



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 22, 2017**

### **Year in Review: South Island Prosperity Project Closes Out 2017 on a High Note**

Victoria, BC – Spirits are high at the South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) heading into 2018, following a busy year for the region’s economic development agency.

After laying the foundation and groundwork for the organization in year one, SIPP spent the better half of 2017 implementing a number of new projects that stimulated and supported the growth and expansion of existing companies across the region, while continuing their work to promote the South Island as an attractive choice for new businesses and investors looking to put down roots.

Organizational Highlights from 2017 include:

- Partnering with UVic's Coast Capital Savings Innovation Centre (CCSIC), Island Women in Science and Technology (iWIST), The Victoria Chamber, Alacrity Foundation and VIATEC to host 'Meet a Mentor Night' with the aim of connecting some of the region’s best and brightest entrepreneurs with local business leaders;
- Coordinating and leading the economic development efforts for the City of Victoria’s trade mission to China, strengthening business ties and generating a number of new opportunities by highlighting our region’s assets to Chinese businesses considering expansion in the South Island;
- Launching the South Island Prosperity Index – a new annual report that provides a holistic view of our region’s prosperity, tracking a series of 140 indicators that will serve as a benchmark to help measure our region’s progress and economic health;
- Partnering with the Community Micro Lending Society and Songhees Nation on establishing a dialogue series to engage First Nations communities in economic development;
- Acting as the lead partner in the newly established Songhees Innovation Centre, designed to support and foster growth for Indigenous entrepreneurs, small business, non-profits, and creatives;
- Assembling a working group of regional stakeholders to assist in planning and developing a South Island bid for Canada’s Smart Cities Challenge – a national competition incentivizing Canadian cities and communities to come up with innovative ways of solving real-world challenges to improve livability for residents using technology and data with the chance to win prizes up to \$50,000,000 for most innovative “smart city” solutions;

- Welcoming over 300 attendees to the first of two Smart South Island Symposiums designed to debate the opportunities and challenges that come with the 'smart' and sustainable development of communities across the South Island region; and
- Launching an Open Innovation Challenge that invites teams to submit 'smart' pilot project ideas for a chance to compete for one of three \$15,000 prizes.

In addition to their extensive project work, SIPP continued to build relationships across the region, welcoming Douglas Magazine, Times Colonist, CGI Information Systems and Management, Telus, Babcock Canada and Thrifty Foods as new members in 2017.

"We are thrilled to have so many new voices at the table this year working together to build a resilient, sustainable economy, and create stronger communities and career opportunities across the region," said SIPP CEO, Emilie de Rosenroll.

"It is our hope that we can continue to build upon this spirit of collaboration in 2018, by strengthening our existing partnerships and creating new relationships that will foster positive economic growth across the region," she said.

For more information on the South Island Prosperity Project, please visit [www.southislandprosperity.ca](http://www.southislandprosperity.ca).

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### **ABOUT SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PROJECT**

The South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) is an economic development organization based in Greater Victoria, B.C., comprised of 36 members, including 10 local governments, 2 First Nations, 3 post-secondary institutions, 2 non-profits, 5 industry and sector associations, and 14 private businesses, who are working together with an aim to bolster our region's economic and social prosperity by catalyzing the creation of high-quality, household-sustaining jobs, so that more families can afford to live, work and build a life here.

SIPP's mission is to facilitate and promote the development of a strong, regionally

diversified economy on South Vancouver Island. [www.southislandprosperity.ca](http://www.southislandprosperity.ca).