City Celebrates Flavours of Vietnam
With an Eye on Economic Development

Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2012

VICTORIA, BC — Attendees at this year’s Victoria Tea Festival, February 18 and 19 at the Victoria Conference Centre, will be introduced to a new international partnership brewing between the City of Victoria and the municipality of Thai Nguyen in Northern Vietnam, one of the country’s premium tea growing regions.

Working with local tea master, Daniela Cubelic from Silk Road Tea, a new tea has been created celebrating the two cities. Entitled “monsoon” the limited edition green tea will be launched at the Victoria Tea Festival and available for tasting at Silk Road’s Vietnam-inspired booth.

Victoria was one of only three BC cities chosen in 2011 by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) Municipal Partners in Economic Development (MPED) program to be paired with an international city, to support capacity building in economic development. MPED is FCM’s new global program, which provides assistance to local governments and local government associations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Bolivia.

“We were very excited at the opportunity to partner with Thai Nguyen to see what synergies existed between our cities,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “We are starting with the wonderful connection around tea and look forward to expanding into other sectors.”

The goal of MPED is to advance sustainable and equitable economic development in selected developing countries, which is measured in terms of increase in investment; creation and retention of jobs, and; creation, retention and growth of businesses in participating communities.

With tea as a natural connection, City officials sought the expertise of Cubelic for her knowledge of North American tea markets, global trends in tea and to assess the quality of the Vietnamese product. Committed to only using organic ingredients with everything she creates, Cubelic says the tea is inspired by the exotic, tropical Asian ingredients used in Vietnamese cuisines. Spicy notes of ginger, lemongrass, and citrus flavors are paired with Vietnamese green tea to create monsoon, which can be served hot or cold. The name is also symbolic, as Vietnam’s weather is dictated by two monsoons, which bring rain and breezes as relief to the tropical heat.

"There is definitely potential for Vietnam to gain North American market share as a tea exporter and I am excited to be presenting Thai Nguyen tea as a feature this year during the festival," said Cubelic, who received her training from Chinese and Taiwanese tea masters and herbalists. “Thanks to this new partnership with Victoria, I will also be exploring ongoing opportunities to showcase their teas, with the growers in the region.”

Cubelic brings over 20 years experience working with tea growers and exporters in China, Taiwan, Japan, India and Sri Lanka helping to develop tea that is high quality, sustainably produced and blended for the North American market.
About Silk Road
Located in Victoria’s historic Chinatown and celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2012, Silk Road imports and blends the world’s finest organic teas, sharing a passion for tea and tea culture with local residents and visitors from all around the world. With an award winning tea-inspired spa and dozens of locally made natural skin, body and hair products available for purchase, Silk Road is a one-stop shop for body wellness – both inside and out. For more information, visit www.silkroadtea.com.

About the Victoria Tea Festival
Hosted in the tea capital of Canada, the Victoria Tea Festival had its inception in 2007 with 200 people attending the one-day event. Now in its sixth year and having experienced phenomenal growth, the event has grown to two days and established itself as the largest public tea exhibition in North America with over 3300 people in attendance and over 40 exhibitors. For more information please visit: http://www.victoriateafestival.com/

For More Information:
Jocelyn Jenkyns
General Manager, Victoria Conference Centre
Office: 250.361.1001
Cellular: 250.704.6957