



SKIDEGATE BAND COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Haida Heritage Centre Grand Opening Ceremony Set for August 23rd

Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, Canada – Chief Councillor of the Skidegate Band, Willard Wilson, has announced that the Grand Opening Ceremony for the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay will take place on Saturday, August 23, 2008. The Centre fulfills a dream of the Haida people for the past 40 years to share their living culture with the world.

Chief Wilson notes that “This wonderful Centre is the culmination of 15 years of planning and development work. The Skidegate community as a whole has played key roles throughout the process and the Centre is a reflection of our rich heritage, how we live today, and what the future holds. We are pleased to see young people from our community intimately involved in the day-to-day operations of the complex and its programs.”

The new Haida Heritage Centre first opened its doors to the general public for its “soft opening preview season” on July 1, 2007 and has been open year-round. Since then visitors from all over the world have enjoyed a preview of this internationally significant showplace, and have given rave reviews to this celebration of the Haida culture.

The Haida Heritage Centre encompasses the expanded and revamped Haida Gwaii Museum with its many exhibits, artefacts and audio-visuais, including a specially commissioned video about the Haida culture. Apart from the Museum, features of the Centre include a gift shop, the Canoe House, Carving Shed, Performing House, the Bill Reid Teaching Centre and a small café. Visitor orientations and presentations about Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site also take place at the Centre.

Over the past several months the Haida Heritage Centre has been adding new exhibits and expanding its programming. The Centre’s CEO, Miles Richardson, emphasizes that “The Haida Heritage Centre is, of course, currently open and fully operational. We look forward to welcoming visitors this spring and summer prior to, during, and after the Grand Opening.”

Among the events planned for the Grand Opening on August 23rd are artist demonstrations, viewing/voyages of three newly carved Haida canoes (the first since Bill Reid carved the famous Loo Taa in the 1980s), traditional dancing and singing, and a seafood barbecue.

Getting to Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) and the Haida Heritage Centre is easier than many travellers realize. Daily non-stop flights from Vancouver are offered by *Air Canada Jazz* (two flights a day during the summer) and *Pacific Coastal Airlines*. From Prince Rupert, *BC Ferries* offers several sailings each week and *North Pacific Seaplanes* has daily flights each way. Summer hours at the Haida Heritage Centre are 10 am to 6 pm daily.

For more information on the Haida Heritage Centre, go to www.haidaheritagecentre.com or e-mail info@haidaheritagecentre.com Telephone: 250-559-7885 Fax: 250-559-7886

- 30 -

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