



For Immediate Release

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ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRAVEL TO AND WITHIN WEST KOOTENAYS GETS BOOST WITH 5 NEW FAST CHARGERS

Castlegar, BC – With this month’s opening of five electric vehicle Direct Current Fast Charging (DCFCs) stations along Highway 3, the West Kootenays are now connected to surrounding regions for electric vehicle (EV) travel.

The stations have been strategically sited in Greenwood, Christina Lake, Castlegar, Salmo, and Creston to ensure connected travel and charging options for drivers. All are part of the broader Accelerate Kootenays initiative which will ultimately facilitate the installation of 13 fast chargers and 40 Level 2 chargers in communities across the Kootenays, resulting in over 1,800 kms of connected electric vehicle travel. The fast charging stations are critical infrastructure to allow electric vehicle drivers to travel to and through the region, and to facilitate increased adoption of electric vehicles locally.

Rossland resident, David Cornelius, who has logged over 90,000 kms in his Tesla 85D, says “Having these DCFCs operating makes travel in an EV quite simple. Now drivers can stop where they like, rather than where they must. Side explorations between chargers is vastly expanded: instead of being required to stretch a trip between two distant chargers, you’re at liberty to take a detour.”

The FortisBC-owned and operated stations connect the West Kootenay to the Okanagan and across Kootenay Pass to the East Kootenay and Alberta. Within each community, each station is also conveniently located to allow easy access to amenities like restaurants, shops and attractions.

“When the Highway 3 Mayors and Chairs coalition initially identified EV travel as a priority for our communities and region, it was to both facilitate tourism to our many destinations, as well as support our long-term commitment to reducing our region’s transportation-related emissions. We are enormously proud to see the original vision come to fruition through an unprecedented collaboration,” noted RDCK Vice-Chair and Mayor of Castlegar, Lawrence Chernoff.

“It is tremendously important to have our region connected to the Okanagan and Alberta networks. This Accelerate Kootenays network ensures our communities are on the map for EV travel, providing options for residents and visitors alike,” said Grace McGregor, RDCK Vice-Chair and Electoral Area Director for Christina Lake / Area C.

All West Kootenay stations were installed by Kootenay-based electricians working with PowerPros Electric. The sites will be owned and maintained over the long term by FortisBC as part of their



commitment to supporting EV travel for BC residents. FortisBC is also a core funder of the Accelerate Kootenays initiative.

“This partnership has done a tremendous job in expanding the network of fast charging stations and helping the region meet its climate goals -- we’re proud to be a part of it,” said Mark Warren, Director, Business Innovation & Measurement, FortisBC. “Projects like this are one of the ways we are meeting our customers’ needs for cleaner energy options, especially for transportation, and we look forward to participating in more projects like this.”

Accelerate Kootenays is a two-year, \$1.5 million project that will strategically address the charging infrastructure gap across the region. The project has been made possible by an unprecedented local collaboration led by the Regional Districts of the East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, and Kootenay Boundary and includes funding contributions from Columbia Basin Trust, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, B.C. Ministry of Energy and Mines, and FortisBC, with long-term in-kind support from BC Hydro. The Accelerate Kootenays project is facilitated by Community Energy Association. For more information visit www.accelerateKootenays.ca.

FAST FACTS

- Fast charging stations allow a vehicle to charge from 0% to 80% in approximately 30 minutes. Level 2 charging stations take four to six hours for an 80% charge.
- 96% of FortisBC’s electrical load is supplied from clean and renewable resources.