



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2009

In 2009, HICEEC continued to focus upon marketing and tourism services while developing partnerships and providing support for small businesses, non-profit organizations and the community in general.

Finances

HICEEC's revenue in 2009 totaled approximately \$48,925. This included \$13,000 of funding from the Comox Valley Regional District deferred from 2008 and approximately \$8,000 for the Community Tourism program, amounts that will not be available in 2010. Expenditures totaled approximately \$41,458 resulting in a net income for the year of \$7,468.37.

Assets on 31 December 2009 were \$8,641.23.

Board

Daniel Siegel, John Heinegg, Paul Clemens, Lynne Carmichael, Matthew Fredbeck and Richard Laskin were elected as directors, with Gerald Hodge appointed as an honorary director. Rachelle Chinnery became a director at the end of the year to fill one of two vacancies. The officers of HICEEC were Daniel Siegel (Chair), John Heinegg (Vice Chair), Paul Clemens (Treasurer) and Lynne Carmichael (Secretary) and these four formed the Executive Committee.

The Board met three times in 2009 and the Executive Committee met once. The directors were assisted by Patricia Gagnon who was appointed by the Comox Valley Regional District to coordinate the provision of economic development services on Hornby and Denman Islands.

Staff

A part-time executive director, Tony Law, and part-time marketing manager, Joanne Ovitsland, were employed on a contract basis. Web-master services were provided by Kevin McMahon and bookkeeping services by Sonja Goldsmith. Mackenzie Everston was employed during July and August to staff the tourist information bureau. Some personal circumstances provided staffing challenges over the year which impacted implementation of some programs.

Programs and Projects

Marketing

The *realHornby* marketing services were continued in 2009 with regular updates of the web-site

and quarterly newsletters to the electronic mailing list. The web-site underwent a major upgrade and a *realHornby* presence was maintained at the Farmers' Market. The addition of a “virtual resource centre” to the web-site will increase its usefulness and thus its value for marketing.

Tourism

HICEEC undertook a contract to implement Stage II of the Community Tourism program administered by UBCM. The associated funding was used for marketing and advertising to promote spring visiting and for the operation of a Visitor Information Bureau during the summer. The Hornby ferry route was the only one the BC Ferries system to show a significant increase in travel during Spring 2009, perhaps reflecting successful promotion of this season. The Visitor Information Bureau was a mixed success; there were a limited number of visits by arriving travellers, but its location provided an opportunity to interact with visitors as they departed to conduct an exit survey, to encourage sign-up to the electronic newsletter and to provide information on off-season visiting.

Virtual resource centre

There were no emerging opportunities to establish an appropriate physical resource centre. Instead, a virtual resource centre was added to the *realHornby* web-site. The Community Resource Centre includes general information about the Island, about living on Hornby and about the services available. A particular feature is a section for Business. This is a work-in-progress and the site will continue to be improved and developed.

Housing

Presentations were made on Hornby and Denman on the Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by HICEEC. Community organizations on both islands expressed appreciation for the information this assessment provides. HICEEC assisted in the formation of a new housing society on Hornby and continued to research and share information on this topic (including placement of posters and leaflets on the Rental Assistance Program). HICEEC also coordinated a meeting with BC Housing and continued pursuit of a Free Crown Grant for housing.

Transportation

In conjunction with REDI, HICEEC upgraded Island Rideshare and took on the hosting and promotion of this web-based service. Explorations were undertaken with respect to a bus service across Denman Island, both with Island Link and BC Transit, but this does not seem to be an immediate possibility. Jan Kennedy represents community economic interests on the Denman and Hornby Ferry Advisory Committee and the Executive Director is actively involved at the provincial level as Chair of the Coastal Community Ferry Advisory Committee.

Support Activities

Support to businesses

In addition to tourism-related activities, HICEEC has provided support to existing businesses and potential entrepreneurs in a number of ways. Bursaries were offered to home-based businesses to provide product samples at an event organized by the Hornby Festival Society. Travel subsidies were offered to Hornby residents to attend the Business Futures orientation sessions in Courtenay. Assistance was provided to fourteen individuals wishing to explore ideas for developing or expanding businesses. Assistance included research into regulations, markets and financing sources and providing information on local circumstances and further assistance. A full-page advert for Hornby businesses was placed in the Denman Island *Flagstone* and a poster and handout were made available listing opening hours. A well-attended free seminar on “All that

Paperwork” was provided for small businesses on Hornby and Denman. A home-based business review tool was prepared and provided both in paper and electronically. As noted above, a “Business on Hornby” section has been established on the *realHornby* web-site

Support to non-profit organization

Significant financial contributions were provided to three Hornby organizations for projects that support HICEEC objectives: printing of the Hornby Island Art Council's Studio Guide, upgrading of the Hornby Island Blues Society's web-site to promote the spring Blues Festival and the implementation of the Hornby Island Education Society's SAGE project to encourage young families to move to Hornby. Assistance was provided to the three Hornby housing organizations, including through organizing an on-Island meeting with BC Housing and sharing information. HICEEC obtained electronic and paper copies of the Canadian Subsidy Directory and these were made available to other community organizations.

Support to the community in general and individuals

HICEEC sent out six electronic newsletters: *Economic Enhancement News* and provided six reports in *The First Edition*. Information was provided in response to enquiries from individuals, both residents and non-residents, and the media.

Partnerships and affiliations

DICEEC

HICEEC has kept in close contact with DICEEC with a view to identifying potential areas of collaboration.

Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce

HICEEC has become a member of the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce which provides valuable links to Comox Valley activities and resources.

Community Futures Strathcona

HICEEC has maintained contact with Community Futures Strathcona and has promoted its programs on Hornby Island.

Looking ahead

In 2010, the HICEEC Board will be developing a five-year strategic plan. *RealHornby* will continue as an on-going community service and the virtual *Community Resource Centre* will be upgraded.

Tony Law, Executive Director, HICEEC - January 2010