

For Immediate Release
2006CS0033-001214
Oct. 12, 2006

Ministry of Community Services
Western Economic Diversification Canada
Union of B.C. Municipalities

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES

KELOWNA – The governments of Canada and British Columbia today officially launched the Canada-British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF), allowing communities to apply for funding under this program.

Effective Thursday, Oct. 12, communities and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to make an application online. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 31, 2007. It is anticipated all funding from the current agreement will be allocated by summer 2007.

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Member of Parliament (Kelowna-Lake Country) Ron Cannan, on behalf on the Honourable Carol Skelton, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, and B.C. Community Services Minister Ida Chong, along with Councillor Marvin Hunt, president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), made the announcement at Kelowna's Poplar Point Pump Station.

“Through the Canada-British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, all orders of government are working in partnership to improve the strength and sustainability of British Columbia communities,” said Minister Cannon. “This new funding is an excellent beginning in supporting Canada's new government in its approach to the environment.”

“Our government is strengthening Canada's economic growth and prosperity through investments in our communities' vital infrastructure,” said Mr. Cannan. “This new infrastructure program will help address British Columbia's infrastructure needs and improve the quality life for all its residents.”

Under the CBCMRIF agreement announced in June, the federal and provincial governments will each commit \$51 million, and participating local governments are expected to match this amount, for a total benefit to British Columbia of over \$150 million.

“Through this infrastructure program, communities have the ability to select priority projects and make an application to the program to help make them a reality,” said Minister Chong. “In addition to the funding that is now available, we look forward to future discussions on how B.C. communities can access the \$2.2 billion in national funding identified in the federal budget for the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund.”

A minimum of 80 per cent of funding will be targeted towards communities with a population of less than 250,000. At least 60 per cent of funding will go to “green” projects helping rural communities and towns address drinking water supply, treatment and distribution needs; improving local wastewater and storm-water sewage treatment; enhancing public transit; and supporting environmental energy improvements. Up to 40 per cent of the remaining funding will support local roads, culture, tourism, recreation and connectivity projects.

“I am encouraged that this program is now underway and communities can apply for funding to address some of their priority infrastructure needs,” said Councillor Hunt.

The Government of Canada, the Province of B.C. and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) will jointly implement the program. Western Economic Diversification Canada will assist Infrastructure Canada in the delivery of the program.

Complete program application details are available online at www.canadabcmrif.ca.

Media contact: Karl Yeh
Communications Advisor
Western Economic Diversification
Canada
604 666-4714

Dave Crebo
Communications Manager
Ministry of Community Services
250 356-6334

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province’s news feeds using RSS, visit the Province’s website at www.gov.bc.ca.