variety of community initiatives that support stronger, healthier communities throughout B.C.,” said David A. Bennett, Director of Communications and External Relations at FortisBC. “An important initiative is our annual sponsorship of the BCEDA Economic Development Awards which honours the outstanding work communities have done to contribute to overall economic growth and prosperity.”

-30-

**Contact:**

Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO, BCEDA, (604) 819-3809

**About BCEDA**

The BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is the leading professional association of economic development practitioners in the Province of BC. BCEDA currently has over 450 members from communities throughout the province. BCEDA provides services that help member communities grow and expand new and existing businesses, attract new business investments, and work towards strategic infrastructure investment, land use planning, and community enhancement.

BCEDA services include an annual summit and networking event, educational and professional development opportunities, public relations, advisory services and resources and partnering with communities and the Province of BC to market British Columbia for business investment.

## Award Summaries

### Community Project Awards

#### Population Less than 20,000 – Lil'wat Nation and Murphy Construction

The Lil'wat Nation and Murphy Construction Corp have been working collaboratively for four years to build housing and other community projects on reserve with the overall aim of building cost effective projects, on time and on budget, using local labour, while building capacity for Lil'wat Nation members. In 2014, after a public RFP, Murphy Construction Corp (MCC) was awarded a strategic business relationship with the Lil'wat Nation to provide training, mentorship, construction management expertise, and job creation.

What started as a collaboration to build community housing projects in Mount Currie has grown into its fourth year and is now comprised of building multi-family housing units, a youth centre and hockey rink, and a \$7.21-million post-secondary institution and pursuing off-reserve projects in a formal partnership through the Nation's relationships with BC Hydro, Whistler Blackcomb and their land development partners. All housing projects and homes are built above and beyond BC Building Code standards while cost effectively implementing energy efficiency to create a healthy living environment now and into the future. As part of the program, MCC employees 26 Lil'wat Nation members on jobsites throughout projects in the Sea to Sky Corridor.

### Community Project Awards

#### Population More than 20,000 - City of Coquitlam – Coquitlam Business LinQ

Business LinQ is a one-stop business resource centre located at Coquitlam City Hall that helps navigate and interpret the City's various processes in relation to establishing or expanding a business. This free service provides resources and support to both existing and prospective business owners. This one-stop shop model is an innovative approach that encourages local business development. The funding for the physical construction, marketing and opening was covered by the Economic Development division, while the operating budget and staffing is from business licensing.

The purpose of Business LinQ is to make it easier to do business in Coquitlam. Entrepreneurs and business owners can simply drop in to the office to receive the information they require, whether it's help in navigating the City permitting and regulatory processes, or to learn what is required to start and operate a business in Coquitlam. The office also connects businesses with other resources such as the City's Economic Development office, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce and Small Business BC. Ultimately, Business LinQ helps businesses save time, avoid costly mistakes and avoid missed opportunities. Business LinQ has assisted more than 165 people since opening less than four months ago.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses has commended the city of the development of this program and has officially recognized the City of Coquitlam's new business initiative.

## **Marketing Innovation Awards**

### **Population Less than 20,000 – Squamish BC, Website, Tools and Resources**

The District of Squamish Economic Development Office has launched a comprehensive online resource centre to help businesses access information about the local economy, customers and competition. The improved micro-site features practical information and inspiration to help businesses start, grow, invest and thrive in Squamish, as well as a new resource centre with a comprehensive list of 117 (and growing!) third-party and District business tools and intelligence.

New interactive tools offer a convenient one-stop-shop for accessing a wide-range of relevant market information. They also provide how-to information so that businesses can ask the right questions, analyze data correctly, and make better-informed business decisions. The impact of this project has been powerful and immediate. Within the first month of launch, both our colleagues across departments at the District of Squamish, and many local economic development partner organizations have adopted the site as their source for insights and information about the local economy, where there was previously a lack of information. Local partners including Squamish Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Squamish, WorkBC Employment Services Centre. and Community Futures have been able to use the site as a tool in their day to day programs working with clients, as well as a tool for the organizations' leadership, to support decision-making.

The new microsite has attracted over 813 unique visitors in its two weeks since launch, which is serving over 700 percent more residents and businesses than our previous economic development website. Meanwhile, engagement on the website is also higher. Visitors spent double the time engaging on our new landing page, compared to the old website. It is now one of the top-ranking sections on the District of Squamish website.

## **Marketing Innovation Awards**

### **Population More than 20,000 – Venture Kamloops – LinkUp**

LinkUp is the annual Kamloops Business Development Summit. LinkUp 2017 was one of the largest business to government and business to support focused community organization events in the Province. It offered a unique opportunity for businesses interested in taking advantage of programs and incentives from local, provincial and federal government agencies and business organizations to learn about a variety of opportunities all in one day. The event consisted of four modules; community support, financing, provincial/federal support, and grants. 23 support services presented for 15 minutes each and 1 on 1 meetings were organized in a break-out room, along with small booths for each of the presenters.

This was a special event that focused on supporting entrepreneurship, BR&E and workforce development. This all day event took place on November 23, 2017 at the Coast Kamloops Conference Centre.

LinkUp was successful beyond our expectations. We had well over 200 attendees for the day to see 23 presenters, many of whom had to send staff from out of town. LinkUp has led to increased numbers of referrals to VK and has become a high profile, annual event. This event provides an easy drop-in opportunity for the business community to become apprised of the services of most interest to them.

LinkUp provides an effective open channel through which all of the participating agencies can in part fulfill their mandate of reaching out to businesses.

### **Stan Rogers Memorial Award**

#### **City of New Westminster – Front Street Mews**

The removal of the Front Street Parkade and Front Street Mews project form important components of ongoing efforts to revitalize downtown New Westminster, one of B.C.'s oldest commercial districts. A 2013 study indicated half of the 800 parking stalls in the 1950s era Front Street Parkade could be removed given reduced parking need in the area. Following extensive consultation with downtown business owners and key stakeholders involving the city's Economic Development, Planning, Parks and Recreation and Engineering departments, half of the parkade was removed in 2015-2016. In its place, the Front Street Mews took shape - a narrow, complete street that exposed heritage commercial buildings to daylight and balances access functions of a lane with active business frontages, accessory uses, and space shared by cars, bicycles and pedestrians alike. The "Mews" is a safe, comfortable and vibrant place for everyone with increased foot traffic breathing new life into the economic vitality of the downtown.

Front Street Mews has transformed a dark, car-oriented, dilapidated street into a place for people with seating areas, lighting, trees, public art and local business parking. Today, Front Street is experiencing enhanced retail and social activity and has become a local hot spot for community festivals.