



ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN PORT AUTHORITIES

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Canada Ports Group Honours Prince Rupert Port Pioneer Dr. Bill Hick

PRINCE RUPERT, BC; August 26, 2009 - The Board of Directors of the Association of Canadian Port Authorities (ACPA) has awarded the prestigious *Medal of Merit* award to **Dr. Bill Hick**, a retired naval officer and respected medical doctor who helped improve the health of North Coast communities in Canada. Moreover, he assumed a leadership role in the community that eventually led to the further development of the Port of Prince Rupert. As president of a community-based holding company, he helped acquire the leases of the Fairview site as a preferred general cargo terminal and convinced the federal government to purchase the site for a break-bulk terminal in 1970. His further work led to the infrastructure necessary to open Ridley Island in 1979 and the construction of Prince Rupert Grain in 1986. In addition to putting the Port of Prince Rupert on a sound business foundation, he served on the Board of Directors of the Prince Rupert Port Authority for 11 years, the board of the BC Ferry Corporation for 11 years; and as a BC representative on the Council of Canada West Foundation from 1979 to 1990. A Freeman of the City of Prince Rupert, Dr. Hick published the book entitled, *Hays' Orphan: the Story of the Port of Prince Rupert* in 2003, a passionate memoir and history of the Port of Prince Rupert.

The award was presented to Dr. Hick today at the Medal of Merit luncheon at the Chances Convention Centre in Prince Rupert during ACPA's three-day Annual General Meeting and Conference. According to nomination criteria, the *Medal of Merit* is "made in recognition of outstanding works or service, preferably of national impact, by an individual, institution or organization in the port, shipping and maritime transportation fields."

"Dr. Hick has been intimately immersed in the port and marine related businesses for many years and exemplifies the importance of local commitment and involvement in local port development initiatives," notes **Gaetan Boivin**, President and CEO of the Trois-Rivieres Port Authority and this year's ACPA Chair. "Dr. Hick is the kind of individual every community needs and he has shown his strong belief in how ports can help develop towns and regional economies in Canada."

Dr. Hick was nominated for the award by the Prince Rupert Port Authority. "Dr. Hick personifies the indomitable spirit of the North Coast and what one person with a vision and tenacity can accomplish against seemingly insurmountable odds," says PRPA President & CEO **Don Krusel**. "He is an amazing person and an inspiration to us in our quest to continue his work and transform Prince Rupert from a marginalized regional port into a global gateway. We are very

proud and delighted that Dr. Hick is receiving this esteemed award - and serendipitously in Prince Rupert during our annual conference. It doesn't get much better than this."



ACPA Chair Gaetan Boivin (left) and Prince Rupert Port Authority President & CEO Don Krusel (right), with Dr. Bill Hick, who was honoured with the association's Medal of Merit on Wednesday.

The Association has awarded the *Medal of Merit* annually since 1975. Past recipients have included Madeleine Paquin, CEO of Logistec Corporation; the Hon. David Collenette, former Minister of Transport; Michel Pouliot, President of the Canadian Marine Pilots Association; and Jack Leitch, Chair of the Upper Lakes Group.

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The Association of Canadian Port Authorities was founded in 1958 and groups together ports and harbours and related marine interests into one, national association. The ACPA represents all Canada Port Authorities, various government entities and companies doing business in the marine sector. The ACPA is the leading Association for the advocacy and advancement of the Canadian Port Industry. ACPA members contribute greatly to the local, regional and national economy of Canada with over \$142 billion worth of goods handled annually.

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Dr. Bill Hick - Background Information

Dr. Bill Hick arrived in Prince Rupert from Stewart, BC in 1956 to establish a medical practice, based on his belief that Prince Rupert had a long-term future as a vibrant port. However, he became very concerned with the poverty-level lifestyles of most of the local longshoremen he attended, who were trying to live and raise families on 1-2 days work a week.

As Dr. Hick became immersed into the community, he became more aware of a sense of hopelessness and despair entrenched in the community, of which nearly 50% were First Nations, driven by the chronic lack of waterfront activity and work opportunities - and no perceived ability to influence decision-makers to invest in Prince Rupert or increase business through the port. Indeed, throughout its history, the port in Prince Rupert has been shaped and hindered by external political and economic forces, dependent on support from outside investors and government officials with little commitment to the local community.

Realizing that the health of the community was inextricably linked to the health of his patients and their families, Dr. Hick took on the daunting task in the late 1960s, in addition to his busy medical practice, to become an activist for Prince Rupert to take more control over its future. He joined a local group in establishing Western Wharves Ltd., a community-based company that committed \$50,000 to identify and promote the most suitable site for the development of a general cargo terminal for the port. The company identified and leased the Fairview site just inside the entrance to Prince Rupert Harbour and Dr. Hick, as president 1968-70, spearheaded the initiative to promote and make the terminal a reality. Their efforts were rewarded in 1970 when Federal Transport Minister Don Jamieson requested CNR to buy out Western Wharves' Fairview property leases, which were then transferred to the National Harbour Board. The Fairview Terminal began operations in 1977 following four years of construction, managed by a newly-formed National Harbour Board port authority.

In the meantime, Dr. Hick had already observed and concluded that grain had built most western ports and offered the best hope of bringing marine traffic and related infrastructure to Prince Rupert. In 1970, he began an exhaustive research project of grain handling and transportation. Armed with this information and a vision, Dr. Hick, with the backing of the City of Prince Rupert, made numerous trips to the three grain-growing provinces. He addressed prairie farm groups regarding the potential benefits of opening up a new corridor for their burgeoning grain exports through Prince Rupert to overcome the increasingly apparent obstacles of being dependent on a single West Coast port. Facing fierce opposition from powerful self-interest groups, he neutralized numerous myths regarding the supposed problems of shipping thru Prince Rupert by consistently communicating the facts and the port's strategic advantages.

In 1975, Dr. Hick researched and produced a comprehensive monograph entitled "The Case for Expansion of Grain Shipments through Prince Rupert", which was widely distributed and resulted in Prince Rupert achieving a high profile across the prairies. He received strong support for a grain terminal from the Premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, who he convinced to visit Prince Rupert, as well as senior management at Cargill. Dr. Hick then represented Prince Rupert at the Hall Royal Commission on Grain Transportation in 1976, and served as an adviser to the B.C. Govt. at the 1979 Western Premiers conference where a main agenda item was a proposed new large grain terminal at Prince Rupert.

Also in 1979, Dr. Hick began liaising with Don Mazankowski, then federal opposition critic for Ministry of Transport and the Canadian Wheat Board, and took advantage of a visit to Prince Rupert by Mr. Mazankowski to brief him on the benefits for grain movement through Prince Rupert. Later that year, when Mr. Mazankowski became MoT Minister and responsible for the CWB, he asked Dr. Hick to chair the Federal committee negotiating with a grain consortium for the construction of a new grain terminal in Prince Rupert. The completed negotiations and subsequent Memorandum of Understanding in 1979 was directly responsible for the provision of infrastructure to opening Ridley Island, the construction of Prince Rupert Grain in 1986 and, as a by-product, the building of the Ridley Terminal coal facility, which opened in 1984.

Dr. Hick served on the Prince Rupert Port Corporation Board of Directors for 10 years (1984-94), during which time he wrote a Director's Handbook. He also served on the BC Ferries Board of Directors for 11 years (1977-88), where he was instrumental in the expansion of their Northern Services to include Port Hardy and Skidegate, and the B.C representative on the Council of Canada West Foundation from 1979 to 1990.

In 2003, he published "Hays' Orphan: The Story of the Port of Prince Rupert", a passionate memoir and detailed history of the Rupert port, which has been cited in numerous historical and academic publications, including the Canadian Political Science Review.