



Noba Anderson, Director
Cortes– Electoral Area 'B'

Tel: 250-935-0320 E-mail: director@cortesisland.com

Fellow SRD Directors
November 12, 2019

A few months ago, I shared with you information about a Rural Island Economic alliance that I have been a part of shaping. At the time, our efforts were still forming. The Rural Islands Economic Forum (RIEF) is a grassroots initiative organized as a means for cultivating enduring rural island-wide economic partnerships.

I am now pleased to report that we just completed our first, of what I expect will be many, Rural Island Economic Forum. This sold-out first Forum, which took place on Pender, November 7-8, provided an opportunity for a beautifully wide range of participants and presenters to network with like-minded people, help set the agenda for economic capacity building in the rural islands, and frame new rural inter-island partnerships.



The interactive, rural island-focused program featured seasoned activists and subject matter specialists. Participants had the opportunity to engage in lively dialogue through program panels, workshops, case studies and roundtables as well as participant plenary sessions. The Forum engaged over 40 program contributors who joined attendees in addressing a variety of current issues related to rural island economic well-being. I have attached the program overview here for your reference. More information can be found at www.ruralislandsforum.com

The views expressed in this letter are those of the director and do not necessarily reflect those of the corporation or the full board of directors.

There were over 100 delegates at the Forum. All rural islands (except two) serviced by BC Ferries were represented including: Malcom, Cormorant, Quadra, Cortes, Denman, Hornby, Lasqueti, Gambier, Bowen, Gabriola, Thetis, Saltspring, Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Saturna plus the San Juans. Other Regional Directors were present as well as Island Trustees and their staff. We also had delegates from First Nations and their economic development corporations, the Provincial government (both elected and management from various ministries), local chamber of commerce representatives and island economic development organisations (RD commissions and independent societies). Needless to say it was diverse and I am happy to share that it was quite well received.

I have long craved a space in which to share with, and learn from, other rural islands. It was a great honour to be on both the executive and program committees helping to make this gathering a reality. I also gave a presentation and facilitated a large discussion on the economics of climate change. The SRD's Victoria Smith was also a presenter on a 'connectivity' panel. It was great to see her there. I was joined by 5 other Cortes delegates from the Cortes Community Economic Development Association, the Cortes Community Forest Co-op and the Cortes Transportation Committee. There were also (I believe) five Quadra representatives from the Discovery Island Chamber of Commerce and individual businesses.

Now we have tasked ourselves with a few next steps. First we will be putting together a comprehensive Forum report, with public access to the various presentations offered, panel summaries, recommended actions, summary notes, etc. We will also release video footage of panels and workshops as well as individual interviews with participants. After that, we are committed to supporting the formation of ongoing spaces for rural island residents to share information, collaborate on common interest and build spaces for joint advocacy. I look forward to our continued work together in support of wellbeing on our coastal rural islands.

Our Supporting Partners included:

- *BC Rural Centre*
- *Bowen Island Municipality Community Economic Development Committee*
- *Cortes Island Business & Tourism Association*
- *Discovery Island Chamber of Commerce*
- *Gabriola Island Economic Development*
- *I-SEA (Institute for Sustainability Education Action)*
- *Island Savings Credit Union*
- *Islands Trust Council*
- *Labour Market Partnership Program-WorkBC*
- *Noba Anderson, Cortes-Director-Electoral Area 'B'*
- *Namgis Economic Development Corp.*
- *Regional District of Mount Waddington*
- *Salt Spring Island Community Economic Development Commission*
- *San Juan County Economic Development Council*
- *Shaw Communications*
- *Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre*
- *Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission*
- *Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society*
- *Sysco Canada*
- *Vancity-Cormorant Island Community Branch*

The views expressed in this letter are those of the director and do not necessarily reflect those of the corporation or the full board of directors.

E: = ENTREPRENEURIAL C: = MOBILIZING CAPITAL T: = TOURISM CULTURE
 G:= GREEN BIZ RC: = RURAL CONNECTIONS

DAY ONE - NOVEMBER 7th

| | Workshop | Case Study | Panel | Roundtable |
|--------------|--|---|---|---|
| 8:30 - 11:30 | REGISTRATION CHECK-IN • Optional Attendee Meet-Ups | | | |
| 11:30 - 1:30 | WELCOME- LUNCH- OPENING PROGRAM - PLENARY SESSION | | | |
| 1:45 - 3:15 | E1: Trends & Opportunities For Increasing Entrepreneurial Activity | C1: Community Investment Coops | G2: Green Biz Models - Option & Opportunities | T1: Economic Development Models - Options and Tools |
| 3:15 - 3:45 | NETWORKING BREAK | | | |
| 3:45 - 5:15 | C2: Social Enterprise - What Is It? How Does It Work? | T3: Deepening Relations With Indigenous Communities | C3: Financing Options: Ways To Fund Your Initiative | E2: Assessing Your Entrepreneurial Ecosystem |
| 5:30 - 6:30 | T2: Evaluating Your 'Island's Culture' | | RC3: Economics of Climate Change | |
| 7:00 - 8:00 | DINNER - WRAP-UP THEMES - PLENARY SESSION | | | |
| 8:00 - 8:30 | OUR CULTURE MATTERS (OCM) DRUM GROUP - Tsawout First Nation | | | |

DAY TWO—NOVEMBER 8th

| | Workshop | Case Study | Panel | Roundtable |
|---------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| 7:30 - 8:30 | BREAKFAST - PLENARY SESSION | | | |
| 8:45 - 10:00 | T4: Balancing Tourism With Environmental Protection | RC1: Broadband Access Issues & Options | E4: Supporting Entrepreneurs Engaged In The Circular Economy | E3: Build Your Entrepreneurship Plan |
| 10:00 - 10:30 | NETWORKING BREAK (check-out) | | | |
| 10:30 - 11:45 | G1: Overview On Trends • Ways To Increase Green Sector Growth | RC2: Roundtable Dialogue with BC Ferries CEO | E5: Innovative Ways To Expand Markets For Your Products | |
| Noon - 12:30 | LUNCH | | | |
| 12:30 - 1:45 | WRAP-UP THEMES - NEXT STEPS - PLENARY SESSION | | | |

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS—with Conversation Hosts

The upper dining room will be used to host ongoing conversations related to community economic health: Climate Resilience, Workforce Housing, Broadband Access, Transportation Local & Inter-Islands, Food Security. Separate flip charts/bulletin boards will be set-up to focus suggestions, ideas, questions, etc. issues around each topic. A **Conversation Host** will be present to help facilitate dialogue as people gather informally.

Sincerely,



Noba Anderson, Regional Director