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## NEWS RELEASE

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Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat

### **B.C. MLA elected president of Pacific Northwest Economic Region**

CALGARY – British Columbia will have a strong voice in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) with the election of Penticton MLA Dan Ashton as president of PNWER at their 26th annual summit in Calgary, Alberta.

Ashton has acted as Premier Christy Clark’s representative at PNWER since 2014, and has advanced through the executive committee, serving most recently as Canada’s vice-president. As president, Ashton will chair the executive committee, the decision-making body responsible for reviewing all activities of the organization. This will allow B.C. to advance regional priorities including invasive species, transportation, energy, and market access. This role will also be an opportunity to profile several B.C. priorities, including liquefied natural gas, climate action and leadership, and trade throughout the PNWER region.

The PNWER summit draws hundreds of business leaders, legislators and community leaders throughout the region. At this year’s summit, Bill Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines, co-chaired the mining session and participated on a policy maker’s panel on energy development. Ashton also participated in a legislative panel on invasive species.

B.C. government staff also delivered presentations at six sessions, covering a range of topics, including: tourism; forest fire funding; collaborative forest management; marketing products using beetle-kill timber; methane emissions reduction; and, liquefied natural gas.

Private sector leaders are important to the success of PNWER. In recognition for his contributions to PNWER, British Columbian Dave Cowen, general manager of The Butchart Gardens, received the “Robert Day Memorial Award”. The award is given to a business leader who has gone beyond their own interests to promote regional and bi-national co-operation.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Premier Christy Clark –**

“British Columbians couldn’t ask for a better representative at PNWER than Dan Ashton. He understands how to work with different sectors and jurisdictions to build thriving, growing economies that create jobs and a better quality of life for the entire region.”

##### **Dan Ashton, Penticton MLA –**

“It is a great honour to be elected president of PNWER, and to receive the trust and confidence of the members. I would like to thank Sen. Curt McKenzie for his exception leadership as president over the past year. I look forward to building on his successes, and moving forward on key initiatives that will strengthen our state and provincial partners in the Pacific Northwest.

In the year ahead, I look forward to working collaboratively with all PNWER members not only to promote the organization but especially to bring forward the initiatives that allow us to work co-operatively with the private sector and all levels of government.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Established in 1991, PNWER is the only statutory, non-partisan, non-profit, bi-national, public-private partnership in North America.
- PNWER is comprised of 10 jurisdictions: the U.S. states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories.
- PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region, identify and promote models of success, and serve as a conduit to exchange information.
- PNWER tackles regional issues through its 20 working groups, each headed by one public-sector and one private-sector chair. The working groups cover a variety of regional priorities, such as agriculture, border issues, energy and environment, natural gas, and trade and economic development.

**Learn More:**

For more information on PNWER, visit: <http://www.pnwer.org/>

To learn more about PNWER's 26th annual summit in Calgary, July 17-21, 2016, visit: <http://www.pnwer.org/2016-summit.html>

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