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Contact Amy Melmock, Manager, EDC: amy.melmock@cverd.bc.ca

April 2019 Update

Sector Development on the Agenda for EDC

Tech Training Initiative Bolstered

A tech training initiative created in partnership with Economic Development Cowichan, Vancouver Island University (Cowichan Campus), School District 79 and Apple Canada is getting a boost from the BC Government's *Rural Dividend Program*. The Province's support will help support a series of summer workshops and launch a longer-term strategy for tech training certification. As part of the initiative, EDC hopes to enlist regional tech firms interested in student co-op placements.

Cowichan Land Use Strategy Unveiled

A comprehensive study into industrial land use trends in the Cowichan region is now available on the EDC website at www.ecdevcowichan.com. The Cowichan Industrial Land Use Strategy looks at vital employment lands in the region alongside projected population and employment trends to create a forecast the lands needed to support a robust local economy. EDC is thankful for the many regional businesses and local government representatives who took part in shaping the plan with consultants Urban Systems.

Ladysmith Attraction Tools in Development

With support from *Islands Coastal Economic Trust*, the Town of Ladysmith, and a host of community partners, Economic Development Cowichan is assisting with the development of a mobile app and website for the Ladysmith region. These foundational investment attraction tools are the starting point for acting on the Ladysmith Economic Development Strategy, completed this past fall.

Island Speaker Series Draws to a Successful Close

The Cowichan Valley Regional District welcomed two renowned speakers to the region this month to conclude the acclaimed Island Speaker Series. Storm Cunningham visited from his home base in Washington, DC on April 11 to speak about the importance of regenerating our communities through revitalization, restoration, and reconnection.

On April 4, Canadian author and thought leader Doug Griffiths met with an enthusiastic audience in Shawnigan Lake to give a dynamic address on *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*. His presentation, designed to inspire change, resonated with regional residents looking to step up and take ownership of their communities.

Island Savings, Vancouver Island University, the BC Real Estate Foundation and Social Planning Cowichan supported the speaker series throughout the past 19 months. Events began with “Happy Cities” author Charles Montgomery and his speech on building inclusive communities in September 2017. Presentations from eco-cities expert Jennie Moore, internationally renowned “8 to 80 movement” founder Gil Penolosa and Vancouver artist and educator Justin Langlois followed.

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Housing guru Avi Friedman visited the Cowichan region twice in conjunction with the series and created concept designs for an innovative North Cowichan housing project during a summer 2018 visit. Rural design specialist Dewey Thornbeck gave a nod to acknowledging the importance of Cowichan’s rural landscapes during a November 2018 address. **Background information on the series is available on the CVRD website at <https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/2897/Place-Making-Vancouver-Island-Speaker-Series>**

ON THE HORIZON

- **EDC** will release the first-year results of the **Young Agrarians Land Match Program** at the May 22 CVRD Regional Services Committee Meeting. The pilot program, supported by EDC, the BC Department of Agriculture and Cowichan Green Community matches producers with local land owners.
- **A Cowichan Heritage Workshop** is in the works for October 2019. Participants come together for a free one-day event to share stories on best practices and potential partnerships. The Cowichan Valley Museum, Heritage BC, and Cowichan Tribes are helping to organize the workshop.