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Ministry of Community Services
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Western Economic Diversification Canada

\$2M INVESTMENT FOR VICTORIA CONFERENCE CENTRE EXPANSION

VICTORIA – The Victoria Conference Centre will become the second-largest conference facility in British Columbia thanks to a \$2-million upgrade through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF), which supports communities across B.C. in becoming healthier, greener and more sustainable places to live.

The announcement was made today by the Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources and MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, and Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services and MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head.

The project will expand the Victoria Conference Centre and preserve the heritage value of the existing Crystal Gardens site. Once renovated, the centre will offer conference delegates a dedicated exhibition space, additional meeting rooms and a new ballroom facility. The centre will also be more energy efficient thanks to a solar energy system that is part of the upgrade.

“This joint investment will provide Victoria residents with a leading-edge and environmentally sustainable facility to hold conferences and special events,” said Lunn, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification. “The conference centre is a key infrastructure investment that will benefit the economies of both the City of Victoria and Vancouver Island by strengthening the tourism industry.”

“The addition of 25,000 square feet of event space will make the Victoria Conference Centre the second-largest facility of its kind in British Columbia,” said Chong. “By using this existing building, which has so much history, the City is helping to ensure Victoria is a sought-after conference destination for years to come. This is a special and unique place for us to be proud of and which is truly helping to make our capital city a vibrant and sustainable place to live, work and do business.”

“This additional conference space is projected to double the Victoria Conference Centre’s annual economic impact to \$80 million per year,” said Mayor Alan Lowe. “Victoria will now be on the map to attract the premier, international conferences that have been passing us by. This is great for the long-term viability and restoration of the Crystal Garden, and this is fantastic news for Victoria.”

The majority of the program funding from the CBCMRIF, which was launched in June 2006, supports communities of fewer than 250,000 people in minimizing the costs to taxpayers of local infrastructure upgrades or new construction projects.

At least 60 per cent of the funding will assist with “green projects” that are geared towards enhancing environmental sustainability, such as water and waste-water systems, public transit and environmental energy improvements. Other infrastructure projects will support local roads, cultural and recreational facilities, infrastructure to support tourism and broadband connectivity. The funding for this project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

The total amount available through the CBCMRIF, with federal and provincial investments and matching local government contribution, is over \$220 million. More details on the program are available online at www.canadabcmrif.ca.

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