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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Gibsons Public Market Announces First Three Vendors

**GIBSONS, BC (July 11, 2016)** - Three of the coveted nine permanent vendor spaces at the Gibsons Public Market have now been filled by a chocolatier, a florist and a coffee roaster.

Since January more than 40 business owners have applied to open shop in the six-day-a-week market located in the new Sunshine Coast community hub.

"I come from Europe where markets are where all the interesting things happen, so this is where I want to be—right in the heart of the community," says Sylvia Punguntzky, a professional chocolatier and owner of *Art Meets Chocolate*, one of the selected businesses. The opportunity for collaboration with other vendors is appealing to Punguntzky who has developed her brand over the past five years by using premium chocolate blended with seasonal products to create innovative and delicious treats.

For RainFlorist owner, Carina Torgerson, the public market offers flexibility and an energetic setting where she can stay connected to her source of inspiration.

"I will offer a broad selection of flowers and plants, but my true passion is to fashion creative expressions of the natural beauty that surrounds us. I have received a great response from customers who grow a greater appreciation for local plants through my arrangements." Her services will range from cut flowers to unique arrangements for special events.

The third space is reserved for the Bowen Island Coffee Company, a small-batch organic bean roaster. Since 2005, owners Victoria and Gino Rutigliano have mastered their slow roasting technique in search of the perfectly balanced, full-bodied, smooth cup of coffee. And, based on their 2012 America's Best Espresso award, they have found it.

"We use an old-fashioned drum roaster and figured out the right mix of heat, air and time to maximize flavour. Slow roasting may not be how you make a lot of money," he says, "but it's how you make good coffee." The couple will share their knowledge and love for the full experience of coffee with an on-site small roaster. Their space in the market will also feature a service window for early morning coffee service. The Rutigliano family started the business on Bowen Island, and has recently moved to the Coast.

Rae Abbott, curator of the market floor, leads a group of volunteers who bring extensive experience in the food and retail industry to the task of finding the right vendor mix. The group is in negotiations with a baker, seafood vendor, deli/cheese operator, butcher and bistro operator and continues to welcome applications for a green grocer.

"Our vendor selection criteria is heavily weighted in favour of local entrepreneurs, but it also considers the importance of creating a destination with unique items not available anywhere else on the Coast and balances this with the need to offer everyday family staples," she says.

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GIBSONS COMMUNITY BUILDING SOCIETY (operator of the Gibsons Public Market)

604-886-8814 | [www.gibsonspublicmarket.com](http://www.gibsonspublicmarket.com)  
PO Box 191, 473 Gower Point Road, Gibsons BC V0N 1V0



Talented and savvy entrepreneurs continue to step forward. “The tremendous response we’ve received is an indicator of the flourishing local economy on the Coast, everyone is very optimistic about the future,” says Abbott.

The Gibsons Public Market will be operated by the non-profit Gibsons Community Building Society. Approximately 70% of the hub will be dedicated community amenity space what will facilitate learning and engagement in sustainability issues.

Along with the vendors, the ground floor of the public market will also host a community kitchen, a commercial kitchen and provide access to outside green space. From this level, visitors will see the bottom part of BC’s tallest water fish tank which will stand through the three floors of the building.

The main floor of the Gibsons Public Market will be home to the Nicholas Sonntag Marine Education Centre, a licensed bistro, community gathering and public amenities. The third floor will provide meeting facilities and office space.

#### ***Gibsons Community Building Society***

The Gibsons Community Building Society (GCBS) is building and will operate the vibrant year-round Gibsons Public Market. The facility will feature a marine education centre, a community kitchen, community gathering amenities and meeting rooms, a rentable commercial kitchen for new incubator businesses, a bistro and a 6-days-a-week public market. More than 70% of the 13,500 square foot building will be dedicated to community amenities.

The GCBS has mobilized hundreds of volunteers and a Board of Directors and Governors that continues to attract financial, material and in-kind donations to make the project a reality. Construction is underway, with a planned opening of late Fall 2016. Project partners are Community Futures, Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, and the Town of Gibsons.

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#### **Contact:**

Nancy Grenier, Gibsons Community Building Society  
604-741-3421 (m) | [ngrenier@telus.net](mailto:ngrenier@telus.net)

Public market floor plan and high-resolution renderings of the building are available upon request.