

Kinsol Trestle needs public support and money

By Mike Damour - Cowichan News Leader and Pictorial
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Calling it the second most important day for the Kinsol Trestle, Jack Peake and others kicked off a grassroots fundraiser near the historic, but rickety, wooden structure.

"The most important day for the trestle will be in about 18 months or so when this is completed," Peake, the chair of the Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign, said from the trestle Wednesday.

Peake is heading a \$2-million fundraising effort to rehabilitate one of the world's tallest wooden railway trestles and close the last link in the Cowichan Valley portion of the Trans-Canada Trail.

"This is a day that many of us have been working toward for a long, long time," Jack Peake told a small crowd that included local businessmen, politicians and other invited guests.

"There aren't that many opportunities in a lifetime to do something that will have a dramatic impact on generations to follow, but this is one of those."

The cost to restore the trestle is estimated at \$5.76 million. Just more than \$4.1 million in funding has already been secured from the province, a provincial program and the Island Coastal Economic Trust. Now organizers are looking to the community for \$2 million, which includes \$340,000 above the project costs to create an endowment to generate income for future repairs to the trestle. Many local businesses have agreed to donate in-kind services to the campaign by supplying necessary construction materials and labour. Western Forest Products will be contributing timber and lumber.

"The Kinsol Trestle is a valuable icon of the logging heritage that is so important in the Cowichan Valley," Duncan Kerr, vice-president of WFP, said in a release.

"We look forward to hearing about other contributions so that the rehabilitation work can get fully underway," he said.

Local union members have already offered skilled manpower to provide, mill and deliver the timber. Local service clubs in the valley area are planning to complete a key segment of the trestle as their contribution and others will contribute their professional services at diminished rates or no charge. The rehabilitated Kinsol Trestle will be part of the Trans-Canada Trail and complete the 120-km Cowichan Valley Trail. It's estimated the restoration project will create 59 jobs including: 30 in direct construction, 20 indirect jobs in manufacturing and support and nine in engineering and project management. But Peake said a restored trestle would be valuable to tourism, as well.

"We already get over 114,000 visitors each year and that number will certainly increase after this project is complete," said Peake.

"Visitors will leave all kinds of money behind (and) the economic spin-offs and benefits will only be limited by the imagination."

Those wishing to donate can do so in several ways:

- In person or by mail at campaign headquarters at 135 Third St. Duncan, B.C. V9L 1R9
- By telephone (Visa or MasterCard) at 250-709-1087, or
- Log onto <http://www.kinsol.ca>.