OVERALL OUTCOME

SPIRITUALLY >>>>>>> WE SUCCEEDED in UNITING OUR SPIRITS - August 6th, 2004 - Transfer Beach, Ladysmith B.C. – The Chemainus First Nations (CFN), along with dozens of Tribal Journey nations participating in this healing and spiritual journey of their ancestors, paddled over from Kulleet Bay to Transfer Beach at Ladysmith for a cultural celebration of words, song and prayer. Mayor of Ladysmith Robert Hutchins, residents and guests were ready to greet their neighbours and journey guests in the pouring rain to welcome them to the shores with open arms. There was honest, sincere and powerful words and messages shared for almost 1.5 hours; concerns & regret about the past and hope for the future permeated the speeches.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS - The overall Tribal Journey experience was full of learning and lessons, especially concerning protocol, process and procedures, for both the organizing committee as well as the Town. The rain on Friday was heavy and constant and created several logistical changes in terms of event operations. The bonus opportunity was that the crowd was able to come closer to one another to keep warm; we observed our guests’ smiles, patience and cooperation during the heavy and cold rain; one perspective shared often was the cold/warm rain served to cleanse us and join our spirits. The event was not meant to be perfect; however, the most important objective was most certainly achieved – that two communities came together in a very real and honest way.

The weather conditions presented a very significant challenge. Event organizers are proud of the decision to move forward and continue with the event and luncheon, especially given the fact that the journey guests had departed from their shores in the heavy rain of the early morning. The main concern of the organizers was for the health and well being of the journey guests; hence warm drinks were in abundance and event organizers worked to obtain warm, dry clothes from the local thrift shop.

Event Coordinator Brenda Clark travelled to Kulleet Bay and spent several hours in the Long House on Friday night to participate in the celebrations. Everyone had arrived back safely from Transfer Beach and they appeared to be in good spirits upon their return. The evening in the Long House truly warmed them completely.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING - Mayor Hutchins provided the leadership and ongoing support for this event. The good will and positive intent behind the entire initiative was confirmed to the Chemainus First Nation through extensive organizational efforts. Acknowledgement and a heartfelt thank you goes to all of the sponsors, including the Town of Ladysmith and Ladysmith & District Credit Union of $5,000 each, Union of BC Municipalities at $3,150, Western Economic Diversification Canada at $2,000 and Timber West Forest Corp. at $500. These generous sponsorships demonstrate support for the people of the Chemainus First Nation and their journey guests – from the youngest to the eldest.

GREAT NEWS FOR FUTURE RELATIONS - Western Forest Products donated a 41” red cedar log to be presented to the Chemainus First Nation as a gift from the Town of Ladysmith. The log will be used to construct a canoe for the CFN to use during a future tribal journey. It was placed near the amphitheatre at Transfer Beach throughout the entire event for people to see, and Mayor Hutchins officially presented the log to Chief Terry Sampson & the CFN during the welcoming ceremony. Additional gifts presented in commemoration of the day include:

- Centennial/Tribal Journey logo pins – pins have or will be presented to all CFN people & canoe participants, event volunteers, Council, Parks/Recreation staff, all sponsors and other key people.
- Water fountain and one years’ supply of water - this gift will be presented to the CFN Council at their next meeting on Wednesday, August 11th. The hot/cold water fountain has a plaque, thanks to local shopkeeper Nita Grant, displaying the event logo and the inscription, “To the Chemainus First Nation – In Honour of Tribal Journey – August, 2004. With Respect and Gratitude – The Town of Ladysmith.”
Event coordinator Brenda Clark presented a Tribal Journey commemorative t-shirt to Willie Seymour in appreciation of his excellent leadership and cooperation throughout the planning and execution of the event.

COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

Welcome Ceremony - Willie Seymour / Mayor Hutchins / Chief Terry Sampson

Mayor Hutchins facilitated the welcoming ceremony. Together with Willie Seymour, Chief Terry Sampson and other members of CFN council, Mayor Hutchins welcomed each of the dozen canoes to the shores of Transfer Beach. Other First Nations joined in the welcoming and drumming to bring in our guests from as far south as Seattle and north to the Queen Charlotte Islands. The speeches were honest, sincere and full of stories about the First Nations culture. Other highlights include:

- Each canoe gave words of appreciation for being invited to Transfer Beach and articulated their intent to work together in harmony on important issues of common interest;
- MLA Graham Bruce was in attendance and participated in the welcoming and gave words of encouragement and support to Chemainus First Nation and all the canoe families;
- The welcome ceremony lasted from the arrival time of 10:00AM thru to the beginning of lunch at about 11:30AM. Approximately 1,500 participants watched and listened to an estimated thirty people speak, drum and tell stories that described the past, present and future opportunities between the Chemainus First Nation and the Town of Ladysmith. A copy of Mayor Hutchins’ speech is attached (please note that due to weather conditions, this speech was modified to be an official welcome, rather than a farewell address) and a video of the speeches will be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities upon final edit, expected by December, 2004, which will highlight the formal communications between the two communities.

Luncheon

Approximately 1,800 to 2,000 meals were served during the barbeque picnic at the Kinsmen Shelter on Transfer Beach. Meals consisted of hamburgers/hotdogs, Caesar salad, refreshments and watermelon. The barbeque was coordinated by local service clubs including the Kinsmen Club, Lions, Rotary, Women in Action, several Ladysmith churches and the Chamber of Commerce.

Luncheon sponsors included the Town of Ladysmith, Ladysmith & District Credit Union, Timberwest Forest Corp., Union of British Columbia Municipalities and Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Roundtable at Kinsmen Shelter (Communications) - Chief Sampson and Mayor Hutchins invited several guests to their picnic table including CFN Councillors (Gerry Harris, Catherine Harris - several other Councillors dropped in throughout the luncheon, but were also attending to the needs of paddlers due to the weather), Regional Chief of British Columbia Shawn Atleo, Town Councillors (Don (Duck) Paterson, Doug Fraser, Jan Christenson, Glenda Patterson and Rob Johnson) Event Coordinators Willie Seymour (CFN) and Brenda Clarke and several CFN staff members. Town of Ladysmith Director of Parks and Recreation Dan Pagely served the table their lunch. There was encouraging and positive talk with table guests and this luncheon round table lasted about one hour.

Due to the weather and the fact that the primary concerns of the community leaders were for the safe return of the paddlers, plans were established to meet at the CFN council office to discuss many of the items that were originally scheduled for discussion at the luncheon. Mayor Hutchins and Brenda Clarke attended the August 11, 2004 CFN Council meeting (see attached minutes), and a subsequent invitation has been delivered to the CFN Council inviting them to an informal gathering of the two Councils on December 15, 2004 (see attached invitational letter). Mayor Hutchins debriefed Ladysmith Council on the event, as well as the follow up meeting at CFN Council Chambers on August 14th, during the regular meeting of Council on August 16, 2004. In addition, a copy of this report has been provided to Council, and will be made available to Committee members at a follow-up session that is tentatively scheduled for December.
Also attached is a copy of an article that appeared in the local newspaper (Ladysmith / Chemainus Chronicle) following the event. It should be mentioned that both communities were mindful of keeping a low media profile so as not to detract from the deep spiritual significance of the Tribal Journey.

In brief, a general willingness and interest in working together on issues of common concern has been acknowledged by both Councils; however, discussions held during the event and during subsequent gatherings have identified a need to work towards healing the relationship between the two communities before any major projects or initiatives are undertaken in cooperation.

**Closing Prayer - Rev. Rosalind Westaway**

At about 1:00PM, Rev. Rosalind Westaway closed with a beautiful prayer that reminded the participants of the importance of respect and humility. Thanks were given to the First Nations people for teaching these values and so much more throughout the day and always, and it was noted that the rain was seen by many as a healing force that helped to cleanse the old wounds and also nurture the new seeds that were planted this day.
As we stand together today on the shores of this beautiful community, I give thanks for the momentous day that we have shared and for all of the volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make it a reality. I give thanks, as well, for the safe arrival of the Tribal Journey guests and for the opportunity to host this historic occasion in their honour.

Today’s celebrations are a landmark in the evolution of the Town’s relationship with our neighbours, the Chemainus First Nation. The Town of Ladysmith was incorporated 100 years ago on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people, and amidst our Centennial celebrations, it is important to reflect on the footprints of our past, and to chart a new course for the future.

Many of you in attendance today are aware that the Town’s relationship with the Chemainus First Nation has historically been fraught with difficulties stemming from what I believe is the Western World’s general failure to comprehend and appreciate the richness of First Nation culture. For this, and for the many misunderstandings that have occurred between our communities, I offer my sincere apologies, along with a promise to work towards a brighter future.

It is my genuine hope that together, with faith in the future and in our dedication to improving our relationship, that we as leaders in our communities will find a way to bridge the cultural gaps that have existed between us - setting a tone of forgiveness for the people of our communities and encouraging them to respect and embrace diversity.

I believe that today’s celebrations have provided a foundation for a better future – the type of cultural sharing that has occurred here today is a fundamental step towards facilitating greater understanding. I am excited about what today’s celebrations mean in terms of what I hope is a turning point in our relationship with the people of the Chemainus First Nation. My wish is that the next one hundred years in Ladysmith will mark a chapter in history that future generations will admire even more than the first one hundred years – a chapter of greater harmony, friendship and unity.

In closing, on behalf of Council and the citizens of Ladysmith, it has truly been an honour to be involved in your journey and I wish you all a safe voyage home. Thank you - Hych ka.
Ch cannedus First Nation

Minutes
Chief and Council Meeting
August 11, 2004

Attendee's:
Council: Edward Seymour Sr.
    George Harris
    Gerrude Seymour
    Kevin Frenchy
    Charlotte Elliott
    Harvey Seymour Sr.
    Sylvia Harris
    Catherine Harris

Regrets: John Elliott and Terry Sampson

Band Administrator: Viola Wyse

Executive Assistant: Josie Louie

Recording Secretary: Corina Harris

1. Mayor Rob Hutchins and Brenda Clarke:
   • Rob: Congratulations on special event, very successful.
   • Thank you for opportunity to work with you on this event
   • Positive feedback is very overwhelming
   • We wanted to do this at closing ceremony; we would like to acknowledge
     Chief and Council with a gift. We present this water cooler - hot and cold
   • A one year supply of bottles (100 bottles)
   • Acknowledges Cathy Harris and Willie Seymour on such a wonderful event.
   • Brenda Clarke: congratulations on events, it is an honor for me to be
     involved. I have t-shirts for you, and some for Chief Sampson and his wife.
   • Mayor Rob Hutchins donated a 41 ft. cedar log for future tribal canoe.
   • Congratulations and thank you.
   • Council: acknowledges and thanks Rob Hutchins and Brenda Clarke for
     being a part of the tribal journeys. This is the first step in strengthening the
     relationship between CFN and Ledywhist. Also thanked Cathy for the hard
     work she did. Thanks Rob Hutchins and Brenda Clarke for gifts.
October 18, 2004

Chief Terry Sampson and Council
Chemainus First Nations
12611 Trans Canada Highway
LADYSMITH, B.C.
V9G 1M5

Dear Chief Sampson and Council;

RE: TRIBAL CANOE JOURNEY

On behalf of the Town of Ladysmith, it is my pleasure to present the Council members of the Chemainus First Nation with commemorative Tribal Canoe Journey pins as a small token of my appreciation for allowing our community to share in such a memorable event.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend your Council meeting on August 11, 2004, and in the spirit of continuing to encourage positive relations between the leaders of our communities, it is my honour to invite each of you to a gathering of Council on Thursday, December 16, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at Ladysmith City Hall for hors d’oeuvres and informal discussion.

Please RSVP to Sarah Morden at 245-6404 by Wednesday, December 8, 2004. I look forward to meeting with each of you.

Yours truly,

Town of Ladysmith

Robert Hutchins
Mayor

Cc: B. Clarke
    D. Pagely
Paddlers celebrate First Nations pride

By EDWARD HILL
The Chronicle

Dozens of ornate canoes glided onto Transfer Beach Friday morning, celebrating the cultural bond between coastal First Nations for the 2004 Tribal Journeys.

Braving the torrential downpour, paddlers young and old, in both hand-carved cedar and fibreglass boats, were met by hundreds of drenched supporters. The landing marked the end of a journey that for some lasted over a month.

"This is the way we travelled, and did commerce hundreds of years ago," said Dave Lopeman, chairman of Squaxin Nation from Olympia, Washington.

"Tribal Journeys represents the rebirth of our nations and recognizing each other again as we did many years ago."

The two Squaxin cedar canoes – three years in the making – oared hundreds of kilometres and made dozens of stops at Puget Sound Nations before crossing to the Island.

"The hospitality here has been outstanding. People have opened their homes and given food to the rowers," Lopeman said. "It’s something I haven’t experienced in a long time."

The journey not only reunites the links once forged between aboriginal bands prior to European colonization, but also inspires youth to become intimately involved in their cultural heritage. Tribal Journeys is drug and alcohol free, and involves traditional potlatch ceremonies.

"Travelling on the water is a spiritual thing for the young people," said Raymond McCloud of the Puyallup Nation. "They learn the ancient ways, are taught discipline, friendliness and get to meet different tribes."

Launching from Sibell Bay, the canoes formed an impressive armada stretching across the harbour, appearing out of the drizzle much like they would have a century ago. Soon the boats, some simply painted red or black, some with beautiful Haida art, lined the length of the beach.

Present at the ceremonies was one of the founders of the Tribal Journey on the American side, 90-year-old Emmett Oliver of the Quinault Nation. Oliver created the journey for Seattle’s centennial in 1989.

"In 1935 he paddled in canoes, but it was a race then and he still thinks it is a race now," laughed Oliver’s daughter Marilyn. "He asked if the Canadians won."

Chemainus First Nations – Tribal Journeys’ host – led the day’s ceremonies, unfortunately cut short by the inclement weather. Mayor Rob Hutchins, MLA Bruce Graham and Assembly of First Nations B.C. Chief Shawn Atleo stood with Chemainus spokesperson Willie Seymour, all acknowledging the need to constantly improve the often-troubled relationship between native and non-native cultures.

"This is an opportunity for understanding and appreciation of our collective history," said Atleo. "It is important to keep working for our children. But there is much work left to come."

Under beachside tents representatives told stories of the wisdom of their ancestors before erupting into the deep rhythmic beats of traditional chanting and drumming. The cold and damp couldn’t quell the collective pride and joy of cultures that refused to be extinguished after lifetimes of systematic oppression.

"Our intent today is to build bridges. Paddlers have journeyed here to respect our ancestors going back thousands of years," Seymour said to the crowd. "This is our opportunity to overcome ignorance and poverty, to create a better community."