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Regional benefits from provincial emergency funding

PORT ALBERNI – The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), the District of Ucluelet, and the District of Tofino will be even more prepared for an emergency after receiving a \$65,115 grant from the Province of BC to bolster its regional readiness.

The grant is part of \$3.2 million in Community Emergency Preparedness funding announced last week. The funding is designed to help communities build or upgrade Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs), purchase equipment, and enhance capacity through volunteer recruitment, retention, and training. The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund is administered through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and supports programs that strengthen the resilience of First Nations communities, local governments, and residents.

The grant is a partnership between the three organizations and will strengthen capacity in all partnering jurisdictions and benefit residents in these regions.

"We recognize that united we are stronger, better prepared, and more resilient," says Heather Zenner, protective services manager for the ACRD. "As a region we must work together to improve our depth of resources and increase our response capacity."

The ACRD is a collection of remote and isolated communities that rely on each other's support, assistance, and resources. The Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet face the same challenges as well as living with limited access routes. Since these Districts and the ACRD are adjacent to each other, it is essential that a regional approach is practiced when it comes to potential emergencies.

"Our top priority is keeping our community safe before, during, and after an emergency," said Brent Baker, fire chief and manager of protective services at the District of Tofino. "Working as a region is essential in ensuring emergency operations centres across our communities can respond effectively."

It will build capacity through training opportunities and tabletop exercise and purchasing supplies and equipment will help build resources and improve functionality. Some of the supplies that will be included are pagers, hand-held radios, a digital flip chart, a laptop, webcam, and speakers, a printer, headsets, a projector, and auxiliary power banks.

"This grant will further strengthen the emergency response capacity of the ACRD and west coast communities by providing valuable joint training and upgrades to our Emergency Operations Centre equipment," explains Ucluelet Fire Chief Rick Geddes.



In addition to this official partnership, this project will offer collaboration through training opportunities with area First Nations, Pacific Rim National Park, the fire departments in Bamfield, Cherry Creek, Port Alberni, Beaver Creek, and Sproat Lake, Emergency Support Services, and the City of Port Alberni.

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For more information, please contact:

Heather Thomson, ACRD Communications Coordinator

250-206-5162

hthomson@acrd.bc.ca