



COMMUNITY TOURISM PROGRAM

Provincial PROGRESS REPORT

As at March 31, 2006

BACKGROUND

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Community Tourism Program was launched in 2005 through a \$ 25 million grant from the Province of British Columbia. The primary goal of the program is to assist local governments in increasing tourism activity that will, in turn, build stronger economies. The Program also aims to help ensure that the Province achieves its goal of doubling tourism in the next ten years, supporting the Province's Spirit of 2010 Tourism Strategy. Increasing tourism industry awareness of local government's role are also Community Tourism program objectives.

An Overview of Programming to Date:

UBCM announced the program to its members on July 29, 2005. Community Tourism Grant program design provides for a granting entitlement that is divided by local governments around the Province. Communities can access their entitlement, by application, until March 30, 2007.

Below you will find a summary of program activities undertaken since program inception. Details around these activities are provided later in this document.

Information Sharing:

UBCM staff has promoted the Community Tourism Program to local government and tourism industry stakeholders as follows:

- Presentation to the 2006 Tourism Industry Conference in February 2006
- Morning Study Session on Community Tourism – 2005 UBCM Convention
- Presented at several Newly Elected Official Workshops
- Newsletters and bulletins

COMMUNITY TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM

To date, 50 applications have been received under the program and we have approved projects to a total of 62 local government have applied for funding under the program. We have approved projects totaling \$2,339,751.33. The applications received to date reflect a wide range of tourism-focussed projects, and demonstrate local government flexibility in securing cost sharing partners.

Projects approved under the program are in progress, and thus final reporting has not yet been received. However, the built-in performance measures that must be provided upon project completion will provide valuable data on the status of tourism activities across the province.

Additionally, members approved a contribution of \$100,000 from the Community Tourism Program in support of BC Canada Place at the Winter Games in Torino.

SUMMARY

The Community Tourism Program has enabled local governments around the province to increase tourism activity. Within the program guidelines, local governments have the ability to tailor tourism planning to meet local needs. This flexibility has also led to increased partnerships with tourism partners such as Chamber of Commerce, Tourism BC, and local stakeholders. As communities complete analysis of their local tourism needs, we anticipate dramatically increased activity under the Program.

CONTACT

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