



Press Release

\$1.6 MILLION CANADA/BC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT GOOD NEWS FOR PORT COQUITLAM

Port Coquitlam, BC, April 13, 2004 . . . Port Coquitlam Mayor Scott Young was in Saanich this morning as the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment and Senior Minister for BC, on behalf of the Honourable Dr. Rey D. Pagtakhan, Minister of Western Economic Diversification, and the Honourable John Les British Columbia Minister of Small Business and Economic Development announced a Canada/BC Infrastructure Program investment of \$1.6 million for the Port Coquitlam Leigh Square Community Arts Village.

Returning from Saanich, a jubilant Scott Young expressed his sincere appreciation for the funding. "Partnerships are key to the success of this project," said Young. "By endorsing this investment in the Leigh Square Community Arts Village, both the Federal and Provincial governments have clearly expressed their commitment to supporting heritage, culture and recreation through increased access to local facilities. This partnership between the three levels of government demonstrates an understanding of the value of cultural infrastructure to the overall sustainability and well-being of Canadian municipalities."

Young explained, "The many contributions to the quality of community life as a result of the Leigh Square Community Arts Village will prove to be a catalyst for community development and will benefit residents of Port Coquitlam for many years to come. Ultimately it will be the ability of the Village to attract grassroots community participation in arts and culture that will be the most beneficial pay off on this public investment. An increased interest in the downtown business district as well as the increase in resident and visitor attendance to Leigh Square events will have a positive benefit to the City's economic growth."

Young also noted, "Any public acknowledgement of this project would not be complete without recognizing the continued involvement and support of the community in the creation of a vision and design for the Village. In particular, the ongoing commitment of the citizen members of the Community Cultural Development Advisory Committee has been outstanding." Other key partners committed to creating a strong presence for cultural development in the downtown core include the Port Coquitlam Heritage and Cultural Society, Art Focus, and the regional arts council, ArtsConnect.

Irene Bouchard, Chair of the Community Cultural Development Advisory Committee, stated, "The community has been waiting for this announcement with great anticipation and excitement. The awarding of the BC Canada Infrastructure Grant for the Leigh Square Community Arts Village is about the best possible news we could have received. A home for the arts has long been a top priority for the community and the cooperation shown by the three levels of government will turn those dreams into a reality."

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The City of Port Coquitlam has committed \$1.6 million (combined capital and reassigned budget allowances) to this project as a whole, in addition to its role in funding the operations of the Village, once completed.

The grant awarded through the Canada/BC infrastructure Program will provide the additional funding required to undertake the first phase of the project, including renovations of the former Post Office Building to the north of Leigh Square and a new construction on the site of the current Parks and Recreation Department offices to the east. Planned space allocations for the renewed Post Office building include community art workrooms, a visual arts studio, a public archives, and artisans' co-op and a resource centre. The new building will house a display centre and related production rooms as well as dressing rooms to support performances on the Leigh Square Bandshell. The new building will also contain community meeting rooms for local arts, heritage and cultural groups, and administrative offices to support the operations of the Village.

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