

For Immediate Release  
2008CS0042-000242  
Feb. 22, 2008

Ministry of Community Services  
Ministry of Economic Development  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

## **MERRITT TO BENEFIT FROM RECREATIONAL HALL EXPANSION**

MERRITT – The community of Merritt will benefit from a new addition to St. Michael’s Church Hall, thanks to an investment of more than \$166,000 from the federal and provincial governments. The funding is being provided through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF), which enables communities across B.C. to become healthier, greener and more sustainable places to live.

The announcement was made today by the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety and MP for Okanagan-Coquihalla, and Kevin Krueger, MLA for Kamloops-North Thompson and Minister of State for Mining.

“This investment will enable the residents of Merritt to expand a valued heritage building to accommodate the community’s growing needs,” said Day, 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. “Our government is proud to partner with the Province of British Columbia to make long-term infrastructure improvements in Merritt.”

“This project will not only enhance this beautiful heritage building by ensuring it’s up to B.C. building codes, but it also provides more space, making it accessible to all members of the community,” said Krueger, on behalf of Community Services Minister Ida Chong. “We’re pleased to support cultural sustainability here in Merritt with infrastructure that provides a safe, clean and comfortable place promoting healthy food and community support.”

About 11,600 people a year use St. Michael’s Hall, which will be expanded by more than 12,000 square feet, doubling its current capacity and enabling it to host larger community events. The funding will also enable the continued delivery of Merritt’s Soup Bowl Program and Infant Development Program. The church has been officially recognized by the Merritt Heritage Society as a heritage building and has significant value in the history of the community of Merritt.

The majority of the program funding from the CBCMRIF, which was launched in June 2006, supports communities of fewer than 250,000 people by 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, tourism and broadband connectivity. 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](http://www.canadabcmrif.ca).

Media contact: Jackie Stewart  
Western Economic Diversification  
Canada  
604 666-1306

Marc Black  
B.C. 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](http://www.gov.bc.ca).