

Malaspina University-College
NEWS RELEASE

October 21, 2003

Malaspina launches new Centre for Shellfish Research

At an official groundbreaking ceremony held Tuesday, October 21, Malaspina University-College launched construction of a new \$3-million Centre for Shellfish Research (CSR) laboratory building at the top of the Nanaimo campus.

The CSR, under director Don Tillapaugh, will serve B.C.'s coastal communities through technical and scientific research expertise and support for the growing shellfish aquaculture industry.

Funding for the centre has been provided by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund (BCKDF), Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), and the Malaspina University-College Foundation

The new facility will be comprised of wet and dry labs, offices and a meeting room. The lower floor will house 8,000 square feet of wet-labs with tanks for rearing shellfish under experimental conditions.

The research tanks will be supplied with seawater from a state-of-the-art recirculation system designed by Nanaimo-based PRAqua Technologies, a world leader in water treatment systems. Upstairs will house 3,000 square feet of typical dry-labs with analytical equipment to process samples.

Tillapaugh said, "Our mission is to help create wealth from knowledge. The centre will facilitate timely information transfer to the shellfish farmers who can put the knowledge to work."

Malaspina president Rich Johnston said, "Research centres such as these give students important hands-on career-related research and training opportunities and at the same time support and develop new economies for our coastal communities."

Malaspina's Dr. David Thomas, vice-president instruction & research, said "Expanded research capacity to support sustainable shellfish farming in B.C. is badly needed. This new research laboratory and offices will become the nucleus for shellfish research and innovation in B.C. We're delighted that Malaspina will play this critical role."

Advanced Education Minister Shirley Bond said, "The province supports research projects such as the shellfish centre through the BC Knowledge Development Fund, which to date has provided over \$230-million in capital funding at public post-secondary institutions, teaching hospitals and affiliated non-profit agencies. The fund has leveraged matching funding and contributions from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and other partners for a total investment of over \$650-million for about 270 projects."

Leading off the ceremony, Chief John Wesley of the Snuneymuxw Band gave an opening prayer and stressed the importance of shellfish for First Nations peoples and their growing interest in shellfish culture.

The four funding agencies were all represented at the ceremony.

“The Canada Foundation for Innovation is pleased to be able to assist institutions like Malaspina University-College develop world-class research centres like the Centre for Shellfish Research,” said Suzanne Corbeil, Vice-President of External Relations of the CFI. “The technologies developed here will benefit B.C.’s coastal communities and, ultimately, all of us in Canada.”

Speaking on behalf of the province, Bud Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture Food and Fisheries, said, “The CSR will play a critical role in supporting coastal community economic opportunities for British Columbians. The British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund is proud to be able to support post-secondary institutions, teaching hospitals, and affiliated non-profit research agencies to invest in research infrastructure like this.”

According to studies done by Western Economic Diversification Canada, shellfish aquaculture could grow from \$20-million to \$100-million annually by the year 2010 and create 1,000 new jobs. The agency attempts to support this growth through industry-government-academic partnerships in the knowledge-based economy.

Pam Parker, executive director of the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association, said, “The initial creation of the CSR in 2001 formalized a long-standing partnership between Malaspina and the shellfish industry for research and training needs. This new research centre is critical to the ongoing development of the industry.”

MLA Hunter said, “The research at the new centre will contribute to a sound, sustainable aquaculture industry and to the growing reputation of Malaspina University College as a centre of excellence in this industry. This is critical to developing long-term economic opportunities in our coastal communities.”

Co-founders of the CSR concept, Malaspina professor Dr. Bill Pennell and Brian Kingzett, former president of the BCSGA, concluded the ceremony by thanking the funding agencies for their support of the new centre and acknowledged the importance of the initial funding for the project provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Aquaculture Development.

Pennell said, “The establishment of the CSR facility is both timely and essential to achieving the vision and potential for sustainable shellfish farming in B.C.”

-30-

For information, please contact:

Don Tillapaugh, Director
Centre for Shellfish Research
(250) 740-6113

Valérie Poulin
Coordinator, Media Relations
Canada Foundation for Innovation
(613) 996-3160