

## Transportation History Buff Helming Capital Campaign for New North Van Museum

By Maria Spitale-Leisk , North Shore Outlook, March 7, 2014



Don Evans, chair of the new museum capital campaign, and North Vancouver Museum and Archives director Nancy Kirkpatrick review plans inside the 'Pipe Shop' — where, in 2017, the community's history will be showcased through interactive exhibits. — *image credit: Maria Spitale-Leisk photo*

Don Evans, a transportation history buff who brings Harvard University-learned business acumen, has been chosen by the city of North Van to ignite interest in a \$10-million museum project for the Lonsdale waterfront.

The longtime North Vancouver resident brings a wealth of experience to his post as chair of the new North Van museum campaign cabinet. After a lengthy career in the corporate sector with BC Tel, Evans switched gears and started a leadership consultancy business.

He's a lifelong Rotarian, member of the Vancouver Board of Trade, past chair of the E-Comm 911 board of directors — and recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for his active community involvement.

Most notably, Evans was instrumental in fundraising \$18 million for the West Coast Railway Association, which has preserved much of Canada's railway history in a heritage park in Squamish. In 2011, after a five-year, \$10-million capital campaign helmed by Evans, the WCRA opened the CN Roundhouse and Conference Centre.

Now Evans is excited to be part of a project that will showcase North Van's past, which is steeped in shipbuilding history, present and future.

"So railways and ships — all of these types of things are of keen interest to me," said Evans, standing inside the historic "Pipe Shop" at Shipbuilders' Square on Wednesday.

At the moment it's an unfinished, lofty 11,000-square-foot space. But Evans can imagine four main interactive exhibit galleries — a Mount Fromme mountain biking simulator, for one — and a suspension bridge that spans the museum's lobby and leads to a second-floor tree canopy, among other exciting ideas.

Evans said he really buys into this vision that fosters a new generation of museum-goers.

To "make people aware of the vibrancy it will bring to the waterfront," said Evans, the North Vancouver Museum and Archives Commission has embarked on an awareness campaign. It coincides with a museum fundraising feasibility study that is also underway.

KCI Ketchum Canada, which provides consultancy services for the non-profit sector, has been commissioned for the study. The firm was recently hired by Presentation House Gallery, which will also be making a move to the Lonsdale waterfront.

CNV council, at a July 15 meeting, agreed to put up half of the \$10-million price tag for the new museum, in a deal that hinges on the proponents providing the city with a solid fundraising feasibility study by this spring.

"The wonderful thing is the city has committed the first five million [dollars]," said Evans. "From a fundraising perspective, it's a nice position to be in. So we are very optimistic that we will get the job done."

KCI is canvassing the North Van community to determine which sectors would most likely financially support a new museum. Their report will inform the NVMAC on how to proceed with the museum fundraising campaign, which should stretch into next year.

In his experience fundraising for the Squamish railway attraction, Evans said corporate sponsorship played a key role in the capital campaign.

"The name CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre is so named because of CN's major sponsorship of the project. We also have some sponsored galleries in the building," said Evans.

It's a fundraising strategy he's hoping to apply to the new North Van museum. "Absolutely — things such as each of the four main galleries could each have a sponsor, and there will be other opportunities as well," said Evans.

As well, the NVMAC will continue to lobby the provincial and federal governments for funding opportunities. The museum is anticipated to be open in 2017, which coincides with Canada's 150th birthday, leaving the NVMAC hopeful some special federal grants to help mark the occasion will be available.

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