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## Media Release

**For Immediate Release**

**DATE: April 29, 2022**

### **SUMMERLAND – District of Summerland receives Community Excellence Award**

The District of Summerland has been presented with a Community Excellence Award in the Social Responsibility category by the Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA) at this week's annual convention in Salmon Arm. The Award is in recognition of the District's successful revitalization of the **George Ryga Arts & Cultural Centre**.

Significant building renovations were completed in 2021. These included energy efficient electrical and HVAC upgrades; washroom upgrades to improve accessibility; fire and life safety improvements; new lighting, flooring, and partition walls; and functional multi-use spaces including a new Art Gallery, meeting rooms and storage spaces.

The George Ryga Arts & Cultural Centre fosters community connectedness that is inclusive, accessible, and affordable for all ages and social groups. The project also promotes economic development by ensuring artists have access to a modern space to advance business opportunities through the Artist-in-Residence program, present and sell their artwork through the Art Gallery and Gift Shop, and coordinate and lead programs and events.

"The Summerland Cultural Plan, which was completed in 2016, highlights the community's values and cultural assets to shape Summerland's identity and develop economic prosperity and social cohesion," said Mayor Toni Boot. "Council is proud of the work that has been done, which has also now been formally recognized by the Southern Interior Local Government Association for excellence in social responsibility".

The Summerland Cultural Plan includes a recommendation to name a street or public space after George Ryga, a nationally acclaimed playwright who wrote most of his major works at his Summerland home, most notably *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*. Council made the unanimous decision to name the renovated building the George Ryga Arts & Cultural Centre.

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