

For Immediate Release | April 14, 2016

Community projects improve access to healthy local food

Interior Health, through the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI), has recently provided a total of \$60,000 to help build food security in four communities: City of Revelstoke, Regional District of Central Kootenay, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, and Township of Oliver. The initiative is part of a province-wide strategy to increase food security programs and encourage British Columbians to make healthy food choices.

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to food that is nutritious and safe in order to maintain an active and healthy life - achieving food security is a community effort, said Rose Soneff, Public Health Dietitian with Interior Health. “Local governments, businesses, farmers, organizations and citizens all have an important role to play and the CFAI program supports them to do that.”

The CFAI provides grants of \$15,000 annually to each community over the next three years to increase the community’s ability to contribute to the growth and development of their local food system.

The funding will help recipients develop and implement community-wide food security plans. The projects will address various aspects along the food system such as growing, distributing, accessing, marketing, celebrating and preparing food, as well as managing food waste.

“We are pleased to partner with Interior Health to implement a plan that will ensure residents have access to locally grown food that can result in a healthier life,” said Diane Vaykovich, Corporate Officer with the Town of Oliver. “Our Council is very aware of the significant value of agriculture in our community and we want to be a leader in British Columbia by developing a food security plan for our residents.”

Recent attention on higher food costs has increased interest in food security in many communities.

“Working with local governments helps ensure food security is considered as part of community planning for now and the future; whether that is within an official community plan, a sustainability plan, land use policies, zoning and bylaw, or in economic development and municipal policies,” adds Soneff.

CFAI is a collaborative effort between local communities, Interior Health’s public health dietitians, and the Ministry of Health.

For more information about food security and community nutrition, visit Interior Health’s website at <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/HealthyLiving/FoodSecurity/Pages/default.aspx>

- 30 -

Backgrounder: Please see attached backgrounder for information on funded projects and local media contacts.

NEWS RELEASE

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Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) food security projects

City of Revelstoke

Funding will be used to implement the Revelstoke Food Security Strategy (RFSS) over the next three years. Strategy objectives include improving access to food, increasing environmentally sustainable food production, developing/enhancing local food culture, promoting economic sustainability in local food production, and increasing knowledge of food security initiatives.

The project will take place in the community of Revelstoke, which includes the City and the surrounding region of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (Area B). The City will also work to embed food security language and actions in the Official Community Plan revisions over the next year.

Media contact:

Alan Mason, Director, Community Economic Development
City of Revelstoke
(250) 837-5345

Kootenay Boundary Regional District

CFAI funding will be used to develop a food security plan for the Boundary region by examining the region's capacity for food production, distribution and access. It will identify the gaps and set out an action plan to address them.

A second key outcome for the project will be the creation of a collaborative advisory group of local government, community agencies, and food stakeholders that will explore, guide, and implement the plan. The Food Security Plan will be integrated and developed alongside an anticipated review of the Boundary Area Agricultural Plan, permitting the efficient integration and cross-referencing of this Food Security Plan into multiple facets of local government planning processes and policy.

Media contact:

Roly Russell, Director and Board Vice-chair
Regional District of Kootenay Boundary
(250) 368-9148

Regional District of Central Kootenay

Funding will be used to implement the RDCK Agriculture Area Plan by developing a Rural and Regional Food Policy Council that seeks to strengthen the food systems in the region.

The Regional Food Policy Council will be formed through careful research and community consultation to ensure that it is representative of the range of factors and needs related to food systems in the area, from hunger and access to production and markets. Through formal ties with local government, the council will provide strategic direction to planning activities and enable the co-ordination of initiatives across the region.

Media contact:

Sangita Sudan, General Manager of Development Services

www.interiorhealth.ca

BACKGROUND

Regional District of Central Kootenay
1-800-268-7325 or (250) 352-6665 main reception

Township of Oliver

The CFAI funding will be used to build upon recent food security work done by the Oliver Healthy Living Coalition (OHLC) – a multi-sectoral stakeholder which includes elected officials, health professionals, service providers, non-profit organizations, farmers and business owners.

The group plans to use funds to form a Food Action Advisory Committee (FAAC), develop a Community Food Security Plan for Oliver, adopt that plan for implementation and commence the implementation process including embedding the plan into existing local government processes, such as the Official Community Plan and Regional Growth Strategy. The desired outcome will be a systematic approach to ensuring year-round access to safe, affordable, locally sourced nutritious food for Oliver and Area C residents.

Media contact:

Diane Vaykovich, Corporate Officer
Town of Oliver
(250) 485- 6207