

ACCESS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

October - December 2002

Transportation for Seniors with a Caring Touch

By Christine Weir

FutureCorp Cowichan, a Community Futures Development Corporation

After 17 months of planning and preparation, and going through the red tape for almost three years to obtain a Motor Carriers Vehicle License, Roz Wilson was able to finally open her van doors to offer a wheelchair accessible transportation service for seniors and disabled persons in the Cowichan Region.

Having worked for a seniors' home helped her realize a market for this service. She had witnessed other transport services drop people off and watch the customer struggle to the door.

Care-a-Van Services Ltd. goes above and beyond just transportation. Wilson provides caring, safe services by assisting her customers into their homes and helps them with their items. She also has CPR and First Aid training to deal with emergencies. This caring service helps enhance the lives of seniors and special needs persons by reducing their isolation and increasing mobility, and providing them with greater independence.

Wilson not only transports customers from point A to point B, but also offers group rates and is looking at group outings as her main thrust. The local press has covered her story well and the

public supports her all the way. Through letters of support, letters or articles submitted to the newspapers, and attendance at a public hearing, members of the community have demonstrated the need for this service.



Roz Wilson, owner of Care-a-Van Services Ltd., provides her customers with services that go beyond just transportation.

FutureCorp Cowichan has been behind Wilson since the beginning. "Their support was imperative for me to proceed with my idea," indicated Wilson. She participated in the Self Employment Program they offered. She also received start-up financing from the **Women's Enterprise Society of B.C.**

Wilson is now "on the road" to success.

To learn more about Care-a-Van Services, call (250) 748-9675.

For more about the programs and services of FutureCorp Cowichan, call (250) 746-1004 or visit their Web site at: www.futurecorpcowichan.com. For programs and services available for women entrepreneurs in B.C., call the Women's Enterprise Society office at 1-800-643-7014 or visit their Web site at: www.wes.bc.ca. ♦

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA



ACCESS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Charting the Waters of Success

by Gord Woodward

Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Island



Norm and Jodi Brochno were studying at the Marine Trade Institute in Vancouver. Part of the lessons included creating their own passage charts. As commercial fishermen, they were familiar with the different nautical publications available and realized by combining the passage charts with other necessary elements, a more useful tool would result.

The Nanaimo couple decided to chart the waters of entrepreneurship. They gathered information and published *Ports and Passes*. The distinctive guidebook for mariners of the Pacific Northwest lists tides, currents and charts for the area from Prince Rupert to Olympia, Washington.

Their fifth edition, released in 2002, is an impressive package. The 500-plus page guide is spiral-bound, with full colour charts, and lists services and amenities available in many communities. The drawback – it was costly to produce.

In 1999, the Brochno's visited the **Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Central Island** for assistance. They arranged financing for their business, **Chyna Sea Ventures Ltd.**, to cover printing costs of the second edition of the guide. The money came from two of the loan programs offered by the CFDC. With a background in the fishing industry, they were able to get some money from the **Fisheries Legacy Fund** and the rest came from a program which assists entrepreneurs ages 18 to 29. "If it wasn't for the CFDC, this book wouldn't have happened," says Jodi.

The Brochno's visit each community they cover — Norm sells advertising and Jodi gathers information from the locals about their area. The effort is well worth it, says Jodi. "The most exciting time of the year is when we get the first book back from the printers," she said. "And, to have other people love this as much as we do, it's incomparable." Norm adds, "We get people phoning in October asking when the next book is coming out."

For information about *Ports and Passes*, visit Chyna Sea Venture's Web site at: www.portsandpasses.com or call 1-866-627-8324.

For more information about the programs and services offered by the CFDC of Central Island, call (250) 753-6414 or visit their Web site at: www.cfnanaimo.org. ♦

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WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA



Employees Put Life Back into Keltic Seafoods

Provided by the Community Futures Development Corporation of Mount Waddington

When Seafood Products closed its Port Hardy fish processing plant doors in July 2000, out-of-work employees considered having to relocate to Victoria or Vancouver to find work.

A year later, former employees resurrected a custom fish processing plant in its place. Employees decided the plant could be a viable operation if some changes were made and, along with local investors, conducted extensive research to evaluate market potential. "We decided that by refocusing and changing the format into custom processing we could make it work," recalls **Keltic Seafoods Limited** President Mickey Flanagan.

Rather than buying and selling the fish like other local fish processing plants, Keltic Seafoods simply provides custom processing for a fee. "It's about taking the market out of the equation, which reduces the risk. We're not depending on market swing," says Flanagan.

Several business plans were drafted before the group hired an expert in the fishing industry to draw up the formal business plan.

With help from **Community Economic Adjustment Initiative** funding, delivered through **Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Mount Waddington**, the employees and investors reopened the plant.

Today, Keltic employs 42 locals and provides the local fishing fleets with value-added custom processing. The company is able to take the fish products and modify them into products of higher value.



Keltic Seafoods employees put life back into a closed fish processing plant in Port Hardy.

Photo courtesy of the CFDC of Mount Waddington

Flanagan says the company is "employee driven." Employees sit on the board of directors with local business people to run the company. Many are also investors, which motivates them to take pride in their work and care more about the finished product.

A long-time employee said, "A locally owned and operated company has an advantage, because local fishermen will be more likely to bring their business there." With the plant now processing ground fish in addition to salmon, the company can hope to provide year-round employment for North Islanders.

For more information about Keltic Seafoods, contact (250) 949-8088 or visit their Web site at: www.callofthewildmarket.com/aboutkeltic.html.

For information about the programs and services offered by the CFDC of Mount Waddington, call (250) 956-2220. ♦

Who Ya Gonna Call? Rent-a-Husband!

Provided by Community Futures Development Corporation of Nicola Valley

You won't call Lance Thatcher if you're looking for a date...well maybe...but if you have a property maintenance problem, then he's the man to call if you live in Merritt/Kamloops.

Thatcher puts his wide range of skills to the test daily running his home-based business, **Rent-a-Husband Maintenance Services**. The company specializes in maintaining homes and property when owners don't have the time, equipment or expertise to do the job. His services range from lawn and garden care, rubbish removal and gutter cleaning, chimney sweeping, household moving, and a host of other tasks.



Lance Thatcher, owner of Rent-a-Husband Maintenance Services, improved his marketing skills with the help of the CFDC of Nicola Valley.

Marketing the business effectively is one of the hardest parts of being self-employed indicated Thatcher. To increase his marketing skills, he attended the Pre-Entrepreneurial Sessions offered by the **Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Nicola Valley** and participated in the Self-Employment Program. Both programs helped him understand how to promote his business effectively.

The CFDC was also able to help him plan each phase of his venture. "I came in to this thing with no business experience at all. The CFDC got me started on my business plan and showed me what it takes to run a business."

"I was thinking of all the various skills that I had picked up over the years and didn't see why I couldn't put them to work for me." Thatcher saw a need and, combined with his broad knowledge and experience, started Rent-a-Husband in 1998.

Thatcher enjoys the variety offered by operating Rent-a-Husband. He rarely uses the same equipment or does the same thing two days in a row. "I do so many different jobs everyday, I never find myself getting bored," he indicated.

For information about the services offered by Rent-a-Husband, contact (250) 378-4614 or 1-866-444-8229.

To learn more about the programs and services provided by the CFDC of Nicola Valley, call (250) 378-3923. Community Futures offices in Western Canada are members of Western Economic Diversification Canada's network of business service partners. ♣