Media Release

50 Local Businesses to Cut Costs by Cutting Carbon

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VICTORIA, BC — Fifty local businesses will have lighter carbon footprints and lower energy bills soon as a result of an innovative partnership by the Capital Regional District, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria and Climate Smart, a BC-based training program.

The Climate Smart program teaches businesses how to measure their carbon footprint, identify ways to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and learn about becoming carbon neutral. Marketing and communications tips are also included in the three half-day workshops. Participants are also provided access to an online tool to calculate and manage their carbon footprint, one-on-one technical advice and membership in a network of like-minded businesses.

25 businesses from both Victoria and Saanich will be eligible for the $1,000 subsidy that is being offered through this funding, bringing the cost of the training down to $250 for a micro-business (1-10 full-time employees (FTE)), $500 for a small business (11-50 FTE), $750 for a medium business (51-200 FTE) and $1,000 for a large business (201-500 FTE).

To qualify for the $1,000 subsidy, businesses must have a base of operations in the City of Victoria or the District of Saanich, or be a supplier to the CRD or the City of Victoria or the District of Saanich. Half of each $1,000 subsidy will come from the CRD and with the municipalities covering the other half for their respective businesses.

“This partnership is a part of our goal to have a strong regional network of businesses that are ready for the future and thrive due to lower operating and energy costs,” said CRD Board Chair Geoff Young. “By working with local businesses, many of which provide services to municipal governments across the region, we are helping to achieve our goal of reducing community greenhouse gas emissions by 33% by 2020 and fulfilling obligations under the BC Climate Action Charter.”

Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin is excited about bringing this opportunity to local businesses, noting, “growing a green economy is a priority in this region, so we are very excited to be able to sponsor this program in order to help local companies benefit from cost savings related to a reduction in energy use.”

“By working across our municipal boundaries we are looking to help promote Climate Smart businesses on a more regional level- so whether you are a paving company in Saanich or a hotel in Victoria, local businesses will have the support needed to reduce their costs and carbon footprint,” said Saanich Mayor Frank Leonard.
Accent Inns, Rogers Chocolates and Capital City Paving are three examples of businesses that have recently completed the Climate Smart program. “For our team at Accent Inns, mapping out our energy use and seeing where we had opportunities to reduce our environmental impacts and maximize our cost savings was a powerful process. Making real changes like installing energy efficient lights and occupancy sensors for heating rooms and hearing our guests acknowledge those efforts, has made our team even prouder of what we do. It’s really a win-win for everyone,” added CEO of Accent Inns Mandy Farmer.

Interested businesses can visit: www.climatesmartbusiness.com/crd for further details and to register for this program. Businesses in Victoria can visit: www.victoria.ca/climateaction Saanich businesses can visit http://www.saanich.ca/living/climate/sustbusprog.html The first training group will begin in January 2012.

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