



The Metlakatla Traditional Canoe

The Metlakatla First Nation's business activities include marine transportation. For a number of years the Metlakatla Development Corporation has conducted canoe tours for passengers on cruise ships docking in Prince Rupert.

The existing canoe was too small, showing signs of its age, and did not properly represent Metlakatla's Tsimshian culture and heritage. Metlakatla studied the market and knew there was capacity to expand its operation. In May 2009 they invested in the design and construction of the world's largest North Coast First Nation traditional-style Tsimshian canoe, and to prepare the necessary infrastructure for canoe tour operation.

The canoe is a replica, built with modern materials, but is in a traditional design and decorated with Tsimshian art. For the Metlakatla, this was not just about using a Coast Funds award to invest in a sustainable business, but for the right sustainable business, done the right way.

The capacity of the canoe, which was launched in April 2010, more than doubled from twenty to forty-five occupants, creating more employment in the business. The canoe is also linked to Metlakatla's broader tourism strategy, with opportunities for related activities like participating in traditional meals. There is interest being shown in using the canoe in films because it is unique.