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New Smithers Library-Gallery Project more than halfway to goal!

SMITHERS, B.C. – The Smithers Library-Gallery Project has reached a significant fundraising milestone. The project has received more than half of the \$1 million in community contributions it targeted this past year. The fundraising committee thanks the many generous donors who stepped up in this first phase. Wally Bergen, Fundraising Committee Co-chair, stated on behalf of the Committee that the community has shown tremendous initial support: "We can be proud and continue to move forward with the successful completion of this invaluable project."

The Smithers Library-Gallery Project partners envision the new building as an inclusive and dynamic hub for learning, artistic expression, collaborative programming, and community connections. The larger project concept includes a revitalization of Veterans' Peace Park—which includes a prominent location for the cenotaph—and maximizes the outdoor space to create a satisfying bookend to Main Street. The Cassandra Trust has generously dedicated \$30,000 towards the project. Keith Schindler, Branch Manager at RBC Royal Bank which has contributed \$10,000 towards the project, foresees the new civic facility as "a cultural hub that will provide services to all residents of the Bulkley Valley for years to come."

In the fall of 2018, Harvey and Corry Tremblay jumpstarted this fundraising campaign by pledging \$1 million to the project and challenging the community to come together and raise an additional \$1 million in matching donations: "We see this project as an opportunity to give back in a way that benefits Bulkley Valley families and contributes to the vitality of the community."

Donors are inspired by how the multi-use building can add something of value to our community: "Dr. Rodolfo and Marianne Bianco and the Koerner Foundation are happy to support the New Library and Art space Project with a contribution of \$300,000. The New Library and Art Gallery will enrich in a meaningful way, the arts, education, culture, and community life by providing a much needed venue for our growing community."

Upon receiving a joint grant application from the Library and Art Gallery, the board of the Bulkley Valley Community Foundation (BVCF) found a creative way to contribute. "The Board decided to commit \$5,000 per year for three years to the project," says Jill Dunbar, Chair of the BVCF. "This is our first multi-year commitment and our largest to date." Greg Wacholtz, Branch Manager at the Bulkley Valley Credit Union also welcomed the opportunity to support the project with \$60,000: "It will give a fresh look to the library and gallery, and provide a new gathering place for community members of all ages to meet and learn."

The fundraising committee is currently waiting on results from a Federal/Provincial Infrastructure Grant Application that will provide 80% of the funds needed for this project. With such significant funding in place—from the aforementioned donors, the Havard Family, anonymous community members, and support from Smithers Lumber Yard—a major milestone has been reached, but there is still work to be done. In the coming months, there will be an opportunity for the wider community to make donations to this project and help build a lasting legacy for Bulkley Valley residents to enjoy for generations to come.

For more information about how you can contribute, contact Wally Bergen at wwbergen@telus.net (250-847-9660), or Shannon Goodhead at director1@smithersart.org.